

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/064/2008

05 December 2008

Further Information on UA 129/08 (AMR 41/023/2008, 16 May 2008) Fear for safety

MEXICO **Inhabitants of Santo Domingo Ixcatlán opposing the sale of communal lands**
Workers for human rights organisation CEDHAPI

Inhabitants of town Santo Domingo Ixcatlán, in Oaxaca state, are apparently under siege from a group of armed men working for a local political boss (*cacique*) closely connected to the municipal authorities. For many months, the group has been threatening and intimidating members of the community who oppose the sale of communal lands. Three community members opposed to the sale were killed in April 2008. The sale of those lands would bring profit to the municipal authorities and the local political boss.

According to members of the local community, on 3 December a group of about 50 men wearing balaclavas and armed with rifles and AK-47s surrounded Santo Domingo Ixcatlán. Five state police officers who had been deployed to the town in order to protect the inhabitants were told to leave within an hour or be killed. After the police officers left, the armed men shouted that all those that opposed them must leave within 48 hours or be killed. As far as Amnesty International is aware, no police reinforcements have been sent to Santo Domingo Ixcatlán. Inhabitants have reported that roads have been blocked and electricity has been cut off.

In May 2008, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Mexican authorities to provide protection measures for 60 people, including people working for Centre for Human Rights and Advice for Indigenous People (*Centro de Derechos Humanos y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas*, CEDHAPI) who work with the community, as well as relatives and friends of those killed in April, and witnesses to these killings. In August, the Inter-American Commission asked for protection measures to be extended to 177 people.

CEDHAPI has reported that the protection provided by the state police is insufficient and there has been little progress in arresting and bringing to justice a number of people involved in the killings and intimidation, even though arrest warrants have been issued for least 16 men. So far only four men, including the local political boss, have been arrested, and it is thought that this latest attack may be an attempt to make the authorities release those arrested.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the inhabitants of the community of Santo Domingo Ixcatlán, Oaxaca state, which is reported to be under siege from some 50 armed men;
- calling on the authorities to mobilize security forces immediately in order to protect the community and restore order, as well as restoring the routes into and out of Santo Domingo Ixcatlán;
- urging the authorities to carry out a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the activities of the armed group, and its intimidation of the inhabitants of Santo Domingo Ixcatlán; with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to promptly carry out the arrests that are pending for the killings of April 2008.

APPEALS TO:
Minister of Interior

Lic. Fernando Francisco Gómez-Mont Urueta
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso,
Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc,
México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza
Procurador General de la República
Procuraduría General de la República,
Av. Paseo de la Reforma n° 211-213, Piso 16
Col. Cuauhtémoc, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P. 06500, MEXICO
Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (if someone answers please say “me da tono de fax, por favor”)
Salutation: Señor Procurador General/Dear Attorney General

Governor of Oaxaca

Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz
Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca
Carretera Oaxaca-Puerto Ángel, Km. 9.5, Santa María Coyotepec,
Oaxaca C.P. 71254, Oaxaca, MEXICO
Fax: +52 951 517 5890
E-mail: gobernador@oaxaca.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Local Human Rights Organisation

Centro de Derechos Humanos y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas
Calle León, no. 15 Barrio San Diego, Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, México
Email: cedhapi@yahoo.com.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 16 January 2009.