

UA 173/98 Fear for safety

9 June 1998

MEXICO**Detained:**

Bernardino García Francisco
Javier Angel Severiano
Francisco Cristino Crecencio (15)
Arcadio Alonso Martinez
Eugenio Ambrosio Trinidad
Martin Macario Salazar
Porfirio Hernandez Francisco
Alfonso Oliver Morales
Ivan Garcia Cristiano
Adrian Patriarca Angustiano
Pedro Barrera Daniel

Albino Santos Concepcion
Lazaro Pelaes Castro
Vicente Vazquez Diaz
Aurelio Porfirio Catarino
Bernabé Garcia de Jesus
Pedro Esteban Abril
Serafín Morales Lopez
Julian Ramirez Crecencio
Adelfo Filiberto Concepción
Arnulfo Santiago Hernandez
Efrén Cortes
Erika Zamora Pardo (f)
and 11 others killed

Amnesty International is deeply alarmed at reports that 11 people were killed and at least 23 detained during an exchange of fire between alleged members of *Ejército Popular Revolucionario* (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army, and members of the Mexican army in the indigenous Mixteco community of El Charco in Guerrero State on 7 June 1998.

There are fears that the detainees are being denied legal assistance and communication with their families. Unconfirmed reports state that a number of those held are minors. There is also concern for the safety of the members of the community who witnessed the events.

On 7 June members of the Mexican army entered the El Charco community, supposedly on an anti-drugs raid. According to official reports the soldiers came across a number of armed men in the local school, allegedly EPR members. After the soldiers apparently called on the men to surrender, shots were fired. Eleven of the alleged EPR members were killed while the members of the military sustained no injuries. At least a further 22 people were detained, apparently on charges of *motín* (rioting). Those injured are currently being held in the 18th Zone naval hospital.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A wave of violence has swept through Guerrero State since the Aguas Blancas massacre on 28 June 1995, during which 17 peasants were killed in an ambush staged by Guerrero state police and government officials (see UA 159/95, AMR 41/15/95, 5 July 1995, and follow-ups AMR 41/16/95, 26 July and AMR 41/18/95, 17 August).

EPR, an armed opposition group, made its appearance on the first anniversary of the massacre, on 28 June 1996. Since then an increasing number of security force members have arrived in Guerrero State, sparking continuous reports of threats, intimidation and ill-treatment of people from local communities, mainly indigenous peasants, as the security forces searched their homes and vehicles for weapons and EPR members.

Those detained by security forces during operations to clamp down on alleged EPR members have often been subjected to gross human rights violations, particularly the use of torture to obtain confessions. Several peasant leaders have been wrongly charged with having links with the EPR (see Extra 103/96, AMR 41/34/96, 5 July 1996, and follow-ups AMR 41/50/96, 29 August 1996 and AMR 41/69/96, 4 November 1996). Some peasant leaders in Guerrero have reportedly also been forced into hiding, fearing for their safety given the prevailing climate of human rights violations and impunity.

Members of the EPR are also believed to have committed repeated human rights abuses.

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

- calling for an investigation into the military operation on 7 July 1998 in El Charco, Guerrero State, which led to the killing of 11 people, the wounding of at least seven and the arrest of at least 22 others (name some of them) and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- expressing deep concern for the safety of the people named above (name some) seeking absolute guarantees of the physical safety of all detainees and granting them access to a lawyer, a doctor and their relatives;
- urging that they be promptly charged with recognizable criminal offences or released immediately;
- seeking assurances that all those injured will receive appropriate medical treatment in conditions free from intimidation.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of the State of Guerrero

Lic. Angel Eladio Aguirre Rivero, Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero
Palacio de Gobierno, Plaza Central, Primer Congreso de Anahuac
Chilpancingo 39000, Estado de Guerrero, MEXICO

Telegrams: Gobernador del Estado, Guerrero, México

Faxes: + 52 747 2 8319

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

Attorney of the State of Guerrero

Lic. Servando Alanis Santos, Procurador del Estado de Guerrero
Procuraduría del Estado de Guerrero, Carretera México-Acapulco Km. 6300
Chilpancingo 39000, Estado de Guerrero, MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador del Estado, Guerrero, México

Faxes: +52 747 22328 (if voice, please say "me puede dar tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

Attorney General of the Republic, Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuellar

Señor Procurador General de Justicia de la República
Procuraduría General de Justicia de la República
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Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney General

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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 21 July 1998.