

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/23/98

24 April 1998

UA 132/98 Fear for safety / Fear of torture or ill-treatment

MEXICO Leandro Marcial Montor } leaders of CIPO peasant rights  
Catarino Torres Pereda } organisation

Raul Gatica } peasant activists  
Alejandro Cruz López }  
and at least 30 other CIPO members, names unknown

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On 18 April 1998, over 30 members and supporters of the *Consejo Indígena y Popular de Oaxaca* (CIPO), Indigenous and Popular Council of Oaxaca, were arrested while staging peaceful public protests at the recent detention of Leandro Marcial Montor and Catarino Torres Pereda, two CIPO leaders. All are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

The CIPO members and supporters' peaceful occupation of judicial buildings in Tuxtepec and Putla de Guerrero, two towns in Oaxaca State, on 17 April, were violently broken up by agents of the state judicial police force on the following day. At least two people were reportedly killed during the break-up and more than 100 people, including indigenous women and children, were beaten and detained. The majority have since been released, but at least 30 others remain in detention, including Raul Gatica and Alejandro Cruz López.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded a steady increase in the number of human rights violations, including "disappearance", extrajudicial execution and torture, carried out by members of the security forces in Oaxaca State over the past two years. Targets have frequently included activists and supporters of peasant and indigenous groups as well as members of the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD), Party of the Democratic Revolution, the leading political party in opposition.

This increase has occurred in the context of counter-insurgency operations, by both the armed forces and the state judicial police force, against the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario* (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army. The EPR is an armed opposition group which emerged in July 1996 and which is alleged to operate mainly in the southern states of Oaxaca and Guerrero.

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

- urging that measures to be taken to guarantee the safety of more than 30 COPI members detained on and before 18 April 1998, including Leandro Marcial Montor and Catarino Torres Pereda;
- requesting that those detained be given access to lawyers, doctors and relatives, and that they be released if no charges are brought against them;
- asking to be kept informed of judicial proceedings against those who remain in detention;
- calling for a prompt and thorough investigation into allegations that state judicial police involved in the break-up of the occupations of judicial buildings in Tuxtepec and Putla de Guerrero, Oaxaca State, on 18 April 1998, resulted in the death of at least two protestors and the ill-treatment of others.

#### APPEALS TO:

Governor of the State of Oaxaca  
Lic. Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano

Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Bustamente s/n  
Oaxaca 68000, Estado de Oaxaca  
MEXICO

**Telegrams: Gobernador del Estado, Oaxaca, México**  
**Faxes: + 52 951 550 77**  
**Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Governor**

Attorney of the State of Oaxaca  
Lic. Roberto Pedro Martínez Ortiz  
Procurador del Estado de Oaxaca  
Avenida Luis Echeverría  
La Experimental  
San Antonio de la Cal  
Oaxaca 71236, Estado de Oaxaca  
MEXICO

**Telegrams: Procurador del Estado, Oaxaca, México**  
**Faxes: + 52 951 1 55 19**  
**Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney**

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights organisation  
Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos  
Avenida Azcapotzalco N. 275, Col. Claveria  
02090 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 5 June 1998.