

via fax 011 52 55 5346 0908 Arturo Chavez Chavez Attorney General of the Republic of Mexico	via fax 011 52 961 6165724 Mtro. Raciél Lopez Salazar Attorney General of Chiapas State, Mexico
Via fax 011 52 961 618 8050 ext. 21122 Lic. Juan Sábines Guerrero Governor of Chiapas State, Mexico	

November 3, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about the detention and torture of members of "Emiliano Zapata" Peasant Organisation (OCEZ), a peasant farmers' organization in Chiapas state. On October 24, the homes of several members of OCEZ in Venustiano Carranza municipality were searched by state police. After entering the home of **Roselio de la Cruz Conzalez**, the police hit and threatened one of his sons at gunpoint to reveal the whereabouts of his father. Roselio de la Cruz immediately gave himself up. His family saw him being hit in the stomach before being put into a police van. On the same night, police entered the nearby home of **Jose Manuel de la Torre Hernandez**. They hit him and his three children who were trying to stop him from being taken away. In neither case did the police show warrants to arrest the men or search their homes. Other homes of OCEZ members were also searched. Hundreds of police officers and soldiers remained in the area for at least two days.

At the present time, Roselio de la Cruz and Jose Manuel de la Torre are being held in a state prison. During interrogation, they have been blindfolded, bound and beaten. Roselio de la Cruz was threatened with death. Officials put a plastic bag over the head of Jose Manuel de la Torre until he was close to suffocation, then forced him to inhale water until he fainted. Both men were forced to sign papers which they were not allowed to read.

Another member of OCEZ, **Jose Manuel Hernandez Martinez**, was arrested on 30 September. Instead of being held by the Chiapas state authorities, he was moved to a federal prison 2,000 km away. Since this is too far for his family and lawyer to visit him, he is effectively being held incommunicado.

Based on the facts presented above, we urge that you

- guarantee that Roselio de la Cruz and Jose Manuel de la Torre will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- immediately carry out an impartial investigation into their torture and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that the two men are either released immediately, or promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offense and fairly tried according to international standards, with any evidence ruled inadmissible that is obtained through torture;
- ensure that Jose Manuel Hernandez Martinez has access to his family and lawyer;
- end illegal house searches and intimidation of OCEZ supporters and other inhabitants of Venustiano Carranza, and initiate an investigation into the conduct of the police operation.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: "Fray Bartolome" Human Rights Center ~ via email
Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
Carlos Pascual, US Ambassador to Mexico, via fax ~ 011-52-55-5080-2834
Mary Stickles, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA287/09/Mexico

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