

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/66/96

UA 248/96

Death Threats / Fear for safety

28 October 1996

MEXICO Juan Salgado, human rights activist

On 24 October 1996 Juan Salgado, a member of the *Academia de Derechos Humanos*, Human Rights Academy, based in Mexico City received an anonymous phone call, in which the caller is reported to have said:

"*Hola Juanito no andes haciendo pendejadas acuerdate que viene el día de los muertos*". Hello Juanito, don't do silly things, remember that the day of the dead is coming up". (Referring to 1 November)

The death threat is believed to be the result of Juan Salgado's active role, together with other human rights organizations, in a campaign to stop the numerous death threats against *Centro de Derechos Humanos Agustín Pro-Juárez*, (PRODH), Human Rights Centre Agustín Pro-Juárez, whose members have repeatedly been targeted because of their human rights work (see below).

For the past three weeks Juan Salgado has been closely followed by unidentified individuals, and his personal belongings have twice been stolen from his vehicle. Amnesty International is concerned that actions such as the telephone threat - made to his home - could not be possible without the authorities' acquiescence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International remains deeply concerned about the sharp increase in death threats and general human rights violations against civil and human rights activists in Mexico. It has had particular fears for the safety of members of PRODH, ranging from director, Father David Fernández Dávalos, to two members of their legal team, lawyers Pilar Noriega and Digna Ochoa (see UA 200/96, AMR 41/43/96, 13 August 1996 and follow-ups of 29 August, 26 September and 11 October).

Amnesty International is alarmed by the general increase in abuses by members of the security forces and paramilitary groups in Mexico, including death threats, illegal arrests, torture and "disappearances", and by the growing militarization of the south states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero. Impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators is prevalent and is the root cause of these gross human rights violations (see News Service 184/96, AMR 41/64/96, 14 October 1996 as well as the latest Urgent Actions).

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

- calling for a full investigation into the threats against Juan Salgado, apparently targeted for his human rights activism, for immediate steps to guarantee his safety, and for those responsible for the threats to be brought to justice;
- expressing alarm at the rapid deterioration in the human rights situation in Mexico, and calling on the government to adopt urgent and effective measures to protect the work of human rights defenders;
- urging the Mexican Government to adopt urgent and effective measures to halt the spiralling pattern of human rights violations, and to abide to its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil Political Rights, (ICCPR), and the United Nations Convention Against Torture, (CAT).

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 UAs. Those taking part in this UA should expect such a reply. In AI's experience, the Mexican authorities currently take little effective action beyond the paperwork to fully deal with AI'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 IS, where they will be monitored and acted upon. See also "Mexican Wave" (UA NEWS, ACT 60/01/96, March 1996).

APPEALS TO:1) **Attorney General of the Republic**

Lic. Antonio Lozano Gracia
Procurador General de la República
Paseo de la Reforma 75
México 06200 D.F. MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General de la República, México D.F., México

Faxes: + 52 5 626 4478

Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney General

2) **Attorney General of the Federal District**

Lic. José Antonio González Fernández
Procurador del Distrito Federal
Niños Heroes 132. Col. Doctores
México 06720 D.F. MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General del Distrito Federal, México D.F., México

Faxes: + 52 5 625 7081

Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney General

3) **President of the Human Rights Commission of the Senate**

Senador Eduardo Andrade de Sánchez
Presidente de la Comisión
de Derechos Humanos del Senado
Comisión del Senado
Xicoténcatl 9, Mezanine, desp 34
06018 México D.F. MÉXICO

Telegrams: Presidente, Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Senado, México DF, México

Faxes: + 52 5 510 8700 (if voice: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Presidente de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos/Dear Senator

COPIES TO:1) **Human Rights Organization**

Sres.
Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles
de Derechos Humanos "Todos los Derechos para Todos"
Puebla 153, Col, Roma
06700, México D.F
MÉXICO

2) **Daily newspaper**

Sr. Editor
La Jornada

Balderas 68

06050 México D.F., 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 16 December 1996.