

URGENT ACTION

MEXICAN PRIEST RELEASED ON BAIL

A Mexican priest and human rights defender who was put in pre-charge detention on 19 June was released on bail on 30 June. He and nine other men are accused of killing two local officials in the municipality of San José del Progreso, Oaxaca State. Eight men have also been released on bail. One has been charged.

Father Martín Octavio García Ortiz, who was placed in pre-charge detention (arraigo) on 19 June, was released on bail on 30 June. He did not suffer any ill-treatment in detention. Before being taken into custody, he was abducted and beaten by some members of the community of San José del Progreso, but has now recovered from his injuries. The State Attorney General's Office is continuing to treat him as a suspect in the killing of the leader of the municipal government San José del Progreso and a local council official, despite clear evidence that he was not involved. Amnesty International will follow the case closely, to ensure that spurious charges are not brought against him, and to ensure that the investigation is not used simply to deter legitimate criticisms of mining operations in the municipality, which have divided the community.

Nine other men, initially thought to be 10, were also arrested and placed in pre-charge detention on 19 June. One of them has been charged with the murder of the two local officials of San José del Progreso municipality. He is in detention and has access to a defence lawyer. The other eight men have been released on bail pending continuing investigations. None of them reported any ill-treatment while in pre-charge detention.

The Oaxaca City-based Regional Human Rights Centre (Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos "Bartolomé Carrasco Brisño") has received more than 100 emails of solidarity following Amnesty International's Urgent Action about this situation. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case to ensure that the authorities uphold their obligation to carry out an effective and impartial investigation into the killing of the local officials and that all suspects receive a fair trial and are not prosecuted simply because of their involvement in human rights work or legitimate protests.

No further action is required and thank you to all those who sent appeals.

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