

PUBLIC

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UA 233/08 Ill-treatment/Fear for safety

MEXICO Martha Contreras Estrada (f),
Remigio Hernández Arellano (m),
José Gómez Estrada (m) Deceased

On 9 August, Remigio Hernández Arellano and José Gómez were arrested by police officers in the small town of Benemérito de las Américas, Chiapas state, for drinking alcohol in a park. Before being taken to the local police station, four of the arresting officers hit the men repeatedly in their faces and their stomachs.

After Remigio Hernández Arellano and José Gómez had been held in custody for two hours they were handcuffed and bundled into the back of a police pickup truck and driven to a rural area known as Laguna Oaxaca, 8 kilometres out of town. The police officers removed the men's handcuffs and told them "you've got a minute (to run away) if you want to live" (*ahora si, tienen un minuto si quieren vivir*). The officers followed the two men in their vehicle, shining a spotlight on the men as they ran. The men eventually ran off in different directions: José Gómez ran into a river while Remigio Hernández ran toward the mountains.

Remigio Hernández hid in the mountains overnight and then walked home the next morning. On returning home he called José Gómez's family and told them what had happened. José Gómez never returned.

On 10 August, Martha Contreras Estrada; José Gómez's daughter, attempted to report her father's disappearance to the police and to the local prosecutor but her requests were turned down.

Two days later on the 12 August, José Gómez's body was found by his son-in-law on the bank of the river that he had run into when running away from the officers' vehicle. A preliminary investigation into José Gómez's death was opened by the municipal police after his body was found. At the time of writing the cause of death had not been established.

A peaceful protest demanding a full investigation into José Gómez's death was held in front of the Municipal Palace of Benemérito de Las Américas, on 13 August. Martha Contreras Estrada, one of the leaders of the protest, was threatened shortly after the protest with enforced disappearance and told to keep quiet by a member of the municipal authorities of Benemérito de las Américas.

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

- calling on the authorities to investigate the threat against Martha Contreras Estrada and to provide protection measures that will guarantee her safety;
- urging the authorities to carry out a prompt and impartial investigation into the death of José Gómez Estrada and for the findings to be made public;
- calling on the authorities to order an investigation into the alleged ill-treatment of Remigio Hernández Arellano and José Gómez Estrada on 9 August by the municipal police of Benemérito de las Américas and bring those responsible to justice;

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Chiapas

Lic. Juan José Sabines Guerrero
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
Palacio de Gobierno, 1º piso, Col. Centro,
C.29000, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México

Fax: +52 961 618 8050. You will then be asked for an extension number, type in: 21122

Email: juansabines@chiapas.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Minister of Justice of Chiapas state

Lic. Amador Rodríguez Lozano
Ministro de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas
Libramiento Norte s/n, tercer nivel
Col. Infonavit "El Rosario", CP 29049
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México

Fax: + 52 961 61 657 24

Email: arodriguez@mje.chiapas.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Minister/ Señor Ministro

Human Rights Commission of Chiapas

Lic. Juan Carlos Moreno Guillen
Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Chiapas
Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Chiapas
Boulevard Comitán 143, Col. Moctezuma
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, ChiapasMéxico

Fax: +52 961 639 6615

Email: jmoreno@congresochiapas.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear President/ Señor Presidente

COPIES TO:

Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, A.C.
Calle Brasil 14, Barrio Mexicanos, 29240 San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México

Email: accionurgente@frayba.org.mx

And 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 7 October 2008.