

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Mexico: Make public details of the detainees and investigate the abuses in Oaxaca**

Amnesty International is concerned about the fate of individuals arrested in Oaxaca since 29 October 2006. Non-governmental human rights organizations in Oaxaca have been trying to obtain information about the 80 or more people, including several minors, arrested during this period. However, neither federal nor state authorities have officially published the names of all those in custody.

The absence of official information about the detainees, their physical condition and any charges they face may mean that they are being held incommunicado and subjected to ill-treatment, both of which constitute serious human rights violations. Over the past five months Amnesty International has received reports that several demonstrators held by the state authorities have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment and incommunicado detention.

Amnesty International urges the authorities to publish the names of the individuals in detention together with any charges they may be facing. They should also demonstrate that those concerned have had access to relatives, medical attention and a defence lawyer of their choice and that they have been brought before a judge. It is essential for the authorities to allow representatives of civil society, including human rights defenders in Oaxaca, to have access to detention centres to verify the situation of detainees.

The National Human Rights Commission and the Oaxaca State Human Rights Commission should work together and with civil society to ensure that the rights of the detainees are respected.

The authorities should also make public any information they have about people, including members of the security forces, who have died or been injured in the context of the conflict.

Amnesty International is dismayed at the 17 deaths reported since the start of the conflict five months ago, several of them apparently the victims of individuals or armed groups said to have links with the governing party in the state. The organization urges that an impartial federal investigation of these crimes be carried out. It also condemns the apparent excessive use of force by members of the municipal, state and federal police in the operations conducted against demonstrators and stresses the need to carry out impartial investigations into any human rights violations.

Amnesty International also condemns the violence used against the state and federal police by some groups within the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (Asamblea Popular del Pueblo de Oaxaca - APPO) and calls on demonstrators to respect the rule of law during their protests.

**Background**

On 29 October 2006 over 4000 members of the Federal Preventive Police (Policía Federal Preventiva - PFP) went into the centre of the city of Oaxaca to evict thousands of striking school teachers and APPO supporters who had been occupying the city for several months demanding the resignation of the state governor, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz.

On 2 November further confrontations took place during which APPO supporters and police clashed at entrances to the Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca, which is still being occupied by APPO supporters. On 7 November there was another demonstration against the state governor, also calling for the PFP to be withdrawn from Oaxaca.

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