

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/67/96

UA 249/96

"Disappearance" / Fear for safety

30 October 1996

MEXICO

Felipe Sánchez Rojas, Indian rights activist

Felipe Sánchez Rojas, chairperson of the non-governmental *Centro de Desarrollo Regional Indígena*, Indigenous Regional Development Centre, was abducted by unidentified individuals on 29 October 1996. He remains "disappeared" and Amnesty International fears for his safety.

According to reports, at around 10pm on 29 October Felipe Sánchez Rojas returned to the Centre's offices in Oaxaca, the capital of Oaxaca state, together with a colleague, after a day's work. He was informed that an unidentified man had visited the office earlier looking for him, and was waiting outside. When Felipe Sánchez Rojas approached him, he was reportedly grabbed by this individual and two other men, who forced him at gunpoint into a vehicle without number plates.

Witnesses of the abduction believe the perpetrators are members of the security forces.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Felipe Sánchez Rojas had recently reported that the office of the *Centro de Desarrollo Regional Indígena* had been under surveillance by unidentified individuals and members of the Mexican army. Amnesty International fears he may be the latest victim of human rights violations by the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the state of Oaxaca, in the context of a clampdown on rural guerrilla activities. Scores of civil rights and political activists, and even people picked up at random, have suffered serious human rights violations, and the perpetrators have continued to benefit from impunity.

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

- expressing grave concern about Felipe Sánchez Rojas' "disappearance", and calling for an immediate investigation into his abduction and for full guarantees for his safety;
- requesting information about any official action on behalf of Felipe Sánchez Rojas, including the prosecution of those responsible for his "disappearance".

#### 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) Minister of Interior  
Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor  
Secretario de Gobernación

Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucarelli 99, 1er piso,  
Col Juarez  
06699 México D.F., MÉXICO

**Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernación, México DF, México**

**Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350**

**Salutation: Sr. Secretario/ Dear Minister**

2) Governor of the state of Oaxaca

Lic. Diódoro Carrasco Altamirano

Gobernador del estado de Oaxaca

Palacio de Gobierno

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, MEXICO

**Telegrams: Gobernador Carrasco, Oaxaca, Mexico**

**Faxes: + 52 951 637 37 (if voice, 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) 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

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 18 December 1996.