

URGENT ACTION

ATTACKED FOR ENSURING FAIR ACCESS TO WATER

Community activists have repeatedly been beaten and threatened for their work to ensure fair access to water in the town of Coyotepec, near Mexico City. Federal authorities have promised them protection, but so far no measures have been implemented. Their lives could be at risk.

On 28 January a local man with apparent links to municipal authorities punched community activist **Jesús Díaz de León** as he was monitoring the peaceful functioning of the public well in Coyotepec. Afterwards, the man approached **Federico Cruz**, another community activist, and told him “you’re fucked” (*te va a llevar la chingada*). The assailant and others harassed **Alonso Pérez Atayde**, another community member, later that day and robbed him of money which belonged to their community association, the **‘9 June’ Front in Defence of Natural Resources and Administration of Potable Water of Coyotepec** (Frente 9 de junio por la Defensa de la Naturaleza de Recursos y Administración de Agua Potable de Coyotepec).

Community members have traditionally managed access to drinking water in the town of Coyotepec. However, the municipal government has been trying to take control of water distribution and billing for some time. The ‘9 June’ Front was formed by a large group of community members who organized themselves to oppose this change. Local men with apparent links to municipal authorities have harassed members of this association for the last few years. On 1 July 2013 one community member, Alberto Cruz Luna, was shot dead. Since then, 11 leading members of the Front were formally registered with the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists (Mecanismo de Protección de Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas), but measures provided have so far been ineffective. The 28 January attacks have been reported to the federal authorities, however the authorities have failed to offer the three men any protection measures.

The community activists also reported that municipal authorities closed down their local office on 12 January.

Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the repeated acts of harassment and threats against members of the Front, and calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into all these acts, including the killing of Alberto Cruz Luna in 2013, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging the authorities to immediately adopt and implement effective protection measures in strict accordance with the wishes of the activists;
- Reminding them of their duty to ensure that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- Calling on them to guarantee the right of all members of the community to fair access to drinking water.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 MARCH 2015 TO:

Minister of Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretario de Gobernación
Bucarelli 99, col. Juárez, CP 6600,
México, D.F., México.
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor
Ministro

Governor of Mexico state

Eruviel Ávila Villegas
Lerdo Poniente 300, Primer Piso,
Puerta 216, Palacio del Poder Ejecutivo
Colonia Centro, C.P. 50000
Toluca, Edo. De México, Mexico
Fax: +52 722 2760046
Email: eruviel.avila@edomex.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor
Gobernador

And copies to:

Local human rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos Zeferino
Ladrillero
Email: cdhzi.presidencia@gmail.com

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.

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The leading members of the Front who were formally registered with the official Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists (Mecanismo de Protección de Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas) are: Sergio Velázquez Morales, Irma Luna Montoya, Ivone González Cristóbal, Guadalupe Rivas Rodríguez, Felipe Rodríguez Díaz, Ernesto Donato Reyna, Juan Cristóbal y Tomás Mezas García. However, the Mechanism has failed to provide them with any meaningful protection. On 29 January 2015 Jesús Díaz de León and Federico Cruz were also registered with the Mechanism. They have also received insufficient protection measures to date.

Human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico often face attacks, threats, intimidation and abduction and killing in reprisal for their legitimate and vital work. Those behind the attacks are almost never brought to justice. In order to provide emergency protection, the Mexican federal government established the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in 2012. Nevertheless, most defenders and journalists at risk who have sought protection have not received a timely or effective response, creating frustration, insecurity and disillusion. 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 authorities at all levels. The impunity enjoyed by those responsible for attacks due to ineffective investigations, often conducted by state authorities who are suspected of involvement in threats, continues to foster tolerance of attacks. The Mechanism should be just one part of a comprehensive strategy to address violence against those defending human rights and journalists. The federal government has so far failed to respond convincingly to this prevailing climate of hostility to defenders and journalists in several states.

Local community activists who highlight abuses of power or misuse of resources by local authorities are frequently subject to threats, attacks and spurious criminal charges in order to deter their activism.

Name: Jesús Díaz de León (m), Federico Cruz (m), Alonso Pérez Atayde (m) and other members of the '9 June' Front in Defence of Natural Resources and Administration of Potable Water of Coyotepec (Frente 9 de junio por la Defensa de la Naturaleza de Recursos y Administración de Agua Potable de Coyotepec) (both)

Gender m/f: both