

EXTERNAL

AI Index: 41/55/96

EXTRA 144/96

Arbitrary arrest / "disappearance" /
fear for safety

6 September 1996

MEXICO

Silverio López Ramos, peasant rights activist

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Silverio López Ramos who was arrested - reportedly violently - at his home on 4 September 1996 by members of the state police, the Mexican army and the federal judicial police. Amnesty International fears that he might be further ill-treated and tortured, and is making an urgent appeal to the authorities to ensure his safety.

According to reports, at 4pm on 4 September, several members of the security forces arrived at the home of Silverio López Ramos in Santa Cruz, municipality of Miahuatlán, in the state of Oaxaca; they fired shots at the house before raiding it. Silverio López Ramos did not respond to the attack, but was beaten and carried away in a van. His whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Silverio López Ramos is an active member of the political commission of the *Comité de Defensa de los Intereses del Pueblo* (CDIP), People's Defence Committee, and of the national coordinating committee of the *Frente Amplio por la Construcción del Movimiento para la Liberación Nacional* (FAC-MLN), Broad Front for the Construction of a National Liberation Movement, both peasants' rights organizations. Several members of these organizations have recently been targeted by the security forces involved in the clamp-down on the *Ejército Revolucionario Popular* (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army, an armed opposition group (for further information, see EXTRA 103/96 (AMR 41/34/96, 5 July 1996) and follow-ups AMR 41/37/96, 18 July, and AMR 41/50/96, 29 August).

Over the last few weeks, scores of members of grass roots organizations in some of the poorer states of Mexico have been victims of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest and torture, carried out by the security forces.

In one instance, in the early afternoon of 4 September, several members of the Oaxaca state police, the Mexican army and the federal judicial police, raided the home of Evaristo Peralta, a member of the CDIP in the town of Miahuatlán, Oaxaca. He was brutally beaten, blindfolded, and carried away in a van to an unknown destination. During his detention he was interrogated about the EPR and threatened with death if he did not cooperate, before being released without charge at 2pm the following day.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Silverio López Ramos, and calling for immediate guarantees that he will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- asking that his relatives be immediately informed of his whereabouts;
- calling for an investigation into the arrest of Silverio López Ramos by security forces on 4 September so that those responsible for his "disappearance" may be brought to justice;
- urging that, unless there are well-founded and legally issued charges against the detainee, he should be immediately and unconditionally released; in the case of his remaining in prison, asking that he should have immediate access to medical care, legal counsel and to a fair and prompt hearing;
- politely requesting to be kept informed about the results of investigations into the case.

NOTE

Like a number of governments, the Mexican authorities employ a large human rights bureaucracy, one task of which is to respond to public appeals, such as those generated by Urgent Actions. Those taking part in this UA should expect such a reply. In Amnesty International's experience, the Mexican authorities currently take little effective action beyond the paperwork to fully deal with the organization's concerns, particularly impunity. However, given their sensitivity to international public opinion, UAs continue to be invaluable in confronting human rights emergencies in Mexico. Please forward replies to your Section or to the International Secretariat, where they will be monitored and acted upon. See also "Mexican Wave" (UA NEWS, ACT 60/01/96, March 1996).

APPEALS TO:Minister of Interior

Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor
 Secretario de Gobernación
 Secretaría de Gobernación
 Bucarelli 99, 1er piso
 Col Juárez, 06699 México DF, México

Faxes: +525 546 5350

Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernación, México DF, México

Salutation: Sr. Secretario/Dear Minister

Governor of the State of Oaxaca

Lic. Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano
 Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Oaxaca, Estado de Oaxaca, Mexico

Telegrams: Gobernador del Estado, Oaxaca, Mexico

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:Centro de DD.HH.

Miguel Agustín Pro-Juárez (PRODH)
 Puebla No 153, Col Roma
 06700 Mexico DF, México

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and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please contact the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 September 1996.