

URGENT ACTION

MEXICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER RELEASED

Mexican human rights defender Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez was released on bail on 24 February. The charges against her remain and she is at risk of an unfair trial.

On 24 February, at around 00:30, **Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez** was released on bail, following a court hearing in the afternoon of 23 February, in the 6th court of the District of Oaxaca. The charges against her have not been dropped, and Amnesty International remains concerned that she may be denied a fair judicial process free of fabricated evidence or unfounded charges.

Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez was arrested on 22 February by agents from the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República) in the municipality of Santa María Xadani, in Oaxaca State, as she left a meeting with the Federal Electricity Commission. She was held incommunicado for four hours before being taken to Tehuantepec prison to face charges of illegally detaining staff of the Federal Electricity Commission and damage to public property (*daños a los bienes nacionales*). The judge ordered proceedings to continue and released Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez subject to bail conditions.

Amnesty International believes that the criminal proceedings against her may be a reprisal for the leading role that she has played in negotiations with a company that has constructed wind-turbines on land belonging to indigenous peoples in Tehuantepec, and in a protest movement campaigning against high electricity charges levied by the Federal Electricity Commission.

Her arrest forms part of a pattern of arrests of human rights defenders on unfounded charges of illegal detention of public officials which have resulted in unfair criminal proceedings and long periods in prison for the activists.

No further action is requested from the UA network at this time. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. We will continue to monitor the situation and take further action if necessary.

This is the first update of UA 62/12. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/012/2012/en>

Name: Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez
Gender m/f: Female

Further information on UA: 62/12 Index: AMR 41/013/2012 Issue Date: 27 February 2012

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