

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN DANGER

Leading human rights defender Diego Cadenas Gordillo has been followed by men in cars, who have photographed him. Human rights defenders followed in this way have often been attacked.

Diego Cadenas is the director of the campaigning organization Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Centre (Frayba) in one of the main cities of the southern state of Chiapas, San Cristóbal de las Casas. Frayba provides support and legal assistance to people suffering human rights violations, especially Indigenous people, in Chiapas, one of the poorest states in Mexico.

As he was returning home on 14 June, Diego Cadenas saw a black four-wheel-drive vehicle parked three blocks from his house, with tinted windows and no number-plates: there were two men inside. Moments later it moved closer to the house.

He saw the same vehicle the next day, when he was on his way to work. A few minutes later, Frayba members saw a white four-wheel-drive vehicle with no number-plates, a few metres from the office. A man inside was taking photographs and video footage of the office. When he realised the staff had seen him, he drove away.

On 16 June Diego Cadenas and another Frayba member, Jorge Armando Gómez, saw a black four-wheel-drive with three men inside parked near where they had just met with Frayba president Samuel Ruiz García. Diego Cadenas asked the driver why he and the men were following him and whether they were from the intelligence agency *Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional* (CISEN), the Centre for Investigation and National Security, and they laughed and said no. Diego Cadenas and Jorge Armando took out their mobile phones and tried to take photos of the men but they covered their faces with their caps and the driver took out a camera to photograph them.

When Diego Cardenas was driving home on 19 June, he saw a grey four-wheel-drive with no number-plates, facing the opposite direction, with two men inside wearing baseball caps. One of them held a camera with a zoom lens out of the window and pointed at Diego Cadenas. As he passed, about a metre away, he heard the sound of two photographs being taken. The car then drove away.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish, English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to investigate the harassment of Diego Cadenas Gordillo and members of Frayba;
- urging them to provide protection for Diego Cadenas Gordillo and members of Frayba in accordance with their wishes;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without obstacles or fear of reprisals.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE DD/MONTH/YEAR TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Fernando Francisco Gómez-Mont Urueta

Secretario de Gobernación
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P.06600
MEXICO

Fax: +52 55 5093 3414/15

+52 55 5093 3415

+52 55 5093 3416

E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Salutation: Señor Secretario/

Dear Minister

Attorney General Chiapas

Mtro. Raciél López Salazar
Procurador General de Justicia del
Estado de Chiapas
Libramiento Norte y Rosa del Oriente,
no. 2010
Col. El Bosque,
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas
México, CP 29049

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Email: raciel.lopez@mje.chiapas.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/

Señor Procurador

And copies to:

Chiapas Human Rights Commission

Lic. Juan Carlos Moreno Guillén
Presidente de la Comisión Estatal
de Derechos Humanos de Chiapas
Comisión Estatal de Derechos
Humanos de Chiapas
Boulevard Comitán 143, Col.
Moctezuma
Tuxtla Gutiérrez
Chiapas, Mexico

Fax: +52 961 639 6615

Email: cdh@cdh-chiapas.org.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders in Mexico face threats, attacks, politically motivated criminal charges and imprisonment for leading protests or promoting respect for human rights. The government has agreed to provide protection measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to several human rights defenders, but some have reported that no effective protection has been provided. Substantial efforts have not been made to investigate cases of abuses against human rights defenders; impunity is the general rule in these cases, leaving open the possibility of further attacks.

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