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UA 270/99 Intimidation / Fear for safety 8 October 1999

MEXICO Jorge Luis Sierra (Opposition party advisor)

Amnesty International fears for the safety of Jorge Luis Sierra, a researcher on Mexican defence and national security issues and advisor to the opposition *Grupo Parlamentario del Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD), Parliamentary Group of the Democratic Revolution Party, after he received a threatening e-mail message on 28 September 1999.

In the message Jorge he was told to desist from researching issues related to the Mexican army, and that unless he did so, he could face reprisals.

This follows the recent publication of a pamphlet (*folleto*) about the armed forces which was co-authored by Jorge Sierra. The pamphlet, entitled "The armed forces at the end of the millennium. The military in the present" ("*Las fuerzas armadas a fin de milenio. Los militares en la actual coyuntura*") apparently looks at the increasing militarization of Mexican society, the support received by the military from abroad, the existence of so-called paramilitary groups, and the deployment of counter-insurgency operations in Chiapas state.

Some 30 advisors to the PRD Parliamentary Group have denounced the threat in the national paper *La Jornada*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has long documented attacks against members of the PRD, especially in the southern states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca where they have been accused of being supporters or sympathisers of armed opposition groups active in the region. According to information received by the organization, 215 members of the PRD have been killed between 1988 and 1999 in Guerrero alone.

In September this year attacks were reported against PRD candidates standing for congressional and mayoral elections. On 4 September Marco Antonio López García, a PRD candidate standing in the Acapulco council elections, was shot and wounded as he got into a mini-bus with his family. His son was shot dead in the same attack.

Over the years there have been hundreds of reports of politically-related acts of intimidation, including death threats, some of which have led to the deaths of those targeted. Victims include journalists, members of opposition political parties and the ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), Institutional Revolutionary Party, trade unionists, students, community activists and human rights defenders.

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

- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Jorge Luis Sierra, an advisor to the parliamentary group of the PRD, who received a threatening e-mail message on 28 September 1999;
- urging that a prompt and independent investigation be opened into the threat against him, that the findings be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuellar

Señor Procurador General de Justicia de la República

Procuraduría General de Justicia de la República

Paseo de la Reforma y Violeta, Col. Guerrero

06300 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams:Procuraduría, México DF, México

Faxes:+ 52 5 626 4419

Salutation:Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney

Minister of Defence

Lic. Enrique Cervantes Aguirre

Secretario de la Defensa Nacional

Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional

Bld. Manuel Vila Camacho y

Avda. Industria Militar

Col. Lomas de Sotelo

11640 México D.F.

MEXICO

Faxes:+ 52 5 557 8963

Salutation:Señor Secretario / Dear Mr Secretary

National Commission of Human Rights

Licda. Mireille Roccatti Velazquez

Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH)

Periférico Sur 3469

Col. San Jerónimo Lídice,10200 México D.F. MEXICO

Faxes: + 52 5 681 7199

e-mails: cndh@laneta.apc.org

Salutation:Senores / Dear sirs

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos

Serapio Rendón No. 57-B, planta baja

Col. San Rafael,

06470, 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 19 November 1999.