

URGENT ACTION

MISSING MEXICANS FOUND, ACTIVISTS STILL AT RISK

Two journalists and three human rights activists, missing after an attack on human rights observers in Oaxaca State, Mexico, were found on 29 April. However, the authorities have not done enough to investigate the attack.

Journalists **David Cilia** and **Erika Ramírez**, and activists **Fernando Santiago** (a member of Mexican organization Brigadas Indigenas), **David Venegas** and **Noé Bautista** (members of Oaxacan group VOCAL) had fled when armed men opened fire on an international caravan of human rights observers in the Indigenous Triqui area of Oaxaca state, southern Mexico, on 27 April. Fearing for their lives, they spent almost two days in woodland (*monte*) close to the scene of the ambush, awaiting rescue.

David Cilia, Erika Ramírez (the only woman among the five), David Venegas and Noé Bautista hid together in a ravine, following the attack, which left two human rights defenders dead. Thinking they should be rescued, they stayed there for almost two days, before David Venegas and Noé Bautista decided to seek help. They walked for about eight hours before reaching the town of Juxtlahuaca, where they managed to pass on information about the whereabouts of the other two. That evening, a rescue party including police, David Cilia's father and the editor of the magazine David Cilia and Erika Ramírez work for, found the journalists. Both journalists are receiving hospital treatment. According to sources in Oaxaca, Noé Bautista has a minor injury and the other two activists are unharmed after their ordeal. Fernando Santiago, who had been hiding by himself, found his own way to safety a few hours before the others.

Human rights groups in Mexico believe that the attack was planned by an irregular armed that operates in the area. Following the attack, federal and state authorities did not go to the scene of the ambush until the day after the attack, claiming this was due to security concerns. Apparently, evidence has not been gathered by the investigators at the scene of the incident. Those affected by the attack are yet to receive protection by the authorities

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the federal authorities to investigate the attack on the human rights observers, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the federal authorities to ensure that those at risk are protected in accordance with their wishes;
- calling on the authorities to publicly condemn the attack and reinforce its commitment to the protection of human rights defenders in Mexico with prompt and effective action.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JUNE 2010 TO:

President

Lic. Felipe de Jesús Calderón
Hinojosa
Residencia Oficial de "Los Pinos",
Casa Miguel Alemán
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec
México D.F., C.P. 11850, MÉXICO

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Email: felipe.calderon@presidencia.gob.mx

Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President Calderón

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Arturo Chávez Chávez
Procuraduría General de la
República
Av. Paseo de la Reforma nº 211-213
Col. Cuauhtémoc, Delegación
Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P. 06500, MÉXICO

Fax: +52 55 53 46 09 08

Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx

Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:

NGO

Centro de Apoyo Comunitario
Trabajando Unidos - CACTUS
Jazmín 31, Fraccionamiento
Jardines del Sur
Huajuapán de León, Oax. C.P.
69007
MEXICO

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 27 April a group of about 30 human rights observers was ambushed by armed men in the Indigenous Triqui area of Oaxaca state. The observers were attacked after they were forced to stop their journey because rocks were blocking the road. One man, observer Jyri Antero Jaakola from Finland, and one woman, Indigenous human rights defender Beatriz Cariño (head of the organization CACTUS in Oaxaca state) were killed, some others were injured

The group was on its way to document long-running human rights abuses in the Indigenous Triqui area, and to provide some humanitarian assistance. The victims of the attack included several members of Mexican organizations and networks, and international observers from Finland, Germany, Italy and Belgium.

Human rights defenders in Mexico face serious and constant human rights abuses. Those working to redress the historical neglect of economic, social and cultural rights are at heightened risk of abuse, and, therefore, are most in need of recognition, protection and support. Among them, the situation of Indigenous human rights defenders is of particular concern. Those leading efforts to break the cycle of exclusion, inequality, poverty and other human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples are paying a high price.

The mainly Indigenous Triqui region is one of the poorest and most troubled in the country. For more than 30 years it has been driven by inter-community conflict in which scores of people have been killed. The state and federal authorities have rarely taken action to hold those responsible to account.

In 2008 Felícitas Martínez and Teresa Bautista, two young Indigenous human rights defenders and journalists were killed. No one has been brought to justice for this crime. Both were colleagues of Bety Cariño who was killed in the ambush this Tuesday 27 April. .

The State of Oaxaca has been ridden with human rights violations for decades. In the last few years widespread protests erupted in a campaign to force the state governor to resign. In 2006 amidst these protests at least 18 civilians were killed and hundreds were injured and arrested. Use of excessive force, arbitrary detention, torture and fabrication of criminal charges against protesters by the security and judicial authorities was widespread.

In 2009, a special investigation by Mexico's Supreme Court concluded that senior state officials should be held accountable for human rights violations committed during the crisis. However, virtually no-one has been held to account for these grave human rights violations.

Further information on UA: 101/10 Index: AMR 41/036/2010 Issue Date: 30 April 2010

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