

PUBLIC

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16 June 2008

UA 168/08 Fear for safety

MEXICO **Cristóbal Martínez Ortega (m)**
Others protesting against the construction of a landfill in Lomas de Mejía, Cuernavaca municipality

Cristóbal Martínez Ortega, a municipal official from the village of San Antón, Cuernavaca municipality, Morelos State, was kidnapped by four men who identified themselves as police officers and was brutally beaten. Cristóbal Martínez is one of the leaders of a group of citizens opposing the construction of a landfill site in the area. Other members of this group may be at risk of similar attacks.

On 11 June, shortly after participating in a press conference informing of the group's programmed protest activities against the construction of the landfill, and as he was travelling in his car with a friend, Cristóbal Martínez was stopped by four men travelling in a large white van without licence plates. The men, who were armed and who identified themselves as federal police officers, told him "we have been looking for you" (*a ti te andabamos buscando*), then forced him into their van. An hour later, Cristóbal Martínez was found by the side of a road, bound and gagged, after he was abandoned by the attackers. He was bleeding profusely from the face and had lost consciousness. He had fractures in his arm, knee and ankle, which he said were the result of being beaten with a metal stick. He is being treated for his injuries in the intensive care ward of a local hospital. Official complaints have been filed with the State Attorney General and the State Human Rights Commission.

The state authorities are planning to build a regional landfill site in the Lomas de Mejía area near the village of San Antón, Cuernavaca municipality. People from nearby towns and villages, including Cristóbal Martínez, have been protesting about the planned site for many months. They claim that the positioning of the site would ruin a well preserved nature area and would pollute water resources, especially as the site is going to be on a mountainous area.

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

- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the beating of Cristóbal Martínez Ortega on 11 June and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to take appropriate measures to guarantee Cristóbal Martínez's safety and that of those who are taking part in legitimate protests against the plan to set up a landfill site in Lomas de Mejía;
- calling on the authorities to adhere to their obligations under the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties, which recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Morelos state
Lic. Marco Antonio Adame Castillo
Gobernador del Estado de Morelos
Palacio de Gobierno
1° Piso, Centro
Cuernavaca 62000
Estado de Morelos, MÉXICO

Fax: (+52 777) 329 2330 (dial ext. 1111 or if someone answers please say: "me da tono de fax, por favor")
Email: gobernador@morelos.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor/ Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of Morelos state

Dr. José Francisco Coronato Rodríguez
Procurador del Estado de Morelos
Emiliano Zapata 803
Col. Buena Vista
Cuernavaca 62000
Estado de Morelos, MÉXICO

E-mail: francisco.coronato@morelos.gob.mx
Fax: +52 777 329 1500 (if someone answers please say: "me da tono de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Señor Procurador

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Juan Camilo Mouriño Terrazo
Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

Fax: +52 55 5093 3414/15/16 (to confirm receipt /17)
E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Human Rights Commission of Morelos

Ing. José Fausto Gutiérrez Aragón
Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de derechos humanos de Morelos
Calle Río Conchos 305
Col. Vista Hermosa Cuernavaca
Cuernavaca 62270
Estado de Morelos, MÉXICO

Fax: (+52 777) 322-1601 (if someone answers please say: "me da tono de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Dear President/ Señor Presidente

COPIES TO:

Comision Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos, A.C.,
Calle Guerrero, num. 4, despacho 110, segundo piso, Centro, Cuernavaca, Morelos, México
Email: cidhmor@prodigy.net.mx

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 28 July 2008.