PUBLIC AI Index: AMR 41/026/2004

30 June 2004

Further Information on UA 193/04 (AMR 41/022/2004, 4 June 2004) - Fear for safety/prisoners of conscience

MEXICO Isidro Baldenegro (m)] Environmental activists and human Hermenegildo (Domingo) Rivas (m)] rights defenders

Environmental activists Isidro Baldenegro and Hermenegildo Rivas were released on 23 June, after all charges against them were dropped. National and international pressure was vital in securing this action by the authorities. Isidro Baldenegro told the newspaper *La Jornada* that he was "now even more determined [to carry on his work in defence of the environment], because this experience has shown us that there are people who are prepared to help us" (ahora con más ganas, porque con esta experiencia ya sabemos que sí hay gente dispuesta a ayudarnos).

Both men are members of the indigenous *Rarámuris* (or *Taraumaras*) community of Coloradas de la Virgen, in Chihuahua State, where they had been among the leaders of their community's struggle against unregulated logging in the region. In retaliation for their work, officers of the state judicial police (*agentes de la policía judicial del estado*) detained them in March 2003, and charged them with illegal possession of firearms. Isidro Baldenegro was also charged with possession of marijuana.

In April 2004 the Internal Affairs Unit of the state Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado de Chihuahua*), which deals with complaints against the judicial police, concluded that the officers who detained the two men had fabricated the evidence against them. Despite this, the federal prosecutor continued proceedings against the two men until the federal Attorney General dropped the charges against them.

Amnesty International welcomes the men's release. Both are members of the environmental organisation *Fuerza Ambiental*, which believes that their lives are still in danger, as Isidro Baldenegro has said that he intends to carry on his environmental activism in the face of opposition from vested local interests. Amnesty International therefore remains concerned for the men's safety, and that of their families.

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

- welcoming the release of environmental activists Isidro Baldenegro and Hermenegildo Rivas;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee their safety and that of their families;
- urging the authorities to ensure the two men receive appropriate compensation for their false imprisonment;
- calling for all members of the state judicial police involved in fabricating charges against the two men to be immediately brought to justice;
- calling on the federal authorities to investigate why the two men where prosecuted over 15 months on the basis of evidence that was severely questioned from the very beginning;
- reminding the authorities of their duty to guarantee the right of communities to campaign against logging operations and protect the environment, and calling on them to effectively implement the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General of the Republic
General Rafael Marcial Macedo de la Concha
Procurador General de la Republica

Procuraduría General de la República

Reforma Norte esq. Violeta 75

Col. Guerrero, Delegación Cuauhtémoc

México D.F., C.P. 06300, MEXICO

Fax: +525 55 346 0983 (ask for "tono de fax por favor")
Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

President of Mexico

Lic. Vicente Fox Quesada

Presidente de los Estados Unidos de México

Residencia Oficial de "Los Pinos" Col. San Miguel Chapultepec

México, D.F. MEXICO

Fax: +52 5 2 77 23 76 Salutation: Dear President

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Santiago Creel

Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez

Delegación Cuauhtémoc

México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO Fax: +525 55 093 3414

Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. Patrício Martínez

Aldama 901

Colonia Centro, Chihuahua State, MEXICO

Fax: + 52 614 4165 0719

Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor Gobernador

Attorney General Chihuahua

Jesús Antonio Piñón Jiménez

Procurador de Justicia del Estado de Chihuahua

Vicente Guerrero 616,

Col. Centro, Estado de Chihuahua 31000, MEXICO

Fax +52 614 415 0314

Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Señor Procurador

COPIES TO:

Environmental non-governmental organisation

Fuerza Ambiental

Emilio Carranza 910, Colonia Centro

Chihuahua, Chihuahua 31000, 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 11 August 2004.