

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

MEXICO

Manuela Tirado Evangelio (f)
Teresa Tirado Evangelio (f), her sister
Beatriz Evangelio (f), their mother
Two other siblings and several children (names unknown)

Killed:

Griselda Tirado Evangelio (f), lawyer and indigenous activist

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the family of Griselda Tirado Evangelio, a lawyer and indigenous activist who was murdered on 6 August. On the night of 11 August, a group of unidentified people reportedly tried to enter the family's house in the municipality of Huehuetla, Puebla State.

According to reports, about four or five unknown people arrived at the family home at 11.30pm and tried to open the door. They retreated when dogs started to bark and a neighbour turned on a light but returned a few minutes later. Over the next three hours, this group of individuals reportedly continued hitting the walls and doors of the house. The family, including several children, remained inside the house, fearful that the individuals would enter the home.

This incident follows the murder of Griselda Tirado Evangelio, the daughter of Beatriz Evangelio and the sister of Manuela and Teresa Evangelio. Griselda Tirado Evangelio was a human rights defender and member of the *Organización Independiente Totonaca (OIT)*, Totonaca Independent Organization, defending the rights of indigenous communities in Puebla's Sierra Norte region, at times involving land disputes. Griselda Tirado Evangelio was shot dead between 4am and 5am on 6 August as she was leaving her home to go to work. On hearing the shot, her mother and one of her sisters ran out of the house, but her attacker had already run away. Shortly afterwards, a relative informed the local *Ministerio Público*, Public Ministry or public prosecutor's office, of the incident. However, the *Ministerio Público* allegedly failed to carry out an investigation of the crime scene with due speed, potentially losing the opportunity to gather vital evidence.

Griselda Tirado was founder of the *Centro de Estudios Superiores Indígenas*, Centre for Higher Indigenous Studies. She was an adviser to the electoral district in Zacatlán in 2002 and an adviser to the Federal Electoral Institute for the district of Teziutlán. She was also an aspiring candidate in forthcoming elections to the indigenous municipal government, bringing her into conflict with powerful vested interests, or *cacicazgos*. Indigenous activists throughout the country have faced reprisals for their work in defence of land and other collective rights.

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at this latest killing and fears that this incident as well as other recent threats against human rights defenders represents a deliberate attempt to stop them from carrying out their legitimate work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The indigenous rights movement plays a key role in strengthening the rule of law and the development of institutions to protect the rights of indigenous communities. The OIT has been working since 1989 to defend and promote the rights of the indigenous people of the region, resulting in the formation of community assemblies and a proposed bill for indigenous rights in Puebla State. However, those involved in protecting indigenous rights in Mexico have often been the target of threats and harassment themselves. Their personal safety is often put in danger and those responsible are usually never brought to justice.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Manuela Tirado Evangelio, Teresa Tirado Evangelio, Beatriz Evangelio and other members of their family, following the intimidation of the family by unknown individuals on 11 August;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of the family, in accordance with the wishes of the family members themselves;
- urging the authorities to immediately and fully investigate the incident on 11 August, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- to carry out a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the murder of Griselda Tirado Evangelio, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties 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 Puebla

Lic. Melquiades Morales Flores
Gobernador del Estado de Puebla
Palacio de Gobierno

Av. Reforma No. 711 Altos Col. Centro
Puebla 72009, Estado de Puebla, MÉXICO

Telegram: Gobernador del Estado de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

Fax: + 52 22 46 02 71

Salutation: Señor Gobernador / Dear Governor

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Santiago Creel
Secretario de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

Telegram: Secretario de Gobernación, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Fax: + 525 55 093 3414 / 093 3415

Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Attorney General of Puebla

Lic. Héctor Maldonado Villagómez
Procurador del Estado de Puebla
Boulevard Héroes del 5 de Mayo Av. 31 Ote
Col. Ladrillera de Benítez
Puebla 75539, MÉXICO

Telegram: Procurador del Estado de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

Fax: + 52 22 372 867

Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Señor Procurador

Human Rights Commission of Puebla

Lic. Jorge Ramón Morales Díaz
Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Defensa
de Derechos Humanos de Puebla
Bulevar 15 de Mayo No. 2929-A
Fraccionamiento Mundial 86
72070, Puebla, Puebla, MÉXICO

Telegram: Presidente, Comisión Estatal de Defensa de Derechos Humanos, Puebla, Mexico

Fax: + 52 22 48 5319 / 5022

Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" AC

Serapio Rendon 57-B

Col. San Rafael, 06470

México DF, Mexico

Fax: + 52 55 535 6892

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 24 September 2003.