

EXTERNAL

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Fear for Safety/Torture

17 September 1997

MEXICORené SOLORIO, journalist

Ernesto MADRID, journalist

Gerardo SEGURA, journalist

High-Profile News Reporters Tortured in Mexico City

Three high-profile Mexico City news reporters have been abducted, tortured and threatened with death.

On the night of 13 September, armed men abducted René Solorio, news reporter for *TV Azteca*, one of Mexico's leading television channels. The men drove Solorio around while they tortured him. On several occasions, Solorio was dragged out of the car, forced to kneel down, while gun shots were fired over his head in a mock execution style. Before his release on 13 September, he was threatened with death if he continued reporting on the corruption and human rights violations carried out by members of the *Policía de Seguridad Pública* and *Policía Judicial del Distrito Federal*, Federal District's Public Security and the Judicial Police.

Ernesto Madrid, also a reporter for *TV Azteca*, went through a similar ordeal on the night of 13 September. A group of policemen abducted and tortured him before threatening him on the same lines as his colleague. He was released in the early hours of 14 September. Ernesto Madrid had also been covering police involvement in corruption and human rights violations.

Gerardo Segura, news reporter of *TV Azteca*, suffered the same fate on 13 September, and was also threatened with death.

The three journalists were also told to tell their news-director to stop broadcasting information about police corruption and human rights violations. To date, no one has been brought to justice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The police forces in Mexico City are presently under military command, allegedly to improve their efficiency. They have been increasingly accused of perpetrating human rights violations while purporting to combat crime. There have also been growing accusations that the police itself is involved in organized crime, as acknowledged last August by the governmental Federal District's Human Rights Commission.

On 8 September, Juan Carlos Romero Peralta (17), Daniel Colín Enciso and Miguel Angel Leal Alonso were abducted, together with three other unidentified individuals, in front of several witnesses, including relatives, by members of a special unit of the Federal District's Public Security Police called *Jaguares*. Their tortured bodies were discovered on 9 September. The other individuals remain "disappeared". René Solorio and Ernesto Madrid were investigating this case, as well as other abuses by the police.

Amnesty International has documented an alarming increase in threats, attacks and execution of journalists in Mexico. The organization fears that the prevailing climate of human rights violations against journalists may lead to a dangerous self-imposed censorship in a country which otherwise hails itself

as respectful of the freedom of press. Unless the Mexican Government adopts urgent measures to effectively protect all journalists, and stops the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of such crimes, the country will be seriously failing its obligations and commitments towards freedom of the press and full respect of human rights.

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

- expressing alarm about the abductions, torture and death threats suffered by René Osorio, Ernesto Madrid and Gerardo Segura between 12 and 13 September in Mexico City, by men believed to be members of the city's police, and calling for a full and prompt investigation bringing all those responsible to justice;

- expressing concern that the above-mentioned journalists appear to have been targeted for their reporting on corruption and gross human rights violations by the Federal District's police, including the extrajudicial execution of at least three people on 8 September, and urgently calling on the government to ensure their full protection;

- conveying Amnesty International's concern about the growing pattern of threats, attacks and gross human rights violations suffered by journalists in Mexico, and calling for immediate and effective measures to stop this trend, politely requesting to be kept informed about the measures adopted.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León

Presidente de la República

Palacio Nacional, 06067 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Presidente Zedillo, México D.F., México

Faxes: (+ 52 5) 515 1794 / 542 1648 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

COPIES TO:

1) Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal

Av. Chapultepec 49

Col. Centro

México D.F.

Fax: + 52 5 578 25 78

2) Centro de Derechos Humanos

"Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C.

Puebla No. 153

Col. Roma, 06700

México D.F. MEXICO

Fax: + 52 5 208 75 47

3) Fraternidad de Periodistas

Avenida Juárez 88

Despacho 311

Mexico D.F., MEXICO

Fax: + 52 5 671 9484

4) Rapporteurs Sans Frontiers (international NGO)

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Fax: + 33 1 45231151

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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 29 October 1997.