

UA 111/99

Fear for

MEXICO **Francisca Santos Pablo (f), 33**
 Victoriana Vázquez Sánchez (f), 50
 Community of Barrio Nuevo San José

Killed: **Antonio Mendoza Olivero, 12**
 Evaristo Albino Téllez, 27

Amnesty International is calling on the Mexican authorities to protect the entire Mixteca indigenous community of Barrio Nuevo San José, in Guerrero state, after members of the Mexican armed forces apparently summarily killed two men and raped two women from the community.

According to reports on 21 April 1999, Evaristo Albino Téllez and Antonio Mendoza Olivero left Barrio Nuevo San José, part of the autonomous municipality of Rancho Nuevo Democracia, to harvest their crops. As they had not returned home the following day, Francisca Santos Pablo, Evaristo's sister in law, and Victoriana Vázquez Sánchez, Antonio's grandmother, went to look for them. Near their plots of land the women found a military. The women tried to run away, but report that the soldiers caught and raped them.

Both women managed to return to Barrio Nuevo San José, and told community leaders what had happened. Because they feared further attacks, members of the community were only able to visit the site of the camp on 28 April 1999, once the soldiers had left. They apparently found bloodstained military gloves and sandals that belonged to either Antonio or Evaristo.

On 27 April, members of the community attempted to report what had happened to both the State and National Commissions of Human Rights. The State Commission warned them not to pursue the case, which they interpreted as a threat. For two days a lower court judge refused to accept their request to obtain the equivalent of a writ of *habeas corpus*, demanding that both Antonio and Evaristo be presented before the authorities.

On 7 May, a full 17 days after they had last been seen, the State Commission for Human Rights apparently informed Evaristo and Antonio's relatives that they had been killed by soldiers, who claim the two attacked them with guns. The Public Prosecutor's Office in Ometepec, Guerrero, where the army took the bodies, knew of the deaths long before the families and community members were told.

When the families went to the *Servicio Médico Forense (SEMFO)*, Forensic Medical Service, in Acapulco, Guerrero to retrieve the bodies, they found that Antonio had apparently died of blood loss from a single bullet wound to the leg.

Amnesty International has received reports of increased troop movements near Barrio Nuevo San José since 8 May, increasing fears for the safety of the community and others living in the region.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Reports of violence by the Mexican security forces in Guerrero, including attacks on Mixteca activists campaigning for autonomy, date back to the Aguas Blancas massacre of June 1995, when 17 peasants were killed in an ambush set by state police and government officials. In a 1998 report the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights concluded that "the emergence of new dissident armed

groups of various types has led not only to a resumption of measures of control by the security forces but also to the indiscriminate repression of social organizations and leaders".

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

- asking the authorities to take adequate measures to guarantee the safety of Francisca Santos Pablo, Victoriana Vázquez Sánchez and all the Mixteca indigenous community of Barrio Nuevo San José;
- calling on the Governor of Guerrero to open an independent and thorough investigation into the involvement of members of the armed forces in these events, with those under investigation suspended from duty, all results made public and those found responsible prosecuted in a **civil** court;
- calling on the authorities to clarify any irregularities in due process that occurred surrounding the notification, investigation and forensic procedures in this case;
- reminding the Mexican authorities that in August 1998 the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities called on them to combat "the impunity of perpetrators of serious human rights violations, especially those suffered by numerous members of the indigenous populations".

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Guerrero State

Lic. René Juárez Cisneros

Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero

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Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/ Dear Governor

Attorney General of Guerrero State

Lic. Fransico Diaz Garcia

Procurador del Estado de Guerrero

Carretera México-Acapulco Km. 6300

Chilpancingo 39000

Estado de Guerrero

MEXICO

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Salutation: Sr. Procurador/ Dear State Attorney

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Lic. Enrique Cervantes Aguirre

Secretario de la Defensa Nacional

Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional

Blvd. Manuel Vila Camacho y

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Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Mr Secretary

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuellar

Señor Procurador General de Justicia de la República
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Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney

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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 28 June 1999.