

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 102/94 Arbitrary killing / death threats

14 March 1994

MEXICO Mariano PÉREZ DÍAZ, peasant leader - killed  
Jorge PÉREZ NÚÑEZ, peasant leader - seriously wounded

Antonio HERNÁNDEZ, peasant leader )  
Margarito RUIZ, peasant leader ) threatened  
Monseñor Samuel RUIZ, Bishop of San ) with death  
Cristóbal de las Casas and human rights monitor )

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned by reports that on 9 March 1994, Mariano Pérez Díaz was killed, and his son Jorge Pérez Núñez seriously injured, in an ambush by eight unidentified armed men in Simojovel, state of Chiapas.

Both men, leaders of the State Council of Indigenous and Peasant Organizations in Chiapas, (*Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones Indígenas y Campesinas de Chiapas (CEOIC)*), had earlier received death threats, apparently because of their work with local Indian communities in negotiations between the Mexican government and the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN)*, Zapatista National Liberation Army.

This attack heightens Amnesty International fears for the physical safety of indigenous leaders and human rights monitors in Chiapas who continue to receive death threats. Antonio Hernández of the Independent Coalition of Peasant Workers, (*Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos (CIOAC)*), Margarito Ruiz of the Independent Front of Indian People, (*Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios (FIPI)*), and Bishop Samuel Ruiz of San Cristóbal de las Casas are among those who have been threatened. On 8 March Bishop Ruiz received a written threat saying that if he did not leave San Cristóbal, they "would get their hands into the business and silence him for good". Bishop Ruiz, who is a mediator in the armed conflict in Chiapas, received a number of death threats in 1993, believed to have been motivated by his work on behalf of indigenous populations in Southern Mexico.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 1 January 1994, the EZLN, an armed opposition group, took control of several towns in the state of Chiapas. Heavy fighting between the EZLN and government troops ensued for several days. On 12 January the government declared a ceasefire, although there were reports of continuing land attacks by the armed forces during the following days. An Amnesty International delegation visiting the area in late January, confirmed earlier reports of a number of human rights abuses, such as the extrajudicial executions of at least five rebels and the torture of rebel and civilian detainees at the hands of the security forces.

The delegation reminded the Mexican government of its responsibility to effectively investigate and punish the perpetrators of such abuses. However, despite limited investigations into the abuses, no one has yet been brought to justice. This impunity serves only to make further violations likely.

Chiapas has long been the scene of human rights violations by the security forces in the context of land disputes and allegations of electoral fraud. Amnesty International has over the last few years documented these abuses, including massive and arbitrary arrests, torture, ill-treatment and political killings. A large number of the victims belong to the poorest sectors of the population. Very rarely have those responsible been brought to justice.

Members of the Church and other grassroots organizations have been active in promoting and protecting the rights of the indigenous populations of Chiapas for many decades, frequently encountering opposition from the local authorities and large landowners.

See also UA 70/94 (AMR 41/04/94, 22 February 1994) - Harassment of human rights activists.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Mariano Pérez Díaz and the wounding of Jorge Pérez Núñez in an ambush in Simojovel, state of Chiapas, reportedly by eight unidentified armed men;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the attack with a view to bringing those responsible to justice;
- expressing concern for the physical safety of other community leaders and human rights monitors who continue to receive death threats apparently because of their work on behalf of the peace agreement in Chiapas;
- urging the authorities to take immediate measures to guarantee their physical integrity and that those found responsible for issuing the threats be brought to justice;
- urging an effective end to the impunity which appears to be benefitting the perpetrators of human rights violations reported in Chiapas.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic

Lic. Carlos Salinas de Gortari  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio Nacional  
 06067 México D.F., Mexico

**Telegrams: Presidente Salinas, México D.F., Mexico**

**Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme**

**Faxes: +52 5 271 1764**

**Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear President**

2) Minister of Defense

Gral. Antonio Riviello Bazán  
 Secretario de Defensa Nacional  
 Secretaría de Defensa Nacional  
 Ávila Camacho e Industria Militar  
 Lomas de Sotelo  
 11640 México DF, Mexico

**Telegramas: Ministro Defensa, Mexico DF, Mexico**

**Faxes: +52 5 557 7904**

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

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) National Human Rights Commission

Sres.  
 Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos  
 Periférico Sur 3469  
 Col San Jerónimo Lídice  
 10200 México DF, Mexico

2) Non-governmental Human Rights Organization

Sres.

Comisión Mexicana de Defensa  
y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos  
Pitágoras 736, 3er piso  
Col. Narvarte  
03020 México DF, Mexico

3) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor

La Jornada  
Balderas 68  
06050 México DF, 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 25 April 1994.