



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1809-2001, **Version:** A

Proposed Res. No. 1809-A

Resolution commending Rodolfo Montiel, Teodoro Cabrera and other members of the Organization of Campesino Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán and Coyuca de Catalan for their courageous struggle to protect the forests of Mexico in the southern state of Guerrero, condemning the arrests of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, condemning the violent actions of the 40th Infantry Battalion and calling upon the Attorney General of Mexico to investigate the actions of the individual soldiers involved as recommended by Mexico's National Commission for Human Rights of August 2000, and calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera and the payment of compensation by the Mexican government for their arrest and prosecution.

By Council Members Freed, Eldridge and Oddo; also Council Members Foster, Harrison, Koslowitz, Michels, O'Donovan, Quinn, Robinson and Rodriguez.

Whereas, The activities of Rodolfo Montiel, Teodoro Cabrera and other members of the Organization of Campesino Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán and Coyuca de Catalan with regard to logging in the State of Guerrero were peaceful; and
Whereas, Said activities alerted Mexican authorities to take action against the illegal logging in the State of Guerrero according to Mexican law; and

Whereas, International Non-Governmental Organizations have reported a pattern of harassment of communities and environmental activists in the state of Guerrero; and

Whereas, On May 2, 1999, members of the 40th Infantry Battalion of the Mexican Army arrested Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, shooting and killing Salome Sanchez Ortiz, an innocent local farmer; and

Whereas, Human rights investigators from groups including Amnesty International have reported that Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera were tortured and forced to sign blank sheets of paper later filled in with false confessions of marijuana planting and weapons possession; and

Whereas, On July 14, 2000, Mexico's National Commission on Human Rights, a governmental agency, had acknowledged in a report that Montiel and Cabrera had been illegally detained and tortured by members of the Mexican Army, and in that report rejected the allegation that the two men were carrying weapons at the time of their arrest, as they were charged; and

Whereas, On August 28, 2000, Montiel and Cabrera were convicted and sentenced to six years, eight months and ten year jail terms respectively; and

Whereas, On October 27, 2000 and on July 17, 2001, an appeals judge upheld these convictions; and

Whereas, Forensic doctors working for the Danish section of Physicians for Human Rights confirmed the torture after examining Montiel and Cabrera, and concluded that the physical signs and symptoms coincide conclusively with the timing and methods of torture previously described by the two activists; and

Whereas, On July 10, 2001, Amnesty International released the report "Mexico-Justice Betrayed: Torture in the Judicial System" finding that the Mexican military and police continue to commit widespread torture in spite of President Vicente Fox Quesada's highly publicized commitment in his inaugural speech to respect human rights and the rule of law; and

Whereas, Defense attorneys from the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro, a human rights organization based in Mexico City, have raised allegations of irregularities in the judicial process leading to Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera's convictions, including allegations that Montiel's and Cabrera's constitutional rights were violated during their arrest and trial; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commends Rodolfo Montiel, Teodoro Cabrera and other members of the Organization of Campesino Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán and Coyuca de Catalan for their courageous struggle to protect the forests of Mexico in the southern state of Guerrero, condemns the arrests of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, condemns the violent actions of the 40th Infantry Battalion and calls upon the Attorney General of Mexico to investigate the actions of the individual soldiers involved as recommended by Mexico's National Commission for Human Rights of August 2000, and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera and the payment of compensation by the Mexican government for their arrest and prosecution.

ISP
06-26-01
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