

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/04/98

UA 33/98

Fear for safety

30 January 1998

MEXICO At least 120 Tzotzil Indians in the municipality of Chenalhó, Chiapas State

At least 120 Tzotzil Indians from the community of Canolal, municipality of Chenalhó, Chiapas State, have fled their homes as a result of continued harassment, including death threats, by members of armed paramilitary groups for their unwillingness to support the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), Institutional Revolutionary Party, the ruling party.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

More than 8,000 indigenous people in Chenalhó have been displaced in recent months due to the increasingly violent activities of paramilitary groups in the region. On 22 December 1997, 45 displaced Tzotzil Indians, including 21 women and 15 children, were massacred in Acteal, Chenalhó, by paramilitary groups (see UA 409/97, AMR 41/117/97, 23 December 1997 and follow-ups AMR 41/01/97, 2 January 1998; AMR 41/03/98, 14 January 1998).

Although 51 people have been charged with participating in the massacre, including the then mayor of Chenalhó, the judicial authorities have so far failed to investigate the activities of paramilitary groups operating in the region.

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

- urging that immediate measures be taken to guarantee the safe return of 120 Tzotzil Indians to the community of Canolal, municipality of Chenalhó, Chiapas State;
- calling for a prompt and immediate investigation into reports of threats and intimidation by paramilitary groups against Tzotzil Indians in the municipality of Chenalhó;
- expressing deep alarm at the continuing level of human rights violations in the municipality of Chenalhó;
- calling on the judicial authorities to investigate reports of violent threats and intimidation by members of paramilitary groups operating in northern Chiapas.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Interior

Lic. Francisco Labastida Ochoa
Secretario de Gobernación
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucarelli 99, 1er piso,
Col Juárez, 06699 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México DF, México

Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350

Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister

2) Governor of the State of Chiapas

Lic. Roberto Albores Guillén
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
Palacio de Gobierno
Av. Central y Primera Oriente
Colonia Centro, 29009 Tuxtla Gutiérrez

Estado de Chiapas, MEXICO

Telegrams: Gobernador Albores Guillén, Chiapas, México

Faxes: + 52 961 20917 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

3) Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuéllar

Procurador General de la República

Procuraduría General de la República

Paseo de la Reforma y Violeta

Col. Guerrero, 06300 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General, Mexico, Mexico

Faxes: + 52 5 626 4419

Salutation: Sr. Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organizations

Comisión de Derechos Humanos "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas"

Apartado postal 178

San Cristóbal de las Casas

29250 Chiapas

MEXICO

Centro de Derechos Humanos

"Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C.

Puebla No. 153

Col. Roma, 06700

México D.F. MEXICO

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 17 March 1988.