

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

29 May 2003

MEXICO

Raúl Gatica (m), indigenous political activist

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Raúl Gatica, indigenous activist and head of the *Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca "Ricardo Flores Magón"* (CIPO -RFM), Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca, following a break-in at his house in Oaxaca State and a graffitied death threat against him.

According to reports, on 24 May, Raúl Gatica entered his house in San Isidro Monjas, municipality of Xoxocotlan, Oaxaca State, and found that it had been broken into and vandalised. Books, magazines, personal documents and possessions had been destroyed and his home was left in chaos. However no possessions were reportedly stolen. When he and other members of CIPO- RFM started to clear up, they reportedly found a skull graffitied on the floor with "Raúl" and "You're dead (*Estas muerto*)" written next to it. Members of CIPO-RFM took photos of the vandalized house and reported the incident to the *Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado* (PGJE) of Oaxaca, State Prosecutor's Office.

Raúl Gatica is the leader of the CIPO-RFM, an indigenous political movement in Oaxaca, which promotes activism and indigenous rights in various communities in the state. Both the organization and Raúl Gatica have reportedly suffering repeated threats and harassment over a number of years. In February 2002, Raúl Gatica, and two other members of CIPO-RFM received several death threats (see UA 21/01, AMR 41/005/2001, 26 January 2001 and follow-up, AMR 41/010/2002, 26 February 2002).

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights defenders and community political activists are frequently the target of threats and harassment in Oaxaca State. Scores of Oaxaca's many marginalized and impoverished indigenous communities are riven with community conflicts and violence which are frequently manipulated and exploited by *caciques*-local political henchmen - and state authorities. Organizations which promote activism or indigenous rights within communities may be considered to be subversive by the local authorities and have been the target of threats and harassment.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Raúl Gatica, head of the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca "Ricardo Flores Magón" (CIPO-RFM) following the break-in at his house and the reported death threats against him;
- calling on the authorities to take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of Raúl Gatica in accordance his wishes;
- urging an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the break-in and death threats, and for the results of the investigation to be made public.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

##### Governor of Oaxaca

Lic. José Murat Casab

Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca

Palacio de Gobierno, Bustamante s/n, Oaxaca

Oaxaca 68000 México

**Telegram: Governor of Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico**

**Fax:** + 52 951 51 637 37  
**Salutation:** Señor Gobernador / Dear Governor

Attorney General of Oaxaca  
Lic. Sergio H. Santibáñez  
Procurador del Estado de Oaxaca  
Avenida Luis Echeverría s/n, La Experimental  
San Antonio de la Cal, Oaxaca  
Oaxaca 71236 México

**Telegram:** Attorney General of Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
**Fax:** + 52 951 51 56 786 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")  
**Salutation:** Dear Sir/ Señor Procurador

Human Rights Commission of Oaxaca  
Dr. Sergio Segreste Rios  
Presidente de la Comisión de Derechos  
Humanos del Estado de Oaxaca  
Calle de los Derechos Humanos No. 210  
Col. América  
68050, Oaxaca, México

**Telegram:** Human Rights Commission of Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
**Fax:** + 52 951 51 35 197 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")  
**Salutation:** Dear Sir/ Estimado Señor

**COPIES TO:**

Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca (Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca "Ricardo Flores Magón)  
Emilio Carranza No. 210. Santa Lucía del Camino,  
Estado de Oaxaca  
C.P. 71228  
México

Red Oaxaqueña de Derechos Humanos (RODH) (Oaxaca Human Rights Organization) Privada la Canterita  
114, Col. San Felipe del Agua, Oaxaca de Juárez,  
C.P. 68020 México  
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 10 July 2003.