

UA 149/01

Fear for

MEXICO Members of *Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada* and *Enlace Comunicación y Capacitación*, two human rights organizations in Chiapas state

Several members of two human rights organizations in the town of Ocosingo, Chiapas state, have been attacked. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety, and for that of other members of the two organizations.

On 12 June, a car knocked down Jaime Cuevas Mendoza, a member of *Enlace Comunicación y Capacitación*, Communication and Training Link, outside the home of Antonio Paoli Bolio, the coordinator of *Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada*, Brother Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada Human Rights Committee. The car had reportedly been parked near Antonio Paoli Bolio's home, and drove straight at Jaime Cuevas as he approached the house. A nearby police car gave chase, but failed to catch those responsible. Jaime Cuevas was taken to hospital and treated for minor injuries. When the incident was reported to authorities, there was no one available to deal with the complaint.

A married couple working with both the *Enlace Comunicación y Capacitación* and the *Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada* were targeted on the evening of 30 May, when unknown individuals forced their way into their home via the back door. The couple and their child were not at home at the time of the attack, but the attackers set fire to two rooms and the family's possessions. The couple immediately filed an official complaint, but the authorities reportedly failed to take any action to investigate the crime or identify those responsible.

The *Enlace Comunicación y Capacitación* and the *Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada* are human rights organizations working in local communities in Chiapas.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the armed uprising of the *Ejército Zapatista de la Liberación Nacional* (EZLN), Zapatista Army of National Liberation, in Chiapas in 1994, Amnesty International has documented a pattern of human rights violations against peasant and indigenous communities by the security forces and paramilitary or armed civilian groups.

In 1998 there were a spate of military operations against supposed supporters of the EZLN in the communities of Taniperla, Diez de Abril, Amparo Aguatina, Nicolás Ruiz and El Bosque. In Taniperla several members of the *Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada* were detained and imprisoned for over a year.

Human rights defenders make a vital contribution to strengthening the rule of law, civil society and the development of institutions to protect human rights. However, in Mexico those who struggle to defend the rights of others have often been the first to come under attack, and to have their own rights violated and their safety threatened.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of members of the *Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada* and *Enlace Comunicación y Capacitación*, and urging the authorities to guarantee their safety;
- expressing concern that the targeting of members of the two organizations appear to be an attempt to prevent their legitimate human rights work;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into both incidents, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the *UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties* recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:Governor of Chiapas

Lic. Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía
 Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
 Palacio de Gobierno, Piso 1
 Col. Centro, 29000
 Tuxtla Gutiérrez
 Chiapas
 MEXICO

Telegram: Gobernador, Chiapas, Mexico**Faxes: + 52 961 20917****E-mail: p@blosalazar.chiapas.com****Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor Gobernador**Attorney General, Chiapas

Lic. Mariano Herrán Salvatti
 Procurador General de la Justicia del Estado de Chiapas
 Procuraduría General del Estado de Chiapas
 Libramiento Norte s/n, Infonavit El Rosario,
 Tuxtla Gutiérrez
 Chiapas
 MÉXICO

Telegrams: Procurador, Chiapas, Mexico**Faxes: + 52 961 65724****Salutation: Dear Attorney / Señor Procurador**President of the National Commission of Human Rights

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández
 Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH)
 Periférico Sur 3469, 5o piso
 Col. San Jerónimo Lídice
 México D.F. 10200
 MÉXICO

Faxes: + 52 5 668 0767**E-mail: correo@cndh.org.mx****Salutation: Dear President / Señor Presidente****COPIES TO:**

Comité de Derechos Humanos "Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada"
 AA 19, Ocosingo, Chiapas, 29950, 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 27 July 2001.