

2007

22 August

UA 217/07 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

Activists opposing the operations of a mining company in Cerro San Pedro, a village in the northern state of San Luis Potosí, have been repeatedly harassed and attacked, reportedly by employees of the mining company. The attacks have intensified over the last few weeks, and Amnesty International believes their lives are in danger.

Jair Pineda is a lawyer and activist with the umbrella organisation of local environmental groups *Frente Amplio Opositor* (FAO), Broad Opposition Front. On 5 August at 1am, after talking to two employees of the mining company, he drove away but realised that the two men were following him in a mining company van. When they caught up with him the men told him to get out of the car, presumably to beat him. Jair Pineda refused to do so, and they chased him to the outskirts of the town, but eventually he managed to escape.

Later that night, other armed men in a car stopped in front of FAO activist Armando Mendoza Ponce's home and shouted *Armando joto* ("Armando you fag") and fired four shots at his van, which was parked outside. Armando Mendoza, who lives in Cerro San Pedro, reported the attack to the authorities and claimed that the attackers were the same people who had shot at other activists' vehicles months before.

Other Cerro San Pedro residents and FAO activists also recently suffered acts of vandalism, including broken windows and graffiti on their walls, or human excrement thrown at their homes. Many have reported being followed by vehicles or men believed to be employees of the mining company, especially since July 2007.

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 is poisoning the water supply with cyanide and destroying the mountain with explosives. 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 the mining company was allowed to resume operations in 2006, despite an administrative tribunal declaring its concession illegal in 2005.

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

- expressing concern that Jair Pineda and Armando Mendoza Ponce have been threatened and harassed 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
Fax: +52 444 8 12 2707
Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of San Luis Potosí State
Lic. Guillermo Salazar Trejo

Procurador del Estado de San Luis Potosí
Eje Vial 100, 1er Piso
San Luis Potosí, 78000
Estado de San Luis Potosí, MEXICO
E-Mail: subavsslp@prodigy.net.mx
Fax: +52 444 8 12 5364
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador

Minister of the Interior
Lic. Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister

Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources
Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada
Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT)
Boulevard Adolfo Ruiz Cortinez, Fracc. Jardines en la Montaña, Delegación Tlalpan
C.P. 14210, México DF, MÉXICO
Fax: +52 55 56 28 06 43
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 Derechos Humanos (CNDH)
Periférico Sur 3469, 5º piso, Col. San Jerónimo Lídice, México D.F. 10200, MEXICO

Respuesta Alternativa, A.C.
San Luis Potosí
Email: ralternativa@hotmail.com

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 3 October 2007.
