

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

MEXICO

Moisés Molina Rodríguez (m), aged 55

José Reyes Aguilar (m)

Adenicio Reyna Cruz (m), aged 50

Other members of the community of Uruapilla and of Organización Campesina Indígena y Popular Ricardo Flores Magón (OCIP-RFM)

Members of the community of Uruapilla and of political group *Organización Campesina Indígena y Popular Ricardo Flores Magon* (OCIP-RFM), in the municipality of Morelia, the capital of Michoacán state, have been intimidated, abducted and attacked in order to force them to leave a disputed piece of land. Other members of the community and of OCIP-RFM may be at risk of further attacks.

The piece of land, known as “Tabiquera La Loma”, is used by those living in Uruapilla as a site for making bricks. According to local activists, on 12 June, a group of armed men entered the home of Moisés Molina Rodríguez, who is the only person living on the disputed piece of land. The men beat him, forced him to remove all his clothes except his underpants, blindfolded him and forced him to walk for several hours to a new location, which may have been a cellar, where he was shackled and repeatedly beaten. He was not given food for eight days. He believed that at least three other men were being kept prisoner in the same place. The unidentified armed men who held him prisoner repeatedly interrogated him about his membership of OCIP-RFM, a political organisation which has been supporting the community’s claim to the land.

Moisés Molina Rodríguez was freed on 26 June. He was covered in bruises and has received medical attention for broken ribs. He was told to give up his claims to the land or he and his family would be killed. When his family told a local official in charge of security about what had happened, he did not call the police, and insisted that the community should give up its claim to the disputed land.

On 18 June, a group of armed men arrived at the home of José Reyes Aguilar, also a member of the community of Uruapilla and of OCIP-RFM. The armed men attacked him and in the ensuing struggle José Reyes Aguilar was shot in the leg. José Reyes Aguilar is still being treated in hospital for serious injuries to his leg.

On 4 July, another member of the community and of OCIP-RFM, Adenicio Reyna Cruz, was abducted. According to his testimony and that of eyewitnesses, he was taken away by a group of armed men who drove in two 4X4 vehicles without number plates. Adenicio Reyna Cruz was freed the following day. He had been beaten and needed hospital treatment for several broken ribs and a perforated lung.

There are reports that the same vehicles used in the abduction of Adenicio Reyna Cruz and the attack on José Reyes Aguilar have been seen in the area since the incidents. People living in Uruapilla believe that military personnel are behind the attacks. There is a heavy military presence in Michoacán state as the authorities crack down on drug trafficking networks.

Members of OCIP-RFM have filed complaints with the Michoacán State Attorney General’s Office about the attacks, and have asked for protection to be provided. However, the authorities have not yet provided this protection.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Inhabitants of Uruapilla claim to have inherited the right to use the disputed land known as "Tabiquera La Loma". For several years, they have been challenged and intimidated by another community group over the land. Inhabitants of Uruapilla who have asserted their right to the use of the land have been intimidated on several occasions and subjected to judicial proceedings based on spurious charges. In 2007 an agrarian court, which decides land disputes, found against the community of Uruapilla's claim to the land, but an official eviction order has not been issued.

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

- calling on the authorities to protect the inhabitants of the community of Uruapilla and members of OCIP-RFM immediately, using measures deemed appropriate by those at risk;
- calling for an investigation into the abuses committed against members of OCIP-RFM and of the community of Uruapilla in June and July;
- calling on the authorities to investigate the presence of groups of unidentified armed men and establish whether they are linked to security forces or acting with their collusion.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior

Lic. Juan Camilo Mouriño Terrazo

Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

Fax: +52 55 5093 3414

E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister

Governor of Michoacán state

Mtro. Leonel Godoy Rangel

Gobernador del Estado de Michoacán

Palacio de Gobierno, 1er. Patio planta alta, Av. Madero Poniente No. 63, Morelia, Mich., C.P. 58000, MEXICO

Fax: +52 443 322 9000 ext. 5573

Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of Michoacán state

Lic. Miguel García Hurtado

Periférico Independencia # 5000

Col. Sentimientos de la Nación, Morelia, Mich., C.P. 58170, MEXICO

Fax: +52 443 299 6460

Email: contacto.pgje@michoacan.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Special Prosecutor/Señor Fiscal Especial

COPIES TO:

Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos A.C.

Calle Tehuiztilla 1era cerrada, No 44, Col. los Reyes, Del. Coyoacán, CP 04330 México Distrito Federal.

And 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 22 August 2008.