

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/01/98

2 January 1998

Further information on UA 409/97 (AMR 41/117/97, 23 December 1997) -
Extrajudicial executions/ Fear for safety

MEXICO 45 displaced Tzotzil Indian peasants, including 15 children,
 killed in Chiapas massacre

Thirty-nine people have been detained in connection with the attack that occurred in Acteal, municipality of Chenalhó, Chiapas State, on 22 December 1997, in which 45 Tzotzil Indians were massacred. The suspects have been charged with a number of criminal offences, including murder and illegal possession of weapons, by the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR), Attorney General of the Republic. One of the suspects is the mayor of Chenalhó, a member of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), Institutional Revolutionary Party, the ruling party in Mexico.

Whilst Amnesty International notes this response by the Mexican authorities in bringing suspects to justice, it remains concerned that no investigation has been announced into allegations of links between paramilitary groups responsible for the attack and the authorities. On 24 December, the organization publicly called on President Ernesto Zedillo for an independent investigation into these allegations (see News Service 223/97, AMR 41/118/97, 24 December 1997).

There are fears that armed attacks by paramilitary groups against civilian populations may continue should no efforts be made to disband paramilitary groups. *Paz y Justicia*, Peace and Justice, and *Máscara Roja*, Red Mask, two so-called paramilitary groups whose abuses have previously been documented by the organisation (see UA 373/97, AMR 41/111/97, 27 November 1997), were reported to have been involved in the Acteal massacre.

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

- noting that 39 suspects face criminal charges in connection with the Acteal massacre that occurred on 22 December 1997;
- requesting to be kept informed of any further results of the investigation into the massacre by the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR), Attorney General of the Republic, and the outcome of the judicial proceedings against those indicted;
- calling on the authorities to promptly set up an independent commission to publicly investigate allegations that paramilitary groups are linked to the authorities;
- expressing alarm at the deteriorating human rights situation in Chiapas State.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic

Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León

Presidente de la República

Palacio Nacional, 06067 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Presidente Zedillo, México D.F., México

Faxes: + 52 5 515 1794/542 1648 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuéllar
Procurador General de la República
Procuraduría General de la República
Paseo de la Reforma y Violeta
Col. Guerrero, 06300 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General, Mexico, Mexico

Faxes: + 52 5 626 4419

Salutation: Sr. Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

3) Governor of the State of Chiapas

Lic. Julio César Ruiz Ferro
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
Palacio de Gobierno
Av. Central y Primera Oriente
Colonia Centro, 29009 Tuxtla Gutiérrez
Estado de Chiapas, MEXICO

Telegrams: Gobernador Ruiz Ferro, Chiapas, México

Faxes: + 52 961 20917 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organizations

Comisión de Derechos Humanos "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas"
Apartado postal 178
San Cristóbal de las Casas
29250 Chiapas
MEXICO

Centro de Derechos Humanos
"Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C.
Puebla No. 153
Col. Roma, 06700
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 February 1998.