

PUBLIC

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UA 301/98

Fear for safety / Death threats

27 November 1998

**MEXICO** Abel Barrera Hernández, president of the Centre for Human Rights of Tlachinollan

**Other members of the Centre of Human Rights of Tlachinollan**

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Abel Barrera Hernández, president of the '*Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan*', Centre for Human Rights of Tlachinollan, has recently been the target of a number of death threats. This has raised fears for both his safety and the safety of other members of the organization.

On 22 November 1998, Abel Barrera's wife answered a call at their home, in Tlapa, State of Guerrero, in which a recorded message said that if members of the Centre for Human Rights of Tlachinollan did not stop their activities they would be harmed.

Two weeks earlier an employee at Abel Barrera's private office was told that if Abel Barrera "*no se siguiera metiendo con los delincuentes*", "did not stop defending these criminals", he would be killed.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Abel Barrera Hernández is a prominent human rights defender in the State of Guerrero where he is President of the Guerrero-based Centre for Human Rights -- a non-governmental organization which has actively campaigned over the past four years against widespread human rights abuses in the state. He is also a leading member of the coordinating group of the '*Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos "Todos los Derechos para Todos"*', National Network of non-governmental Human Rights Organizations "Full Rights for All", an umbrella group of over forty human rights organizations working in Mexico.

The Centre for Human Rights are currently involved in investigations into the deaths of 11 people in June this year in an incident involving alleged members of *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente* (ERPI), Insurgent People's Revolutionary Army, and members of the Mexican army in the indigenous Mixteco community of El Charco, Guerrero State (see UA 173/98 AMR 41/29/98, 9 June 1998 and follow-up AMR 41/35/98 4 August 1998).

The threats directed at Abel Barrera and other human rights defenders in the state of Guerrero occur against a background of mounting violence by the military which dates back to the Aguas Blancas massacre in June 1995 in which 17 peasants were killed in an ambush 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).

Threats against other human rights activists in the region have also occurred, such as the recent case of Hilda Navarette, a human rights defender active also in Guerrero State, who has been intimidated by members of the Mexican Armed Forces (see UA 273/98, AI Index: AMR 41/38/98 20 October 1998).

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

- requesting that adequate measures be taken to guarantee the physical safety of Abel Barrera Hernández and all members of the '*Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan*';
- calling for prompt and thorough investigations into the threats against Abel Barrera Hernández, that the findings be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- supporting the work of human rights defenders, and to this end citing the recent recommendation of the United Nations' Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities which calls for '*...promoting the action of human rights defenders and guaranteeing their safety*';
- reminding the government of Mexico of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3, 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person'.

**APPEALS TO:**Minister of the Interior

Lic. Francisco Labastida Ochoa  
 Secretario de Gobernación  
 Secretaría de Gobernación  
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso  
 Col. Juárez C.P.  
 06699 México D.F.

MEXICO

**Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernación, Mexico D.F., Mexico****Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350****Salutation: Sr Secretario / Dear Minister**Governor of Guerrero State

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 28319****Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**Attorney General of Guerrero State

Lic. Servando Alanis Santos  
 Procurador 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****Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear State Attorney****COPIES TO:**Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan, A.C

Abel Barrera Hernández  
 Hidalgo #88-A, Col. Centro  
 Tlapa de Comonfort  
 Guerrero CP 41304  
 MEXICO

Congressional Human Rights Commission

Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Congreso,  
Edificio del Congreso de la Nación,  
Avenida del Congreso,  
Edificio A, 2 nivel,  
Mexico D.F., MEXICO

**Faxes: + 52 554 23247**

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 8 January 1998.

**" Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. "**

*Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

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