

# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOT IN MEXICO

Since 15 April, the indigenous community of Cherán, in Michoacan, western Mexico, has sealed itself off to try to protect itself from organized criminal gangs, who act with the collusion of local authorities and police. One resident was shot on 15 April and two more were killed on 27 April.

For several years, an armed gang with links to the main drug cartel in Michoacan has abducted and killed members of the indigenous Purépecha community of Cherán, and has carried out illegal logging on the community's land. Criminal gangs have operated with the complicity of local authorities and police.

On 15 April, members of the community of Cherán stopped trucks carrying illegally-logged timber and captured five loggers. The community informed the local authorities what had happened. Two hours later, a municipal police car and two pick-ups entered the town carrying at least 14 heavily armed men, who began shooting at residents. **Eugenio Sánchez Tiandón** was shot in the head; he remains in a coma.

In response, residents closed access to the town with barricades. Community leaders, with the assistance of human rights lawyers, started discussions with state and federal authorities about the security of the community, which are ongoing. On 23 April, the community presented the five illegal loggers to representatives of the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) along with 140 complaints from residents.

According to reports, on 27 April, community members once again stopped illegal loggers entering their lands. The armed loggers attacked community members, killing two men, **Pedro Juárez Urbina** and **Armando Hernández Estrada**. Amnesty International is not aware of steps taken to arrest and prosecute criminals and police involved in the attacks and residents have reported that messages have been sent to community leaders from the criminal gang that they will face reprisals for their actions. The community is demanding Federal Police ensure their safety.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Call for the federal authorities to ensure that residents of Cherán are protected from attacks and threats by criminal gangs acting in collusion with local authorities and that the community has access to food and basic services during the protest;
- Call for a full, impartial and prompt investigation into the attack on Cherán by armed men and municipal police on 15 and 27 April, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- Ensure full and impartial investigation of the complaints of killings, enforced disappearance, threats and illegal logging filed by the community members and ensure those responsible are held to account.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JUNE 2011 TO:

#### Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora  
 Secretario, Sec. de Gobernación  
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,  
 Delegación Cuauhtémoc,  
 México D.F., C.P. 06600, MÉXICO  
 Fax: +52 55 30032900 ext. 32356  
 Email: [secretario@segob.gob.mx](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado  
 Señor Secretario**

#### Governor of Michoacan State

Mtro. Leonel Godoy Rangel  
 Gobernador del Estado de Michoacán  
 Palacio de Gobierno  
 1er. Patio planta alta, Av. Madero  
 Poniente No. 63, Morelia C.P, 58000  
 Estado de Michoacán, MEXICO  
 Fax: +52 443 322 90 73  
 E-mail: [lgodoy@michoacan.gob.mx](mailto:lgodoy@michoacan.gob.mx)

**Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimado  
 Gobernador**

#### Secretary for Public Security

Lic. Genaro García Luna  
 Secretaría de Seguridad Pública  
 Constituyentes n° 947, edif. "B" planta  
 Col. Belén de las Flores, México D.F.,  
 C.P. 01110, MÉXICO  
 Fax: +52 55 1103 6189  
 Email: [genaro.garcia@ssp.gob.mx](mailto:genaro.garcia@ssp.gob.mx)

**Salutation, Dear Minister/ Estimado  
 Secretario**

**Copies to:** Asociación Nacional de Abogados Democraticos: [anadmexico@yahoo.com.mx](mailto:anadmexico@yahoo.com.mx). Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOT IN MEXICO

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The indigenous community of Cherán, in Michoacan, central western Mexico, has at least 16,000 inhabitants.

Prior to the latest incidents, seven members of the community have been killed and five others forcibly disappeared since 2009, allegedly by members of the criminal gang acting in collusion with municipal police. Despite filing complaints with the state and federal authorities, including the environmental crimes office (PROFEPA) for illegal logging, no action has been taken against those responsible leaving the community without protection or recourse to justice.

Since 2007, violence linked to organized crime has spiralled in Mexico. The government has reported more than 34,000 organized crime related killings. Many communities have suffered high levels of kidnapping and other violent crimes as criminal gangs, often operating with the collusion of police and local authorities, seek to extend their interests. The vast majority of crimes remain unsolved creating a climate of impunity and insecurity for vulnerable populations which in some instances cannot rely on the security forces to ensure safety and combat criminal gangs. Michoacan is one of the states most severely affected.

UA: 126/11 Index: AMR 41/025/2011 Issue Date: 05 May 2011

