

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/26/98

UA 167/98

Fear of torture or ill-treatment /
Fear for safety

29 May 1998

MEXICO

Benigno GUZMÁN MARTÍNEZ, peasant activist
Bertoldo MARTÍNEZ CRUZ, peasant activist

On 26 May 1998, Benigno Guzmán Martínez and Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, both detained at the *Centro de Readaptación Social* (CERESO), Social Readaptation Centre in Guerrero state, were threatened by other prisoners. According to reports other inmates, who brandished knives, claimed to have received orders to kill them from the prison director.

Benigno Guzmán Martínez and Bertoldo Martínez Cruz are leading activists in the *Organización Campesina Sierra del Sur* (OCSS), Southern Sierra Peasant Organisation, a network of peasant organizations in Guerrero State. Benigno Guzmán Martínez was detained on 27 January 1997 for his alleged connection with the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario* (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army, an armed opposition group operating principally in Guerrero and Oaxaca States.

Evidence for this connection was reportedly obtained from testimonies given under torture by other EPR detainees. Bertoldo Martínez Cruz was detained on 3 February in connection with unsubstantiated charges of car theft. These charges are believed to be politically motivated.

Amnesty International believes that both men have been targeted as a result of their OCSS-related activities. Members of the OCSS have frequently been subjected to gross human rights violations by members of the security forces in Guerrero State, including "disappearance", torture and extrajudicial execution. In July 1995, for instance, 17 peasants were gunned down by members of the state judicial police force in Aguas Blancas, Guerrero State. Many of those killed were members of the OCSS (see UA 86/98, AMR 41/15/98, 17 March 1998; UA 110/97, AMR 41/24/97, 22 April 1997; and UA 172/97, AMR 41/42/97, 13 June 1997).

Both men have featured amongst these previous urgent actions when Amnesty International also had concerns for their physical security.

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

- urging that measures be taken to guarantee the safety of Benigno Guzmán Martínez and Bertoldo Martínez Cruz while in detention;
- calling for an investigation into allegations that the death threats received by the two men at the *Centro de Readaptación Social* (CERESO), Social Readaptation Centre were carried out by other inmates on the orders of the Director of the prison;
- expressing concern at the level of human rights violation against members of the OCSS, reportedly carried out by members of the security forces in Guerrero State.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of the State of Guerrero
Lic. Angel Eladio Aguirre Rivero
Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Central
Primer Congreso de Anahuac
Chilpancingo 39000

Estado de Guerrero
MEXICO

Telegrams: Gobernador del Estado, Guerrero, México
Faxes: +52 747 2 8319
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

Attorney of the State of Guerrero

Lic. Servando Alanis Santos
Procurador del Estado de Guerrero
Procuraduría del Estado de Guerrero
Carretera México-Acapulco Km. 6300
Chilpancingo 39000
Estado de Guerrero
MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador del Estado, Guerrero, México
Faxes: +52 747 22328
Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney

Prison Authorities

Lic. Manuel Rodríguez Adame
Dirección General de Readaptación Social
del Estado de Guerrero
Chilpancingo
Estado de Guerrero
MEXICO

Telegrams: Director de Readaptación Social, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, México
Faxes: not available
Salutation: Sr. Director/ Dear Director

COPIES TO:

Human rights organisation

Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
Avenida Azcapotzalco N. 275, Col. Claveria
02090 México D.F.
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 10 July 1998.