

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/46/97

UA 182/97

Fear for safety

19 June 1997

MEXICO

Nancy (f) aged 17 , Mónica (f) aged 16, Rebeca (f) aged 14,
Acapulco (presumed nickname) aged 16, Gari aged
13 and other street children - minors

Amnesty International fears that the five street children named above may face harassment, attacks or arrest for having reported the rape and sexual assault of two of the group to the authorities.

At midnight on 28 May 1997, Nancy was detained near the Northern Bus Station (*Central Camionera del Norte*) in Mexico City by two members of the *Policía Preventiva*, Preventative Police, in a police patrol vehicle. According to reports she was subsequently raped and beaten inside the vehicle. The following day she reported what had happened to the governmental *Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal*, CDHDF, Federal District Human Rights Commission.

At 4 a.m. on 30 May at the Northern Bus Station, members of the police arrested two girls and two boys, Rebeca, Mónica, Acapulco (presumed nickname) and Gari. The adolescents were later released but during the period of their detention they were reportedly beaten and Rebeca was sexually assaulted.

On 9 June, helped by the *Brigada Pro Derechos Humanos Observadores por la Paz*, Brigade of Human Rights Observers for Peace, a non governmental organization which works with street children in Mexico city, a number of the children who live around the Northern Bus Station, including Rebeca, Nancy, Monica and Gari went to the CDHDF to make formal complaints against members of the police involved.

Later the same day nine street children who live in the vicinity of the Northern Bus Station were arbitrarily arrested by police and held incommunicado before being released that night. The following day two friends of Nancy, also street children, were arrested by the police who accused them of theft. They are still in detention. Amnesty International believes these incidents were intended to intimidate Nancy.

Since the children lodged their complaints, members of the private security force, employed by the Northern Bus Station and known as "Los Caninos" (the dogs), have reportedly threatened the children should they attempt to testify against the police. This private security force has itself been repeatedly accused of attacking street children.

Amnesty International fears that the group of children, particularly Nancy and Rebeca, who live around the Northern Bus Station are at risk of serious human rights abuses as a direct consequence of reporting the rape and sexual assault to the authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There are thought to be as many as 18,000 children living on the streets of Mexico City. In recent months there have been reports of increasing human rights violations against street children at the hands of security forces.

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

- expressing grave concern at the reported rape and sexual assault of the street children Nancy and Rebeca, and urging that steps be taken to guarantee their safety and the safety of other street children living around the Northern Bus Station in Mexico City;
- calling for a prompt and thorough investigation into the rape and sexual assault of the two female street children, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor

Secretario de Gobernación

Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucarelli 99, 1er piso, Col Juárez, 06699 México DF, MEXICO

Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350 / +52 5 535 99 52

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernacion, Mexico, Mexico

Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuéllar

Procurador General de la República

Procuraduría General de la República

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Telegrams: Procurador Madrazo, México D.F., México

Faxes: +52 5 626 4419

Salutation: Sr. Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

President of the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District.

Dr. Luis de la Barrera Solórzano

Presidente de la Comisión de los Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal

Comisión de los Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal

Chapultepec 49,

Col. Centro, México D.F. MEXICO

Telegrams: Dr. De la Barrera, Comisión de los Derechos Humanos del D.F.

Fax: +52 5 578 2578

**Salutation: Sr. Presidente de la Comisión de los Derechos Humanos del D.F./
Dear Sir**

COPIES TO:

Newspaper

Sr. Editor

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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 31 July 1997.