

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/024/2006

05 May 2006

UA 122/06 Fear for safety/medical concern/fair trial

MEXICO **Members of *Frente de Pueblos Unidos en Defensa de la Tierra* (FPDT), United Front for the Defence of the Land  
And detained street flower sellers**

**Killed: Javier Cortes Santiago (m), age 14**

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On 3 May, a fourteen year-old boy was killed and at least fifty people were injured during a series of violent clashes between demonstrators protesting against the relocation of street flower sellers, and federal, municipal and state police forces in the town of San Salvador Atenco, municipality of Texcoco, State of Mexico. According to reports, at least two hundred demonstrators were arrested during the incident. Local non-governmental organisations have reported that some detainees are not being allowed access to proper medical attention, family members, legal representatives or non-governmental human rights organizations. Amnesty International has also received information about the possible ill-treatment of some detainees.

At least fifty flower-sellers were protesting in the local Texcoco market against their forced relocation to a new site by the local authorities. The initial clash occurred when municipal and state police officers tried to evict them, reportedly with excessive use of force. In clashes that followed, supporters of the street vendors from a local peasant farmers' organisation, *Frente de Pueblos Unidos en Defensa de la Tierra*, United Front for the Defence of the Land, some of whom were reportedly armed with machetes, sticks and stones, fought with police. Violent clashes also reportedly took place when the peasant farmers tried to block the road between the municipalities of Texcoco and Lecheria. According to reports, at least ten police officers were held captive by protestors during the incident.

During the violence, a fourteen year-old boy was killed in circumstances that are still unclear, and at least 50 people, including demonstrators and police, were injured. About 500 municipal, state and federal police officers were involved in policing operations during the disturbances.

The total number of detainees is unconfirmed. According to the Mexican media and local authorities, more than two hundred people were arrested. So far, the National Human Rights Commission has reportedly registered 101 people in prison, including one of the leaders of the *Frente de Pueblos Unidos en Defensa de la Tierra*. The National Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Commission of Mexico State, have reportedly been allowed to visit some of the detainees, although non-governmental human right organisations have not been allowed access.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In the past, Salvador Atenco has been the scene of a number of violent clashes between protesters and police in connection with plans to construct a new airport in the area. Moreover, protests by grassroots social movements against evictions are common. Police operations to remove protestors sometimes results in violent conflict between police and those demonstrating, leading to the detention and sometimes ill-treatment of those protesting. While Amnesty International acknowledges the responsibility of the authorities to guarantee public order, international standards state that law enforcement officials may only use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty. Nevertheless, allegations of excessive force or ill-treatment of protesters by police forces rarely result in an impartial and effective investigation into the conduct of policing operations.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of the people detained in the disturbances in San Salvador Atenco and calling on the authorities to make public the identity of those in detention;
- calling of the authorities to ensure the physical integrity of those detained and that they have access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention they may require;
- calling for the detainees be charged with a recognisably criminal offence or else released;
- calling for an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the killing of a fourteen-year-old child during the clashes and human rights violations that have occurred in the context of the police operations.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of State of Mexico

Lic. Enrique Peña Nieto  
Gobernador del Estado de México  
Palacio de Gobierno, 1er piso, Lerdo 300,  
Poniente  
Col. Centro, Toluca CP 50.000, Mexico  
**Fax: +52 722 276 7007**

**Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimado  
Gobernador**

President of Mexico

Lic. Vicente Fox Quesada  
Presidente de los Estados Unidos de México  
Residencia Oficial de "Los Pinos", Col. San  
Miguel Chapultepec, México, D.F. Mexico  
**Fax: +52 5 55 2 77 23 76**

**Salutation: Dear President/Estimado  
Presidente**

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Carlos Abascal Carranza  
Secretario de Gobernación  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Delegación  
Cuauhtémoc  
México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO  
**Fax: +52 55 5093 3414**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado Secretario  
de Gobernación**

**COPIES TO:**

President of the National Human Rights  
Commission

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández  
Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos  
Humanos (CNDH)  
Periférico Sur 3469, 5º piso, Col. San Jerónimo  
Lídice

México D.F. 10200 , MÉXICO

**Fax: + 52.55.5681.7199**

**Salutation: Dear President of the Nacional  
Human Rights Commission/ Estimado  
Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de  
Derechos Humanos**

Human rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín  
Pro Juárez" A.C., (PRODH)  
Serapio Rendon 57-B, Col. San Rafael, 06470,  
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 June 2006.