

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 409/94 Fear of "disappearance" / Fear for safety 21 November 1994

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On 20 November 1994 the 10 people named above were detained by members of the *Policía de Seguridad Pública*, Public Security Police, while taking part in a peaceful demonstration in the city of Comitán, state of Chiapas. Their whereabouts are unknown and Amnesty International fears for their safety.

At least one other person received gunshot wounds when the security forces tried to disperse the demonstrators.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 16 November, scores of people were seriously injured when members of the security forces tried to disperse a peaceful march in Palenque, state of Chiapas. The whereabouts of dozens of people detained by the security forces during the march remain unknown and there are fears for their safety (see UA 405/94, AMR 41/21/94, 17 November 1994).

Chiapas has long been the scene of continuing human rights violations by the security forces in the context of land disputes and allegations of electoral fraud. These violations have included massive and arbitrary arrests, torture, ill-treatment and political killings. A large number of the victims of such abuses belong to the poorest sectors of the population, and include women and children. Very rarely have those responsible been brought to justice.

On 1 January 1994, hundreds of armed peasants, calling themselves the EZLN, took control of several towns in the state of Chiapas. There was heavy fighting for several days. On 12 January the government declared a ceasefire, although there were reports of continuing land attacks by the armed forces during the following days. An Amnesty International delegation visiting the area in late January confirmed earlier reports of a number of human rights abuses, including the extrajudicial execution of at least five rebels and the torture of rebel and civilian detainees at the hands of the security forces.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of the ten people named above (naming some or all) whose whereabouts remain unknown since being arrested by the Public Security Police on 20 November in Comitán, state of Chiapas;
- calling for the authorities to immediately make public their place of detention, and for them to either be charged with recognizable criminal offences, or to be immediately released;

- seeking assurances that the ten are being humanely treated and are allowed access to their relatives, doctors and lawyers;
- calling for an inquiry into the circumstances of their detention and for steps to be taken to prevent the holding of civilians in unacknowledged detention.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic

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

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

Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme

Faxes: + 52 5 271 1764

Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear President

PLEASE NOTE: If sending appeals after 1 December, write to the new President:
 Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León

2) Governor of Chiapas

Lic. Javier López Moreno
 Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
 Mexico

Telegrams: Gobernador López Moreno, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico

Faxes: +52 961 20917

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

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) Human Rights Organization

CONPAZ
 Chiapa de Corzo 19
 El Cerrillo
 29220 San Cristóbal de las Casas
 Chiapas, Mexico

3) Newspaper in Chiapas

Sr. Director General
 El Observador de la Frontera Sur
 9a. Sur Oriente 2203
 Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
 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 31 December 1994.