

MEXICO Jesús Navarrete Castellanos (m), trade unionist

His family

Evangelina Navarrete (f), trade unionist

Her family

Other trade unionists from *Coordinación Nacional de Electricistas*, National Coordination of Electrical Workers

Independent trade unionists Jesús Navarrete Castellanos and his sister Evangelina Navarrete and their families have suffered an increasing campaign of harassment and threats, which have not been investigated or prevented by the authorities. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

Jesús Navarrete Castellanos and Evangelina Navarrete are leaders of the *Coordinación Nacional de Electricistas* (CNE), National Coordination of Electrical Workers. They are campaigning against the privatization of the electricity industry, and have challenged the traditional leadership of the *Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana* (SUTRUM), sole Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic, representing workers of the state-run *Comisión Federal de Electricidad* (CFE), Federal Electricity Commission.

In 2000, members of the CNE reportedly won elections for the leadership of SUTRUM. However, the state authorities and the traditional leadership of the union refused to recognize this victory. Members of the CNE have continued to challenge the legitimacy and integrity of the traditional leadership of the SUTRUM. This reportedly led to several of their activists being dismissed from their jobs in the industry or being forcibly reassigned to other jobs.

On 28 May, the leader of SUTRUM reportedly threatened Jesús Navarrete Castellanos. On 14 June, his 13-year old son, Axel Rivero Navarrete, had his house keys stolen at gunpoint. When he tried to hand over items of value his assailant reportedly told him "ya tengo lo que me interesaba" ("I have already got what I was after"). He was then threatened with death if he told anyone about the incident. On 12 June, repeated hoax calls were made to Evangelina Navarrete's workplace, reportedly telling her to go to her daughter's school as something serious had happened to her. On 26 June Axel Rivero Navarrete and some friends were reportedly followed by a van with tinted windows as they left school. On 28 June a SUTRUM official reportedly warned those identified as supporting the CNE to "cuidarse" (look out for themselves). On 17 July a SUTRUM official reportedly told Jesús Navarrete: "No esté tan tranquilo, podemos llegar a su casa" ("Don't feel too safe, we can get to your home").

Though the CNE have been reporting these threats and incidents to the *Procuraduría General de Justicia del Distrito Federal* (PGJDF), Federal District Attorney General's Office, since the end of May, the authorities have made no contact with Jesús Navarrete or others to carry out investigations. On 2 July an application was made to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to issue a protection order (*medidas cautelares*) to the Mexican authorities on behalf of Jesús Navarrete Castellanos and Evangelina Navarrete.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

State-controlled trade unions often played an important role in controlling industrial relations during the much of the 70-year rule of the former governing

party of Mexico, *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, (PRI), Institutional Revolutionary Party. In recent years, trade unions have gained a greater degree of independence. However, efforts to expose corruption in official trade unions and ensure democratic leadership elections, or attempts to establish independent trade unions, still often lead to reprisals against those promoting these fundamental trade union rights. Mexico has ratified the International Labor Organization Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise.

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

- calling for the authorities to ensure the safety of Jesús Navarrete Castellanos, Evangelina Navarrete, their families and other trade unionists with *Coordinación Nacional de Electricistas*;
- requesting immediate, full and impartial investigations into the campaign of harassment and threats against those named above, that the results be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities of their responsibility to adhere to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, (No. 87) of the International Labour Organization which guarantees the right to free association and the right to organize.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of 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

Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernacion, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Fax: + 52 55 5093 3414

Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Minister of Labour

Lic. Carlos Abascal Carranza
 Secretario de Trabajo y Previsión Social
 Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión Social
 Av Periférico Sur No.4271, Col. Fuentes del Pedregal
 México D.F., 14140, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario de Trabajo y Previsión Social, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Fax: + 52 55 5645 2344 / 5645 2345

Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Attorney General of the Federal District

Mtro. Bernardo Bátiz Vázquez
 Procurador General del Distrito Federal
 Gabriel Hernández #56, 5° piso,
 col. Doctores,
 México D.F. 06720, MÉXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General Justicia, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Faxes: + 525 55 345 5529

Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Señor Procurador

COPIES TO:

Trade Union Organization

Centro de Reflexion y Acción Laboral (CEREAL)
Lago Atitlán 46, Col. Pensil Norte, Mexico DF, 11430 MÉXICO

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 2 September 2002.