

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 53/14/94
Distr: UA/SC

9 November 1994

Further information on UA 339/94 (AMR 53/09/94, 14 September 1994) -
Ill-treatment / Prisoner of conscience

VENEZUELA Gabriel RIVAS GRANADILLO, peasant activist

Amnesty International has learned that Gabriel Rivas Granadillo, leader of *La Chivera* peasant's union, was released without charge on or around 29 September 1994.

From his unlawful arrest on 2 July until his release nearly three months later, he was held in a police station annexe in the town of Valencia, state of Carabobo, in conditions amounting to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Amnesty International feared that he was at risk of being sent to the remote penal colony of *El Dorado* where conditions are even worse.

The organization welcomes the unconditional release of Gabriel Rivas, as it believed he was a prisoner of conscience arrested for his peaceful activities on behalf of peasants involved in a land dispute.

Despite repeated promises by the authorities to abolish the Law of Vagrants and Crooks (*Ley de Vagos y Maleantes*), under which Gabriel Rivas had been sentenced to one year's administrative detention, it continues to be applied.

Both the letter and the application of this legislation violate international human rights standards, and Amnesty International will continue to press for its abolition.

At present no further action by the Urgent Action Network is requested. Thank you to all who sent appeals on behalf of Gabriel Rivas.