

MEXICOFernando Ruiz Canales (m), human rights defender

Human rights defender Fernando Ruiz Canales has reportedly suffered harassment and intimidation by the police as a result of his work.

Fernando Ruiz is the President of the non-governmental Law and Human Rights Council, *Consejo para la Ley y los Derechos Humanos* (CLDHAC). A core element of his work involves going to the scene of possible illegal detentions and other human rights violations by the police, in order to investigate the circumstances and provide legal advice to the victim. On two such occasions, on 18 October and 18 November, Fernando Ruiz was reportedly detained without charge by agents of the Mexico City Preventative Police, *Policía Preventiva del Distrito Federal (D.F.)*. Since then, he has reportedly been under surveillance by the police.

Formal complaints have been lodged about these incidents with the Mexico City Public Ministry, *Ministerio Público del D.F.*, the Mexico City Ministry for Public Security, *Secretaría de Seguridad Pública del D.F.*, and the Mexico City and National Human Rights Commissions, *las Comisiones de Derechos Humanos tanto del D.F. como nacional*.

Fernando Ruiz was one of five human rights defenders who received threats in the wake of the killing of human rights lawyer Digna Ochoa on 19 October 2001. (See Further information on UA 233/99, AMR 41/036/2001, 22 October 2001). Since then he has been provided with had a bodyguard by the Federal Judicial Police, *Policía Judicial Federal*. This has not however prevented intimidation by agents of the Mexico City Preventative Police.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The human rights movement plays a key role in strengthening the rule of law, civil society and the development of institutions to protect human rights. However, human rights defenders in Mexico have also faced consistent attempts to discredit their work and threaten their personal safety. Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the recent increase in attacks against defenders and fears that this represents a deliberate attempt to stop them from carrying out their legitimate work. This serious situation calls into question the government's rhetorical commitment to human rights.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Fernando Ruiz Canales after reports that he is being harassed by agents of the Mexico City Preventative Police as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
- urging the authorities to carry out a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation in response to the formal complaints lodged by Fernando Ruiz, to make the results public, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Fernando Ruiz, in accordance with his wishes;
- reminding the authorities that the Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties, approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1998, is a clear recognition of 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:

Head of Government of the Federal District of Mexico

Lic. Andrés Manuel López Obrador
Jefe de Gobierno del Distrito Federal
Plaza de la Constitución esq. Pino Suárez
Piso 1, Col. Centro 06068
México D.F.
MEXICO

Telegrams: Jefe Gobierno, DF, México

Faxes: (+52 55) 5521 0028

Salutation: Señor Jefe de Gobierno / Dear Head of Government

Minister of Public Security of the Federal District

Leonel Godoy Rangel
Secretaria de Seguridad Pública
Secretaría de Seguridad Pública
Calle Liverpool #136
Col. Juárez
México D.F. 06600
MÉXICO

Telegrams: Godoy, Secretaria Seguridad Pública, DF, Mexico

Fax: (+52 55) 5208 6440

Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Human Rights Commission of the Federal District

Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos del D.F.
Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos del D.F.
Av. Chapultepec no. 49, esq. Dr. Lucio, primer piso
Colonia Centro, Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F. 06040
MÉXICO

Fax: (+52 55) 5578 2578

Salutation: Dear President / Señor Presidente

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

Fax: (+52 55) 5668 0767 (There may be a message in Spanish. Just send the fax after the tone)

E-mail: correo@cndh.org.mx

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental organization

Consejo Para La Ley y Los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (CLDHAC)
Calle Cerro de la Estrella No. 150-301,
Campestre Churubusco,
04200 México, D.F.

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 9 January 2002.