

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

MEXICO

**Members of the Indigenous community of Cacahuatapec, Guerrero state  
Rodolfo Chávez Galindo (m), member of the Organisation of Community Members  
Opposing the Parota dam (*Consejo de Ejidatarios y Comuneros Opositores a la  
Parota, CECOP*)  
Other members of CECOP**

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The lives of members of an organization opposed to the construction of a hydroelectric dam in Guerrero state, southern Mexico, and of people in an Indigenous community which will be flooded when the dam is built, may be at risk. The community is due to vote on 6 May on whether to allow the state to take possession of the land for the construction of the dam, and it is feared that this may lead to violence and intimidation of those opposing the project.

A meeting of community members is due to take place in the Indigenous community of Cacahuatapec on 6 May, at which they will vote on whether to approve plans to hand over land to the state authorities for the construction of the Parota dam. However, reports suggest that some members of the community have not been informed that the vote is to take place, and there are fears that the community as a whole has not received accurate and impartial information from the state government and the Federal Electricity Commission (*Comisión Federal de Electricidad*) on the impact of the dam project or the compensation being offered by the state. The authorities in Guerrero state have reportedly failed to consult local communities fairly and transparently about the plans over the last few years, leading to an atmosphere of increasing tension and violence in the communities affected by the dam project. At least three people have been killed in relation to disputes over the dam (see UA 337/04, AMR 41/055/2004, 17 December 2004, and follow ups), leading to fears of further violence related to this latest vote.

On 27 March 2007, an Agrarian Court (*Tribunal Unitario Agrario*), which decides on land disputes, ruled that a previous vote in Cacahuatapec in August 2005 to approve the construction of the dam was invalid as it had failed to comply with legal requirements, including ensuring adequate notification and participation of those eligible to vote. The authorities' decision to rerun the vote so soon after the Agrarian Court's ruling without ensuring that all concerned have been adequately informed about the vote and its consequences may risk a serious confrontation between those in favour of the handover of the land and those against.

On 21 April, Rodolfo Chávez Galindo, a leading member of the Organization of Community Members Opposing the Parota Dam (*Consejo de Ejidatarios y Comuneros Opositores a la Parota, CECOP*), was arrested arbitrarily by the police, who used an arrest warrant that had been cancelled in 2004. His rapid release was secured by local human rights organizations later that day, highlighting the fact that the detention may have been politically motivated. It is feared that other members of the organization may be arrested and intimidated.

In other contested community votes in 2005 on the issue of the dam, the authorities reportedly deployed state police who obstructed the participation of those opposing the construction of the dam. The Federal Electricity Company also reportedly failed to fully comply with a federal injunction requiring it to halt construction work on community lands pending the ruling of the Agrarian Court, resulting in increased tensions within affected communities.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opponents of the construction of the Parota dam claim that it would result in the flooding of some 14,000 hectares of land, the eviction of 25,000 people and an impact on the lands of 75,000 farmers living

downstream. The project has divided local communities, with some accepting the handover of their land to the authorities, and others strongly opposed. Activists are asking for a consultation process that includes all the people affected, not just those on the voting rosters of community assemblies and accurate and impartial information on the impact of the dam and compensation to be awarded to all those affected. Amnesty International has documented the violence surrounding the Parota dam project since 2004 including the killing of three people, injuries to several others and death threats to a local activist. The organization is not aware of any progress in official investigations into these incidents.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- calling on the authorities, while acting to protect those exercising their right to public participation, to act impartially and not to intimidate or threaten members of the Cacahuatpec community wishing to exercise their right to free and informed consent at their community assembly on 6 May;
- calling on the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the assembly on 6th May is conducted peacefully and all necessary steps are taken to prevent violence or human rights violations;
- ensure that supporters of CECOP are not the target of threats or intimidation and are allowed to carry out legitimate protests against the construction of the dam;
- calling for an investigation into the arbitrary detention of Rodolfo Chávez Galindo on 21 April;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that communities affected by the proposed construction of the Parota dam are provided with full, accurate and impartial information on the project and the compensation available.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of Guerrero

Lic. Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo  
Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero  
Palacio de Gobierno, Edificio Centro, piso 2,  
Ciudad de los Servicios, CP 39075, Chilpancingo,  
Guerrero, MÉXICO

**Fax:** +52 747 471 9801 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")

**Email:** [magalyss@guerrero.gob.mx](mailto:magalyss@guerrero.gob.mx)

(secretary of the Governor)

**Salutation:** Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Public Security Minister

Ing. Genaro García Luna  
Secretario de Seguridad Pública, Secretaria de Seguridad Pública  
Constituyentes N°947, edificio "B", Piso 2, Col. Belén de las Flores  
Del. Alvaro Obregón, CP 01110, México DF, MEXICO

**Fax:** +52 55 1103 6189

**Email:** [blanca.medina@ssp.gob.mx](mailto:blanca.medina@ssp.gob.mx)

(secretary of the Minister)

**Salutation:** Dear Minister / Señor Secretario

Director of the Federal Commission for Electricity

Lic. Alfredo Elias Ayub  
Director de la Comisión Federal de Electricidad  
Museo Tecnológico, 2a. Secc. del Bosque de Chapultepec,  
Del. Miguel Hidalgo, C.P. 11870, México DF, MEXICO

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**Salutation:** Señor Director / Dear Director

**COPIES TO:**

Local human rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan" AC., Calle Mina, no. 77, Col. Centro, Tlapa de Comonfort, C.P. 41304, Guerrero, MEXICO.

Guerrero state human rights commission

Comisión de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos del Estado de Guerrero, Av. Juárez, Esq. Galo Soberón y Parra, Col. Centro, Chilpancingo C.P. 39000, Guerrero, MEXICO.

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 June 2007.