

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/60/96

8 October 1996

Further information on EXTRA 91/96 (AMR 41/26/96, 11 June 1996) and follow-up (AMR 41/48/96, 16 August) - Ill-treatment / Fear for safety and new concern: Fear of torture

MEXICO Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, peasant activist

On 3 October 1996, Bertoldo Cruz Martínez, a leader of the *Movimiento 6 de Marzo*, 6 March Movement, a peasant organization in the state of Guerrero, was arrested by members of the *Policía Judicial Federal*, (PJF), Federal Judicial Police in Acapulco, Guerrero state. Amnesty International fears that he may be tortured or ill-treated in custody.

Bertoldo Cruz Martínez, who has always been very active in the defence and promotion of peasant and indigenous rights, has been accused of blockading roads and taking over public buildings (a very common practice in Mexico) during peasant demonstrations in April, May and June 1996 (see below).

Bertoldo Cruz Martínez is also the secretary of the Human Rights Committee of the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)*, Party of the Democratic Revolution, an opposition party, as well as one of the leaders of the *Union de Organizaciones de la Sierra del Sur (UCSS)*, Southern Sierra Union Organization, a network of peasant organizations in Guerrero state.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The peaceful peasant demonstrations earlier in 1996 were related to the annual distribution of fertilizers by the local authorities, who were only distributing fertilizers among members of the ruling party, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, (PRI), Revolutionary Institutional Party, and not to members of the PRD, the 6 March Movement, or other peasant organizations, including the UCSS. A demonstration on 31 May reportedly involved up to 800 peasants calling for a resolution to their demands for fertilizers. On 3 June several peasants occupied the offices of the town hall at San Marcos. On 6 June, an Amnesty International delegation interviewed some of them, including Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, at the occupied town hall, and was able to confirm that the demonstrators were shot at, and a number were kicked and beaten, by members of the local police and *guardas blancas*, white guards (gunmen hired by the local authorities). Some demonstrators required hospital treatment as a result. The events were confirmed by two forensic doctors, part of the AI delegation, who examined some of the wounded and took their testimonies (see original EXTRA).

Arrest warrants were issued against 10 of the participants in the occupation of the San Marcos town hall, including Bertoldo Martínez Cruz.

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

- expressing concern for Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, arrested apparently because of his role in the defence of peasant and indigenous rights, particularly his participation in the occupation of San Marcos town hall, Guerrero, in June 1996;
- calling for immediate measures to guarantee his safety while in prison and to grant him access to a lawyer and his family;

- urging the authorities to promptly charge Bertoldo Martínez Cruz with a recognizable criminal offence or release him;
- calling for immediate measures to ensure the safety of all members of 6 March Movement in Guerrero state.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Interior
Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor
Secretario de Gobernación
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucarelli 99, 1er piso,
Col Juarez
06699 México DF, MÉXICO
Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernación, México DF, México
Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350
Salutation: Sr. Secretario/ Dear Minister

2) Attorney of the state of Guerrero
Lic. Antonio Hernández Díaz
Procurador del Estado de Guerrero
Carretera Nacional México-Acapulco Km. 6.300
CP 39.000, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, MEXICO.
Telegrams: Sr. Procurador, Guerrero, México
Faxes: + 52 747 223 28 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Sr. Procurador/ Dear Attorney

3) Interim Governor of the state of Guerrero
Ángel Heladio Aguirre Rivero
Gobernador Interino del estado de Guerrero
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Primer Congreso de Anahuac
39000 Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico
Telegrams: Gobernador Aguirre, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico
Faxes: + 52 747 23072 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Daily newspaper
Sr. Editor
La Jornada
Balderas 68
06050 México D.F., MEXICO

2) Peasant organization
Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Sur (UOSS)
attn: Ranferi Hernández Acevedo
Calle Zapata No. 1
Col. Fraccionamiento 20 de noviembre
Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 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 November 1996.