

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/06/97

7 February 1997

Further information (4) on EXTRA 91/96 (AMR 41/26/96, 11 June 1996) and follow-ups AMR 41/48/96, 16 August; AMR 41/60/96, 8 October 1996; AMR 41/75/96, 18 November - Ill-treatment / Fear for safety and new concern: Fear of torture

MEXICO Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, peasant activist

On 3 February 1997, Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, leader of the *Movimiento 6 de Marzo*, 6 March Movement, a peasant organization in the State of Guerrero, was arrested by members of the *Policía Judicial Federal* (PJF), Federal Judicial Police in Acapulco, Guerrero. Amnesty International fears that he may be tortured or ill-treated in custody. He had previously been arrested in relation to the occupation of the town hall in San Marcos on 3 October 1996. He was released on bail in November 1996.

Bertoldo Martínez Cruz was arrested while taking part in a meeting in front of the criminal courts of Acapulco demanding the release of Benigno Guzmán Martínez, a political prisoner currently being held in prison in Acapulco, (see UA 30/97 AMR 41/03/97, 28 January 1997). Benigno Guzmán Martínez is the leader of the *Organización Campesina de la Sierra del Sur* (OCSS), Southern Sierra Peasant Organisation.

Bertoldo Martínez Cruz was arrested on the grounds that there were two outstanding charges of car theft against him dating from 1996. These charges are believed to have been politically motivated.

Bertoldo Martínez Cruz is also the secretary of the Human Rights Committee of the opposition *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD), Party of the Democratic Revolution, and a member of the *Union de Organizaciones de la Sierra del Sur* (UOSS), Southern Sierra Union Organization, a network of peasant organizations in Guerrero state.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since July 1996 peasant organizations, particularly those affiliated to the UOSS, have been accused by the authorities of having links with the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario* (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army, an armed opposition group. Such links have been denied by both the EPR and the peasant groups. Several of those detained in mid 1996 were reportedly tortured by the security forces to extract confessions (see EXTRA 103/96, AMR 41/34/96, 5 July 1996 and follow-ups AMR 41/37/96, 18 July 1996; AMR 41/50/96, 29 August 1996; AMR 41/69/96, 4 November 1996).

Bertoldo Martínez Cruz took part in peaceful demonstrations in 1996 over fertilizer distribution which resulted in the occupation of the town hall of San Marcos in June 1996. Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, interviewed by an Amnesty International delegation visiting the town hall, confirmed that demonstrators had been shot at, and a number of them kicked and beaten up by members of the local police force and by *guardias blancas*, "white guards" (gunmen hired by the local authorities). These events were confirmed by two forensic doctors in the AI delegation who examined the wounded and took testimonies.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Bertoldo Martínez Cruz, arrested on apparently politically motivated charges because of his role in the *Movimiento 6 de marzo* and the PRD;
- calling for his immediate release and for the charges and arrest warrant against him to be withdrawn if he is being detained solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association;
- seeking assurances that he is not being subjected to ill-treatment or torture while in prison
- urging that he be granted access to his family and to a lawyer of his choice;
- calling for immediate measures to ensure the safety of all members of the *Movimiento 6 de marzo* and of the UOSS in the Guerrero state.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Interior

Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor
Secretario de Gobernación
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucarelli 99, 1er piso,
Col Juarez, 06699 México DF, MÉXICO

Telegrams: Secretario de Gobernación, México DF, México

Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350

Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister

2) Attorney General of the State of Guerrero

Lic. Antonio Hernández Díaz
Procurador del Estado de Guerrero
Carretera Nacional México-Acapulco Km. 6.300
CP 39.000, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, MEXICO.

Telegrams: Sr. Procurador, Guerrero, México

Faxes: + 52 747 223 28 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Procurador/ Dear Attorney

3) Interim Governor of the State of Guerrero

Ángel Heladio Aguirre Rivero
Gobernador Interino del Estado de Guerrero
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Primer Congreso de Anahuac
39000 Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico

Telegrams: Gobernador Aguirre, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico

Faxes: + 52 747 23072 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor
La Jornada
Balderas 68
06050 México D.F., MEXICO

2) Peasant organization

Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Sur (UOSS)
attn: Ranferi Hernández Acevedo
Calle Zapata No. 1
Col. Fraccionamiento 20 de noviembre

Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 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 7 March 1997.