

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/033/2008

22 July 2008

Further Information on UA 217/07 (AMR 41/052/2007, 22 August 2007) Fear for safety

MEXICO **Jair Pineda (m), lawyer with *Frente Amplio Opositor* (FAO), Broad Opposition Front**
Armando Mendoza Ponce (m), FAO member
Other activists opposing a mining project in Cerro San Pedro, San Luis Potosí state

New name: **Mario Martínez Ramos (m), FAO member**

Environmental activists and members of a coalition protesting against the activities of a mining company in the municipality of Cerro San Pedro, San Luis Potosí state, have been threatened and attacked.

On 16 July a group of activists and members of *Frente Amplio Opositor* (FAO), Broad Opposition Front, an umbrella organisation opposing a mining project in Cerro San Pedro, demonstrated and briefly blocked the access road to the mine's office on the occasion of the visit of the company's new director. According to demonstrators, a municipal police van attempted to run over two protesters who were blocking the road.

On 17 July, Mario Martínez Ramos, a member of FAO, was attacked by a group of armed people while he was in the village of Cerro San Pedro accompanying a couple of foreign journalists. He said that about 10 people, some armed with machetes and handguns, started chasing him. He managed to lock himself in his car and escaped, though the attackers badly damaged the vehicle. He contacted the municipal police immediately after the attack, but they did not investigate the incident. He filed a complaint for attempted murder with the local prosecutor's office, identifying among the attackers some local residents who are believed to work for the mining company as security guards.

On the same day, FAO activist Armando Mendoza Ponce reported being threatened with death by the same man who allegedly tried to run over FAO members on 16 July. According to Armando Mendoza Ponce's testimony, the man threw a large stone at him and said, "You will not live till the end of the week", ("*no pasas de esta semana*").

Last year, Armando Mendoza Ponce's van was shot at while it was empty, and another FAO activist, Jair Pineda, claimed that he was followed and intimidated by men believed to be employees of the mining company. There have been no further reports of threats or intimidation of Jair Pineda and no investigation has apparently been carried into the attacks nor has protection been offered to the activists.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The village of Cerro San Pedro is on a mountain that has been mined for gold and silver for centuries. Local activists claim that mining in the area is damaging the environment and water system. Residents and activists opposed to the mining operations have organised in several environmental defence groups, one of them being the umbrella organisation FAO. The conflict has intensified since mining operations were allowed to resume in 2006.

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

- expressing concern that Mario Martínez Ramos and Armando Mendoza Ponce have been threatened and attacked because of their environmental campaigning work in Cerro San Pedro, San Luis Potosí state, and

calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threats and attacks, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- calling on the authorities to ensure that they receive protection, in accordance with their wishes;

- expressing concern for the safety of members of the *Frente Amplio Opositor* and others opposing the mining operations in Cerro San Pedro;

- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 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 San Luis Potosí

Marcelo de los Santos Fraga

Gobernador del Estado de San Luis Potosí

Palacio de Gobierno

Carranza y Jardín Hidalgo No. 11

San Luis Potosí, 78000, SLP, MÉXICO

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Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of San Luis Potosí State

Lic. Francisco Martín Camberos Hernández

Procurador del Estado de San Luis Potosí

Eje Vial 100, 1er Piso

San Luis Potosí, 78000

Estado de San Luis Potosí, MEXICO

E-Mail: pgjeinf@prodigy.net.mx

Fax: +52 444 8 12 5364

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador

Minister of Interior

Lic. Juan Camilo Mouriño Terrazo

Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

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E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

President of the National Human Rights Commission

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández

Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos (CNDH)

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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 2 September 2008.