

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 52/00

Prisoners of Conscience / Ill-treatment

30 May 2000

MEXICO

Rodolfo Montiel Flores ]  
Teodoro Cabrera García ]

Environmentalist prisoners  
of conscience

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Mexico's Attorney General has until 5 June to decide whether to continue proceedings against two environmental activists facing charges based on confessions reportedly extracted under torture.

Amnesty International considers both men prisoners of conscience, detained and falsely charged to silence them and their environmental group, and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera have been detained since May 1999, when they were arrested by soldiers of the 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, who allegedly forced them under torture to sign confessions. These confessions are the basis of the firearm and drug charges they now face. Both are reportedly still in poor health as a result of the torture they suffered. (See UA 144/99, AMR 41/12/99, 25 June 1999, and follow-up, AMR 41/18/99.)

They are now held at Iguala prison, in Guerrero state, where according to the men's lawyers, the authorities recently separated them from other prisoners and forced them to sleep on the floor of a shower room. The showers were turned on in the night, soaking them.

Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera are members of the *Organización de Campesinos Ecologistas de la Sierra de Petatlán y Coyuca de Catalán*, Peasant Environmentalist Organization of the Mountains of Petatlán and Coyuca de Catalán, which campaigns to stop logging operations threatening forests in the state of Guerrero. In April 2000 Rodolfo Montiel won an internationally renowned environmental award from the US-based Goldman Foundation.

The Attorney General (*Procurador General de la República*) has promised to review the case, in an April meeting with representatives of Amnesty International, the Sierra Club (a US environmental organization) and the Goldman Foundation.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Political violence is endemic in Guerrero. Soldiers are alleged to have killed, raped and tortured members of the state's indigenous community in the course of their operations against armed opposition groups.

For many years Amnesty International has documented the use of torture to extract confessions. Confessions extracted under torture are illegal under Mexico's Federal Law to Prevent and Punish Torture, *Ley Federal para Prevenir y Sancionar la Tortura*, but courts still accept them as admissible evidence.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/e-mails/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, detained and charged solely for their peaceful protests against excessive logging in Guerrero;
- expressing concern that the two men were reportedly forced to sleep in a shower room and deliberately soaked during the night;
- calling for immediate action to guarantee the well-being of both men, whom the Iguala prison authorities have subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic  
Dr. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León  
Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos  
Residencia Oficial de Los Pinos  
Del. Miguel Hidalgo, CP 118500

México D.F., MEXICO

**Telegrams: President, México D.F., México**

**Faxes: + 52 5 515 5729**

**Salutation: Señor Presidente/ Dear Mr President**

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo

Procurador General de la República

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México D.F., CP 06300

MEXICO

**Telegram: Procurador General República, México D.F., México**

**Fax: + 52 5 346 0906**

**Salutation: Señor Procurador General/ Dear Attorney General**

National Commission of Human Rights

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández

Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH)

Periférico Sur 3469

Col. San Jerónimo Lídice, 10200 México D.F. MEXICO

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**E-mail: [cndh@laneta.apc.org](mailto:cndh@laneta.apc.org)**

**Salutation: Dr. Soberanes/ Dear Dr. Soberanes**

Director General of Prison Services of Guerrero State

Lic. José Luis Trujillo Sotelo

Director General de Prevención y Re-adaptación Social del Estado de Guerrero

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**Salutation: Sr Director General / Dear Director General**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental Human Rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C.

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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 11 July 2000.