

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

13 January 2003

MEXICO

Ernesto Ledesma Arronte (m), director of *Centro de Análisis Político e Investigaciones Sociales y Económicas (CAPISE)* Centre for Political Analysis and Social and Economic Research

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Ernesto Ledesma Arronte, director and founder member of the human rights organization *Centro de Análisis Político e Investigaciones Sociales y Económicas (CAPISE)* Centre for Political Analysis and Social and Economic Research in the state of Chiapas. He is reportedly being intimidated and has received a threatening phone call at his home.

On 1 January 2003, Ernesto Ledesma Arronte was at his home in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas state, celebrating the New Year with his family when he received a phone call from an unidentified individual. His brother answered the phone and a voice said "we are going to kill you son of a bitch" (*te vamos a matar hijo de puta*) and hung up. The threatening phone call is believed to have been intended for Ernesto Ledesma Arronte. Two days later, at 10am when he arrived at CAPISE's office in San Cristobal de las Casas, he saw that the door, which he had locked the previous night, was left half opened. Nobody from the human rights organisation was there and reportedly nothing was stolen from the office indicating that the motive for the break in was not robbery but a further act of intimidation.

Two months prior to this incident, on 18 November 2002, on arriving home at night Ernesto Ledesma Arronte found that the gas had been left on the stove and the kitchen window was closed. There were no signs of a forced entry however he had reportedly left home without having turned the stove on and had left the window open. These acts of intimidation are reportedly linked to his work with CAPISE, a non-governmental organization (NGO). The group has been active in denouncing human rights violations against indigenous communities in the state of Chiapas and reportedly those committed by armed forces and paramilitary groups.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the threats and attacks against human rights defenders, and fears that this represents a deliberate attempt to stop them from carrying out their legitimate work in Mexico. Those involved in protecting human rights have often been the target of threats and harassment. Their personal safety is often put in danger and those responsible are rarely brought to justice. Human rights defenders in Chiapas have reportedly received death threats and are continuing to be harassed. Since the President of the Human Rights State Commission, Pedro Raúl López took office in June 2001, he has been threatened and harassed. Last year, Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action expressing concern for his safety see UA 18/02 (AMR 41/004/2002, 17 January 2002) and a further update (AMR 41/033/2002, 17 October 2002).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of human rights defender Ernesto Ledesma Arronte;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Ernesto Ledesma Arronte and his family;
- urging the authorities to carry out a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the acts of intimidation against Ernesto Ledesma Arronte, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General of Chiapas

Mariano Herrán Salvatti
Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas
Libramiento Norte s/n
Infonavit el Rosario
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
México

Telegram: Procurador, Chiapas, México
Fax: (+ 52) 961 616 57 24
Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Señor Procurador

Governor of Chiapas

Pablo Salazar Mendiguchia
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
Palacio de Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas
Av. Central y Primera Oriente
Colonia Centro, C.P. 29009
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
México

Telegram: Gobernador, Chiapas, México
Fax: (+ 52) 961 612 09 17
Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor Gobernador

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Santiago Creel
Secretario de Gobernación
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P.06600
MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernacion, Mexico D.F., Mexico
Fax: + 52 5 703 2171 / 546 5350
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Centro de Análisis Político e Investigaciones Sociales y Económicas (CAPISE)

Av. Hidalgo # 1. int. 16
San Cristóbal de las Casas,
Chiapas CP 29200
México

Centro de Derechos Humanos

"Fray Bartolome de las Casas"

Calle Cuauhtémoc 12
Colonia Centro Histórico
San Cristóbal de las Casas
Chiapas CP 29200
México

Human Rights Commission of Chiapas

Lic. Pedro Raul López Hernández

Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de
Derechos Humanos de Chiapas (CEDH)
Libramiento Sur Poniente 212
29060, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas.
México

Fax: (+52) 961 602 5609 (if someone answers, please say 'me da tono de fax, por
favour')

Salutation: Dear President of the CEDH / Señor Presidente de la CEDH

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 24 February 2003.