

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety / Death Threats

18 August 1999

MEXICO

Enrique Juan García
Macario Miguel Antonio
Marcela Ronquillo Monario, (f)
Agustina González, (f)
Catalina González Martínez, (f)
Zacarías López Martínez
Marcelino Anaya

The seven trade union members named above have been beaten and threatened with death by armed members of the Santa Cruz group of their union, the *Unión General Obrero Campesina Popular* (UGOCP), General Workers Popular Peasants' Union, after they accused the UGOCP leadership of corruption. The attack went ahead with the apparent acquiescence of the authorities. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety, and believes they are at risk of further attacks. The seven belong to the Chinantecos and Mazatecos indigenous groups.

On 31 July 1999, it is alleged that about a hundred UGOCP members, armed with machetes, rifles and guns, apparently under orders from the UGOCP's leaders, seized the seven people from their houses in the community of San Francisco de Asís, municipality of Playa Vicente in Veracruz State. The men warned them: "*si se quieren salir [de la organización] tendrán que sufrir las consecuencias, porque XXX tiene del gobierno autorización de despojarlos de sus propiedades si no se disciplinan*" ("If you want to quit [the organization] you will have to suffer the consequences, because XXX has the government's authorization to take all your possessions if you don't obey").

While this was going on, policemen reportedly came to San Francisco de Asís but did not intervene. The seven were taken away in a truck, which passed two police patrols. The policemen spoke with the men, but apparently ignored the shouts from inside the truck, and the seven were reportedly beaten to shut them up. They were later taken to Santa Cruz, where they were threatened with death to force them to sign blank papers. Their captors let them go later that day.

On 1 August, an official complaint was presented to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Apparently no proper investigation has been carried out since then into these attacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to information received, from November 1998 to April 1999 the seven were attacked many times, being driven off their land and threatened with death. Some of them complained to the relevant authorities, but so far there has apparently been no proper investigation into these attacks.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern at the threats against Enrique Juan García, Macario Miguel Antonio, Marcela Ronquillo Monario, Agustina González, Catalina González Martínez, Zacarías López Martínez and Marcelino Anaya, and calling for the authorities to take steps to guarantee their safety;
- expressing concern that while the authorities have an obligation to ensure the maintenance of law and order, members of the police force reportedly failed to take action to protect those listed above from the attacks against them;
- calling for a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation into these attacks, and the apparent acquiescence of the local police, with the results of the investigation made public.

APPEALS TO:

State Governor
Lic. Miguel Alemán Velasco

Gobernador del Estado de Veracruz
Palacio de Gobierno
Zaragoza esq c/ Leandro Valle SN
Col. Centro, Jalapa 91000,
Veracruz, MEXICO.

Faxes: + 528 182167

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

Telegrams: Gobernador de Veracruz

State Attorney General

Lic. Ignacio González Rebolledo
Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Veracruz
Nicolás bravo 34
Col. Centro, Jalapa 91000,
Veracruz, MEXICO.

Faxes: + 528 176168 / 182167

Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney General

Telegrams: Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Veracruz

State Human Rights Commission

Lic. Margarita Herrera Ortiz
Presidenta de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos
Justino Sarmiento No 3,
Col. Aguacatal, Xalapa 91130,
Veracruz, MEXICO

Faxes: + 528 145486

Salutation: Sra Presidenta / Dear President

COPIES TO:

Human Rights NGO

Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
Av. Azcapotzalco 275,
Col. Claveria, 02090
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 29 September 1999.

Note from Team:

Amnesty International would like to inform members of the Urgent Action network that contrary to information provided in the above cited Urgent Action, the *Unión General Obrero Campesina Popular* (UGOCP), General Workers Popular Peasants' Union is **not** a Trade Union. The UGOCP is an amalgamation of several peasant organizations, who work to obtain government funds and grants for local agricultural projects. Both the aggressors and the victims from the above cited Urgent Action were members of this organization.