

Human Rights - Mexico

CIVIL SOCIETY/
DEMOCRACY BUILDING

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

file Mexico
human
rights

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

File + P's
to
guide
1 sec.

FAX COVER SHEET

NATIONAL
SECURITY
COUNCIL

17th & Penn, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
20504

Did you get a complete,
clear transmission? If not,
please call:

(202) 456-9141
(202) 456-9140 (fax)

From: Wendy Patten

To: Melanne Verreer

Fax: 6-6244

Date/Time: 9-19-00

No. of pages to follow: 3

Message:

Melanne - attached ~~0000~~ IS a
draft response from the first lady
to a letter from Amnesty + the Sierra
Club on a case against human rights
defenders in Mexico. Let me know
if this works, or if you'd like it edited.
Thanks - Wendy

Dear xxx

I appreciated your recent letter expressing concern for the safety of Mr. Rodolfo Montiel and Mr. Teodoro Cabrera, members of an environmental group in Guerrero, Mexico who were imprisoned last year on drug and firearms charges. I am aware of the background in this very unfortunate case, and was honored to attend a reception in April honoring Mr. Montiel for his receipt of the Goldman environmental prize, when I met with the organizers of the Goldman Environmental Prize.

The Department of State, both directly and through our Embassy in Mexico City, has followed the case closely since last year, and has raised our interest in it with the government of Mexico. Our Embassy has also discussed Mr. Montiel and Mr. Cabrera's situation with the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Center for Human Rights (PRODH), the NGO which provided defense representation in the case and continues to advocate on their behalf.

PRODH representatives have confirmed that they will appeal the court's recent guilty verdict in the case. In the appeal, I hope fervently that every relevant fact receives careful consideration, particularly the procedural aspects raised by both PRODH and the Mexican National Human Rights Commission.

You may be assured that the United States will continue to monitor developments in the case, and will reaffirm its interest to the Mexican authorities.

Thank you for writing... etc

*Mr Montiel's wife
and
learned more about her husband's plight.*



Amnesty International USA

Mrs. Hillary Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

DEFENDING THOSE WHO GIVE THE EARTH A VOICE



July 31, 2000

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

On April 20th of this year you met Ubalda Cortes, wife of jailed environmental defender Rodolfo Montiel Flores, and kindly had a picture taken with her. This simple act has provided a great deal of safety for Ubalda and her children. Unfortunately, we can not say the same thing for her husband Rodolfo Montiel, or his colleague Teodoro Cabrera Garcia. As you may know, these two peasant ecologists of Guerrero, Mexico are in detention for speaking out to protect the environment and their community. Amnesty International has declared both men Prisoners of Conscience. Amnesty and the Sierra Club have been determinedly working together on behalf of Rodolfo and Teodoro, and are demanding that they be immediately and unconditionally released.

We are now appealing to you; as you have personally learned about the suffering of Ubalda and her children since Rodolfo's torture and detention. We kindly request that you bring the case of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera to the attention of the highest US government authorities. Your support for their immediate and unconditional release would be of great help to these two environmental defenders.

In 1998 Rodolfo Montiel and other peasants concerned with environmental destruction stemming from rampant and possibly illegal logging in the State of Guerrero founded the Peasant Environmentalist Organization of the Mountains of Petatlán and Coyuca de Catalán. The peaceful activities of the organization affected the economic interests of local landowners (*caciques*) who support logging in Guerrero. The *caciques* have obtained support from the Mexican military in the region to persecute members of the environmental organization. Troops from the 40th Infantry Battalion of the Mexican Army stationed in the region started a campaign of harassment and intimidation against the environmental organization and its leaders.

On May 2nd of last year Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera were arbitrarily detained by troops from the same battalion, held incommunicado for several days, and reportedly tortured to make them sign self-incriminating statements. They were later falsely charged with weapons possession and drug trafficking. The message was clear: the activities of the environmental organization would not be tolerated.

Representatives of AI-USA and the Sierra Club visited Rodolfo and Teodoro in April of this year when Rodolfo was awarded the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize. During this visit we also met with Mexico's Attorney General, Mr. Jorge Madrazo and the Secretary of Natural Resources, Julia Carabias. The Attorney General assured us that, if necessary, he was going to personally review the case of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

600 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., 5th Floor • Washington, DC 20003 • Tel: (202) 544-0200 • Fax: (202) 546-7142

SIERRA CLUB

408 C Street, N.E. • Washington, D.C. 20002 • Tel: (202) 547-1141 • Fax: (202) 547-6009



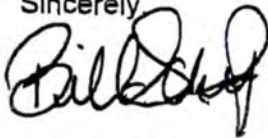
Since our visit, Rodolfo and Teodoro have been subjected to cruel, degrading and inhumane treatment at the detention center in Iguala, where they have been since May of last year. We are concerned for their health and physical safety. Prison authorities have recently started to confine them to the shower room for the night, turning on the showers while they are sleeping, and leaving them wet and cold for hours. Prison authorities have also taken away access to a public phone in the prison and have explained to the inmates that these actions are the fault of Rodolfo and Teodoro. Clearly this is a crude attempt to provoke aggression against Rodolfo and Teodoro.

Because of these developments, we have followed up with two letters to the Attorney General asking him to personally review the case of Rodolfo and Teodoro as promised. Unfortunately we have not received any response from Mr. Jorge Madrazo. We have also supported Representatives of the US Congress in sending a letter to the Attorney General expressing concern for Rodolfo and Teodoro and demanding their immediate release. All these efforts have not elicited any response from the Attorney General.

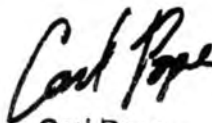
The results of the July elections in Mexico, after 71 years of one party rule, will bring a new administration. We believe this change brings a new opportunity to urge the incoming government of President-elect Vicente Fox to show its determination to uphold international human rights standards. President-elect Vicente Fox is to meet President Clinton in August, we are doing all we can to bring our concerns for Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera to their attention. However, we hope that before then, the outgoing Mexican administration will do justice to Rodolfo and Teodoro and set them free.

Your support in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely



William Schulz
Executive Director
Amnesty International, USA



Carl Pope
Executive Director
Sierra Club

cc:

Albert Gore, Vice President of the United States of America

Harold Koh, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy Human Rights and Labor, Department of State

David Sandalow, Assistant Secretary of State for OES, Department of State

Peter Romero, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Department of State

Brooks Yeager, Assistant Secretary of State, Environment and Development, Department of State

Fulton Armstrong, Director, Inter-America Affairs, National Security Council

Gerald Gallucci, Director, Inter-American Affairs, National Security Council

Bill McIlhenney, Political Officer, Office of Mexican Affairs, Department of State