

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/17/95

UA 201/95

Fear of torture / Fear of "disappearance" 15 August 1995

MEXICO

Santos SOTO RAMÍREZ, 27, Indian peasant activist

Macario DE LA CRUZ MARTÍNEZ, 27, Indian peasant activist

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Santos Soto Ramírez and Macario de la Cruz Martínez, members of the Nahua Indian peasant community of Chapopote Chico, state of Veracruz. On 11 August 1995 they were reportedly detained as they were walking home by members of the *Policia Judicial*, Judicial Police, of Tantoyuca, Veracruz, and taken away in a blue Chevrolet van without registration plates. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

The two men are members of the *Frente Democrático Oriental de México Emiliano Zapata (FDOMEZ)*, "Emiliano Zapata" Oriental Democratic Front of México, one of a number of peasant organizations that have suffered continuous repression.

Concern for their lives has been greatly heightened by previous reports of torture and extrajudicial executions by the security forces in this state for many decades (see below).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded a long-lasting pattern of rural violence related to land-tenure conflicts in this area. On 2 July 1995, four Nahua indigenous peasants were arbitrarily detained by the Judicial Police of Veracruz. On 27 July members of a local human rights organization interviewed them in prison and were told that they had been ill-treated and subjected to interrogation during the night of 12 July.

On 17 September 1994 the mutilated bodies of Rolando Hernández Hernández and Atanacio Hernández Hernández were found after they had last been seen alive on 8 September when their community of Plan del Encinal, in Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz, was raided by scores of members of the security forces (see UA 351/94, AMR 41/18/94, 22 September 1994).

In most cases, victims of these conflicts are the poor indigenous peasants who lose their lands to big ranchers, known as "*caciques*". The close relationship that often exists between *caciques* and local authorities seriously undermines the legal rights to land tenure of Indian peasants and places them at risk of human rights violations.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Santos Soto Ramírez and Macario de la Cruz Martínez following their reported detention by members of the Judicial Police in Chapopote Chico, state of Veracruz on 11 August 1995;
- requesting an immediate and impartial investigation into the whereabouts of the two Nahua Indians and asking to be kept informed of any findings;
- urging that, if in detention, they be humanely treated and allowed access to relatives, doctors, interpreters and lawyers, and be charged with a recognizable offence or released immediately.

#### APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic  
Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León  
Presidente de la República

Palacio Nacional  
06067 México D.F., MEXICO  
**Telegrams: Presidente Zedillo, México D.F., México**  
**Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme**  
**Faxes: + 52 5 271 1764**  
**Salutation: Sr. President/Dear President**

2) Governor of the state of Veracruz  
Lic. Patricio Chirinos Calero  
Gobernador del Estado de Veracruz  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Jalapa  
Estado de Veracruz, México  
**Telegrams: Gobernador Chirinos Calero, Veracruz, México**  
**Faxes: +52 281 82167**  
**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor**

3) Minister of the Interior  
Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor  
Secretario de la Gobernación  
Secretaría de la Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er piso  
Col. Juárez, 06699 México DF, MÉXICO  
**Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México D.F., México**  
**Faxes: + 52 5 546 7388; 566 8406**  
**Salutation: Sr. Secretario/Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) Daily newspaper  
Sr. Editor  
*La Jornada*  
Balderas 68  
06050 México D.F., México

2) Human Rights Organization  
Comite Nacional Independiente  
Pro-defensa de Presos , Perseguidos,  
Desaparecidos y Exiliados Politicos (CNI)  
Apartado Postal 7-887  
Codigo Postal 06700  
Mexico D.F., México

and to diplomatic representatives of México accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 October 1995.