

URGENT ACTION

INDIGENOUS DEFENDERS RECEIVE NEW THREATS

New threats have been made against Silvia Pérez Yescas, an Indigenous human rights defender from the community of Matías Romero in Oaxaca, south-western Mexico. So far the protection measures granted to her by the authorities have been insufficient. Her life and safety remain at risk.

Silvia Pérez Yescas is an Indigenous Zapotec woman from the community of Matías Romero in the state of Oaxaca. On 13 January Silvia Pérez learned that members of her organization, Indigenous Women for the Conservation, Research and Use of Natural Resources (Mujeres Indígenas por Conservación, Investigación y Aprovechamiento de los Recursos Naturales, **CIARENA**) were threatened by people claiming to have been sent by a local political chief (*cacique*) who told them, "Stop fucking around, because you could even be thrown in jail for being Silvia's accomplices, she's going to be fucked for meddling in the land problem and there are people waiting for her when she shows up" (*déjense de chingaderas porque hasta los pueden meter a la cárcel por ser cómplices de Silvia y a ella se la van a chingar por estar metida en el problema de las tierras y que hay gente esperándola cuándo aparezca*).

In recent years Silvia Pérez has repeatedly been threatened because of her work. On 19 August 2014 she received information from a reliable source that 100,000 Mexican pesos (around \$US 7,700) had been offered to any gunman prepared to kill her upon her return to the community of Matías Romero. Although Silvia Pérez filed a formal complaint regarding this threat, the authorities have said they cannot investigate it without an official statement from witnesses; however, fear of reprisals has prevented witnesses from coming forward. In January 2013 the Mexican government agreed to grant her protection measures, nonetheless, to date these measures have been ineffective so Silvia Pérez has not yet been able to return to Matías Romero to resume her legitimate work.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to ensure the safety of Silvia Pérez Yescas and strengthen the agreed upon protection measures in accordance with her wishes so that she can return to her community safely;
- Urging them to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threats made against Silvia Pérez Yescas and members of her organization, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding them of their obligation to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 MARCH 2015 TO:

Minister of Interior
Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretario de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, C.P. 6600,
México D.F., México
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor
Secretario

Governor of Oaxaca State
Gabino Cué Monteagudo
Plaza de la Constitución, Centro
Histórico, C.P. 68000,
Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, México
Fax: +52 95 1501 8100, ext. 40068
Email: spagoboaxaca@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor
Gobernador

And copies to:
Mexican Commission for the Defence
and Promotion of Human Rights
(Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y
Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
A.C., CMDPDH)
Email: info@cmdpdh.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 214/14. Further information:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/033/2014/en>.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Silvia Pérez Yescas is the founder and director of Mujeres Indígenas por CIARENA, a grassroots organization that defends the rights of women and Indigenous communities in Oaxaca. CIARENA has undertaken important work in the defence of women who suffer domestic violence.

Human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico often face attacks, threats, abduction and killing in reprisal for their legitimate and vital work. Those behind the attacks are almost never brought to justice. The impunity enjoyed by those responsible for attacks, due to ineffective investigations, often conducted by state authorities who are suspected of involvement in threats, is fostering tolerance of attacks.

Amnesty International has welcomed the establishment of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in 2012. Nevertheless, many of the more than 100 defenders and journalists at risk who have sought protection have not received a timely or effective response. Despite the government's assertions that the mechanism is working effectively, it is far from being fully operational as it lacks trained staff, resources and the high level political support necessary to ensure that its protection measures are implemented by the authorities at all levels.

The Mechanism should be just one part of a comprehensive strategy to address violence against those who defend human rights and journalists. The federal government has so far failed to respond convincingly to this prevailing climate of hostility towards defenders and journalists in several states.

Name: Silvia Pérez Yescas and members of Mujeres Indígenas por CIARENA

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 214/14 Index: AMR 41/002/2015 Issue Date: 26 January 2015