

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ATTACKED IN MEXICO

A human rights defender has been threatened and beaten in Misantla, Veracruz state, eastern Mexico.

According to **Ignacio Ochoa Plácido**, on the morning of 18 February two unidentified men with guns forced their way into his car while he was at a petrol station in Misantla. The aggressors demanded Ignacio Ochoa Plácido drive away but when he told them to get out of the car, they said, "Let's see if you shut your mouth now because you don't know what they are saying. You don't understand? We are going to do you in" ("*A ver si ya te callas porque no sabes ni lo que dicen, que no entiendes, ya te va a cargar*"). They then beat him and tried to suffocate him, and forced Ignacio Ochoa Plácido to continue driving, although he was injured. The aggressors then forced Ignacio Ochoa Plácido out of the car at another location and beat him again before running away when someone nearby called that the police had been alerted. Ignacio Ochoa Plácido has received medical treatment for the injuries he suffered, and believes that the assault may be connected with his work for the Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos) "Digna Ochoa Y Plácido", of which he is the President.

In August 2011, Ignacio Ochoa Plácido suffered a similar attack in which the aggressors took personal belongings, including keys of the office and the organization's credential. He made a formal complaint with the authorities, but no one was held accountable.

A formal complaint for the most recent incident has been filed with the Veracruz State Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado). The Veracruz state Human Rights Commission has visited Ignacio Ochoa Plácido since his most recent attack. According to Ignacio Ochoa Plácido, some of the protection measures promised after the 2011 incident were never implemented.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling for immediate protection for Ignacio Ochoa Plácido, other members of the Human Rights Centre Digna Ochoa Y Plácido in accordance with their wishes;
- Urging authorities to carry out a swift, full and impartial investigation into the attacks and intimidation against Ignacio Ochoa Plácido, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 APRIL 2013 TO:

Veracruz State Attorney General

Lic. Felipe Amadeo Flores Espinosa
Cto. Rafael Guizar y Valencia No.
707Col. Reserva Territorial, C.P. 91096;
Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico
Fax: +52 228 841 6170, ext. 3519
Email: faflores@pgjver.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney

President of Veracruz Human Rights

Commission
Mtro. Luis Fernando Perera Escamilla
Carrillo Puerto No. 21
Col. Centro. Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico
Fax: +52 228 812 0589 (press 1)
Email:

secretariapresidencia@cedhveracruz.org
.mx

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Human Rights Centre "Digna Ochoa Y Plácido"

Email: americaprimero3@hotmail.com

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

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2012 in Mexico, the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was unanimously approved by both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and signed by the President. The process for implementing the law has now started, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society, but operational protocols, clear guidelines on cooperation between federal and state authorities and resources urgently need to be put in place to guarantee its effectiveness. It is vital that the authorities do not assume that their responsibilities are restricted to establishing a protection mechanism.

Impunity for threats, fabricated criminal charges, attacks and killings of human rights defenders and journalists remain the greatest obstacle to improving the safety of these vital social actors.

Ignacio Ochoa Plácido's sister, Digna Ochoa, another human rights defender, was killed in 2001.

Name: Ignacio Ochoa Plácido (m) and members of the Human Rights Centre "Digna Ochoa Y Plácido"
Gender m/f: both

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