

URGENT ACTION

HOMES AT RISK OF DEMOLITION IN LAND DISPUTE

Fifteen armed men hired by a local landowning family threatened to demolish a couple's home in an area called Lomas del Poleo, Chihuahua state, northern Mexico, on 3 May. The inhabitants of Lomas del Poleo are at risk of further such attacks.

At 12.30 on 6 May, fifteen armed men arrived at the house of **Carmen Quiñones** and **Aurelio Carranza** in Lomas del Poleo in four vans. The men were carrying guns and large sticks and had two fighting dogs with them. The group's leader works for the local landowner, who claims to be the true owner of the land of Lomas del Poleo and disputes the inhabitants' ownership of the land. He told Aurelio Carranza, "You're not going to be worth a thing you bastard, I'm going to demolish your house." ("*Vas a valer madre, pinche viejo, Te voy a tumbar la casa*").

People living in Lomas del Poleo have been harassed and attacked by men working for a local landowner since 2003. In 2004 these men put up a barbed wire fence around the area, with an entrance patrolled by security guards working for the landowner. In 2005, according to people living there, the security guards set fire to 40 homes and beat a man to death. No more than 17 families still live in the area. They say they have told the local Public Prosecutor's office about what has happened, but no serious investigation has ever been carried out.

An Agrarian Tribunal has been considering the land dispute over the ownership of the Lomas del Poleo land for several months, during which the people living there have suffered more threats and intimidation. The Tribunal is expected to reach its conclusion soon, and the recent threats are thought to be an attempt to intimidate the people living in Lomas del Poleo into giving up their claim to ownership.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to ensure that Carmen Quiñones and Aurelio Carranza and other residents of Lomas del Poleo who have been attacked and threatened by security guards working for local landowners are given appropriate protection according to their wishes;
- Urging them to order independent investigations into the attacks, and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to prevent any attempt to drive residents of Lomas de Poleo off their land, and to ensure the dispute is resolved fairly and satisfactorily in the agrarian tribunal.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JUNE 2010 TO:

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. José Reyes Baeza Terrazas
Gobernador del Estado de Chihuahua,
Palacio de Gobierno, 1er piso, C.
Aldama #901, Col. Centro,
Chihuahua, Estado de Chihuahua, C.P.
31000, Mexico

Fax: +52 614 429 3300 (then dial extension 11066 when prompted)

Salutation: Dear Governor

Attorney General of Chihuahua

Patricia González Rodríguez
Procuradora del Estado de Chihuahua
Procuraduría General de Justicia del
Estado
Vicente Guerrero 616, Col. Centro
Chihuahua 31000, Mexico

Fax: +52 614 415 0314

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Mayor of Ciudad Juárez

Lic. José Reyes Ferriz
Presidente Municipal de Ciudad Juárez
Unidad Administrativa Benito Juárez.
Primer piso, ala norte.
Av. Francisco Villa # 950 Norte, Cd.
Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico

Fax: +52 656 615 0690

Salutation: Dear Mayor

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 15/09. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/004/2009

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The land of Lomas del Poleo has become much more valuable since a group of businesspeople began plans to develop a nearby area into a new urban and industrial area.

Further Information on UA: 15/09 Index: AMR 41/038/2010 Issue Date: 06 May 2010

