

via fax: 011 52 961 61 209 17/ 256 18 Lic. Pablo Salazar Mendiguchia Gobernador del Estado de Chiapa	via fax: 011 52 961 61 657 24 Lic. Mariano Herran Salvatti Fiscal General de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas
via fax: 011 52 55 51 28 0234 Dr. Ricardo Sepulveda Director of Human Rights - Interior Ministry	via fax: 011 52 55 5681 7199 Dr. Jose Luis Soberanes Fernandez Presidente de la Comision Nacional de Derechos Humanos

March 12, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned for the safety of **Angel Mario Ksheratto Flores**, a journalist from Chiapas State, who was re-arrested on February 4 for breaking bail conditions imposed after he was charged with defamation in 2003. He is being detained in El Amate, Chiapas.

Ksheratto works for the newspaper Cuarto Poder. He was first detained on January 9, 2003 by the Chiapas State Prosecutor's Office, following a defamation complaint. A senior state official complained about articles in which Ksheratto alleged official corruption by a member of the state-run Schools Construction Committee. After his release on bail, Ksheratto did not comply with the condition of reporting to court every week because the court office moved from his city of Tuxtla Gutierrez to El Amate, which is 90km away. He was denied a petition to report every two weeks.

According to reports, a local judge is considering imposing bail of US\$20,000. This amount would constitute a disproportionate obstacle to pre-trial liberty for a non-serious offense. This raises serious concern about whether the court is sufficiently independent and impartial to meet international standards for fair trial. We believe that Ksheratto's re-arrest may constitute judicial harassment, and that his case fits a pattern of intimidation of journalists with the intention of restricting freedom of expression.

We urge you to:

- guarantee the prompt and impartial application of international human rights standards to ensure Angel Mario Ksheratto receives a fair trial;
- implement the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' recommendation to make defamation and liable civil offences not liable to imprisonment.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

Copies: Centro de Derechos Humanos **Fray Bartolome** de las Casas~ via fax
 Ambassador **Carlos Alberto De Icaza Gonzalez**~ via fax
 Ambassador **Antonio O. Garza, Jr** ~ via fax
William Duncan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax
 US Senators **DeWine & Voinovich** ~ via email
 US Reps **Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones** ~ via email

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter.