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Health concern / Prisoner of conscience

19 August 1994

MEXICO

Manuel Manríquez San Agustín, musician

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Manuel Manríquez San Agustín, a musician from the Otomí indigenous community of Ranchería Piedra Blanca, Tutotepec, in the state of Hidalgo, is currently on a dry hunger-strike demanding his release from the *Reclusorio Preventivo Norte*, a prison in Northern Mexico city. He has been on dry hunger-strike since 15 August 1994 and is said to be in a critical condition.

Manuel Manríquez San Agustín was arbitrarily arrested, without a warrant, by the Federal District's judicial police in Mexico City on 2 June 1990. Manuel Manríquez remained incommunicado for four days under police custody where he was brutally beaten, nearly asphyxiated and received burns and electric shocks. He was forced to sign papers he could not understand, as he did not speak Spanish at the time. A prison doctor later certified that he showed signs of having been tortured.

Manuel Manríquez San Agustín was accused of murder and brought before a judge who, based on his "signed confession", remanded him in prison. Despite the illegality of his detention, the torture to which he was subjected and the lack of evidence, he was sentenced to 24 years' imprisonment in July 1991. The sentence was confirmed on appeal in February 1992. A further appeal against this sentence was rejected in 1993.

Since his imprisonment, Manuel Manríquez San Agustín has become increasingly involved in campaigning for an end to torture and other human rights violations in Mexico. This is his fourth hunger-strike.

The governmental National Human Rights Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH*) has recognized that Manuel Manríquez San Agustín was tortured. Amnesty International has repeatedly called for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of widespread torture in Mexico, despite some legal and administrative measures introduced by the Mexican government in 1992. Mexican authorities, including outgoing President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, have continued to make public statements vowing to curb the practice of torture and to bring those responsible to justice. To date and to Amnesty International's knowledge, no one has been convicted under the 1992 Federal Law to Prevent and Punish Torture (*Ley Federal para Prevenir y Sancionar la Tortura*).

Presidential elections are taking place on 21 August 1994 and the new president is expected to assume office in mid-December.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:**

- expressing serious concern about Manuel Manríquez San Agustín's health and requesting that proper medical care be given to him at all times;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience;
- urging that those responsible for his arbitrary detention and torture be

brought to justice;

- calling for adequate compensation to be given to Manuel Manríquez San Agustín and his family.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic

Lic. Carlos Salinas de Gortari  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio Nacional  
 06067 México D.F., Mexico

**Telegrams: Presidente Salinas, México D.F., Mexico**

**Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme**

**Faxes: +52 5 271 1764**

**Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear President**

2) Interior Minister

Dr Jorge Carpizo McGregor  
 Secretario de Gobernación  
 Secretaría de Gobernación  
 Bucarelli 99, 1er piso  
 Colonia Juárez  
 06669 México DF, MEXICO

**Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México D.F., Mexico**

**Telexes: 1774376, 1774375**

**Faxes: +52 5 703 2171**

**Salutation: Sr. Secretario de Gobernación/Dear Minister**

3) Attorney General's Office

Lic Humberto Benítez Treviño  
 Procurador General de la República  
 Procuraduría General de la República  
 Paseo de la Reforma y Violeta  
 Colonia Guerrero  
 06300 Mexico DF, MEXICO

**Telegrams: Procurador General, Mexico D.F., Mexico**

**Telexes: 1777572**

**Faxes: +52 5 626 4430**

**Salutation: Sr Procurador General/Dear Attorney General**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) National Human Rights Commission

Sres.  
 Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos  
 Periférico Sur 3469  
 Col San Jerónimo Lídice  
 10200 México DF, Mexico

2) Prisoners' Human Rights Committee

Sres.  
 Coordinadora Nacional de Comités  
 de Derechos Humanos para la Defensa  
 de Prisioneros y Prisioneras  
 Reclusorio Preventivo Norte  
 J Nuño S-N ZP14

México DF, Mexico

3) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor

Reforma

Reforma 295, 9o. piso

06170 México DF, Mexico

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 September 1994.