

PUBLIC

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30 May 2007

UA 130/07 **Fear for safety**

MEXICO **Ildefonso Zamora (m), municipal official and environmentalist
Misael Zamora (m), aged 16, his son
Other local officials in the municipality of Ocuilán**

Killed: **Aldo Zamora (m), aged 21, brother of Misael Zamora**

Environmentalists Aldo and Misael Zamora were attacked allegedly by a group of illegal loggers on 15 May in Santa Lucía, municipality of Ocuilán, Mexico State. Aldo Zamora was shot dead, and his brother Misael was seriously wounded and had to be hospitalized. Their father, Ildefonso Zamora, who has been filing complaints about illegal logging in the area for many years, and organizing demonstrations against it, is now in grave danger, as are his colleagues.

Aldo and Misael Zamora were ambushed by four gunmen as they were driving with three relatives through the village of Santa Lucía, near their home village of San Juan Atzinga, in the municipality of Ocuilán, Mexico State. Misael Zamora recognized his attackers and filed an official complaint against them, but the State Public Prosecutor took three days before ordering a search for the gunmen, and arrest warrants were not issued until 24 May. The attackers have still not been found.

Ildefonso Zamora has been threatened repeatedly by loggers since 2004, when the Federal Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of the Environment (*Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Medio Ambiente*, PROFEPA) started a series of anti-logging operations prompted by his complaints. During a demonstration he and other local activists had organized on 19 October 2006, he was reportedly threatened by illegal loggers who told him, *Tienes tus días contados* ("your days are numbered") and *si no te bajas te vamos a dar en donde mas te duela* ("if you don't stop we are gonna hit you where it hurts most").

In May 2005 Ildefonso Zamora had filed a complaint with PROFEPA, presenting photographic and video evidence taken by his son Aldo about illegal logging activities in his area. In November 2006 a representative of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office finally requested arrest warrants for 47 people, which the federal judge refused to issue. The men who attacked Aldo and Misael Zamora were reportedly on that list.

The intimidation of Ildefonso Zamora and other municipal officials is continuing: gunshots were heard near a commemorative ceremony for Alfonso Zamora, and several shots were fired at the local municipal offices during the night of 26 May. The mayor of Ocuilán reported receiving threats from loggers in the last few days.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The municipality of Ocuilán is part of the *Lagunas de Zempoala* National Park, which lies between the states of Mexico and Morelos. This area has been identified by both the federal environmental authorities and environmental organizations such as Greenpeace as being particularly threatened by illegal logging. Amnesty International and other organizations have long documented the harassment and violence suffered by environmental campaigners in Mexico, such as Felipe Arreaga and Albertano Peñalosa, UA 50/05 (AMR 41/008/2005, 2 March 2005 and follow-ups AMR 41/015/2005, 23 May 2005 and AMR 41/037/2005, 16 September 2005).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish, English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of environmental activist Ildefonso Zamora, his son Misael and other local municipal officials, following the 15 May attack that killed Aldo Zamora;
- urging the authorities to carry out a prompt and impartial investigation into the attack, which took place in Santa Lucía, municipality of Ocuilán, Mexico State on 15 May 2007;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Ildefonso Zamora, his family, other municipal officials and environmental defenders in the area are protected, as they have recently suffered threats and intimidation;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Mexico State

Lic. Enrique Peña Nieto
Gobernador del Estado de México,
Palacio de Gobierno, 1º piso
Lerdo Poniente No. 300 Poniente, Col. Centro
Toluca C.P. 50000, Estado de México, MEXICO
Fax: (+52 722) 214 4172
Email: gob@gem.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor/ Señor Gobernador

Public Prosecutor of Mexico State

Lic. Abel Villacaña Estrada
Procurador del Estado de México
Av. Morelos Ote. No. 1300, Piso 6
Centro Estatal de Justicia
Col. San Sebastián
Toluca 50090, Estado de México, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52 722) 215 3123
Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Señor Procurador
Email: abel.v.e@edomex.gob.mx

Federal Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of the Environment

Lic. Ignacio Loyola Vera
Procurador Federal de Protección al Ambiente
Edificio Ajusco, Carretera Picacho-Ajusco, no. 200
Col. Jardines en la Montaña Del. Tlalpan, C.P. 14210, México D.F.
Fax: (+52 55) 2615 2041
Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Señor Procurador

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña
Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, piso 1, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO
Fax: (+52 55) 5093 3414
E-mail: frjramirez@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C., Serapio Rendón 57-B, Col. San Rafael, 06470, México D.F., Mexico

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 July 2007.