

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/06/96

UA 37/96

Fear for safety

15 February 1996

MEXICO Paula Galeana Balanzar, 28 (f)
Rocío Mesino Mesino, 21, leader of the OCSS (f)
Alba Elia Hurtado (f)

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at reports that the three women named above have been threatened, attacked and harassed by individuals believed to be linked to the government of Rubén Figueroa Alcocer, governor of the state of Guerrero.

On 8 February 1996, Paula Galeana Balanzar, widow of Amado Sánchez, one of 17 peasants massacred by state security forces on 28 June 1995 in Aguas Blancas, state of Guerrero, was reportedly visited at her home in the village of Paso Real by three men claiming to belong to the state office for internal affairs (*dirección de gobernación de Guerrero*). The three men took photographs of Paula Galeana Balanzar and told her she would be "sorry because she was making things more difficult" [for them] ("*se va a arrepentir porque está haciendo más difíciles las cosas*"). Paula Galeana Balanzar has been outspoken about the state government's alleged failure to fulfil their promises to build new homes and provide financial assistance to the relatives of the victims of the massacre.

On 7 February, Rocío Mesino Mesino, leader of the *Organización Campesina de la Sierra del Sur*, OCSS, Southern Sierra Peasant Organization, was followed in the streets of Acapulco, Guerrero, by three unidentified men in a car who attempted to kidnap her. Rocío Mesino told an Amnesty International delegation that visited Guerrero in November 1995 that she had received numerous death threats because of her activism in the OCSS and their public denunciation of the role of the state in the June 1995 massacre.

Alba Elia Hurtado, a witness to the June 1995 massacre, was reportedly assaulted in a bus near Atoyac de Álvarez, Guerrero, on 28 January 1996, when three unidentified men tried to force her off the bus. The bus driver and other passengers helped her fend off the attackers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 28 June 1995, Guerrero state security forces ambushed and killed 17 peasants and wounded 19 others, near the place known as *Aguas Blancas*. The victims were among a large number of unarmed peasants, including women and children, who were travelling in lorries to Atoyac de Álvarez to participate in a demonstration to demand the release of Gilberto Romero Vásquez, a peasant activist who had "disappeared" in Atoyac on 24 May 1995. Many of the victims belonged to the OCSS. (See UA 159/95, AMR 41/15/95, 5 July 1995; and follow-ups AMR 41/16/95, 26 July 1995 and AMR 41/18/95, 17 August 1995).

An investigation, opened into the case following the visit by Amnesty International and other national non-governmental human rights organizations to the area in November 1995, continues.

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

- expressing concern at the recent threats and harassment against the three women named above, apparently by members of the Guerrero security forces, in

the context of the women's active denunciation of the role of the state authorities in the massacre of 28 June 1995 in Aguas Blancas;

- requesting that a prompt and impartial investigation be opened into these threats and harassment and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to guarantee the physical safety of these women, the relatives of the massacred peasants and other threatened members of the OCSS;
- requesting to be kept informed of any relevant development in this case.

APPEALS TO:

1) 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

Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme

Faxes: + 52 5 271 1764

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of the Interior

Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor
Secretario de la Gobernación
Secretaría de la Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er piso
Col. Juárez
06699 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México D.F., México

Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350/7380 592 0584

Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister

3) Governor of the state of Guerrero

Lic. Ruben Figueroa Alcocer
Gobernador del estado de Guerrero
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Primer Congreso de Anahuac
39000 Chilpancingo
Guerrero, Mexico

Telegrams: Gobernador Guerrero, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico

Faxes: + 52 747 23072 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor
La Jornada
Balderas 68
06050 México D.F., MEXICO

2) Human rights organization

Sres.
Comisión Mexicana de Defensa
y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
Pitágoras No. 736, 3er piso
Colonia Narvarte

03020 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 7 April 1996.