

URGENT ACTION

MEXICAN COMMUNITY UNDER RENEWED THREAT

Security guards hired by a local landowner have been menacing people living in an area of the northern state of Chihuahua. Many have fled the area, but the seven families still living there are now at renewed risk of attack.

One of the security guards hired by the local landowning family was seen walking around one of the few occupied houses in the area, called Lomas del Poleo, on 24 March. He then fired into the air, according to residents and local human rights activists. The next day, resident **Martín González** had a series of shots fired at his house. On 27 March, Federal Police officers went into Lomas del Poleo via the entrance patrolled by the security guards and were seen shooting close to Lomas del Poleo's primary school. A few days before this, an army patrol truck had gone in through the private security cordon and driven around the inhabited homes several times in the middle of the night. Local residents have said that all this was intended to intimidate them.

People living in Lomas del Poleo have been harassed and attacked since 2003 by men working for the landowner, who has tried to force them off land they have lived on for decades. In 2004 these men put up a barbed wire fence around the area, with a single entrance patrolled by security guards working for the landowner. In 2005, according to people living there, the security guards set fire to 40 homes and beat a man to death. Only seven families still live in the area. They say they have told the local Public Prosecutor's office about what has happened, but no serious investigation has ever been carried out.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to ensure that Martín González and other residents of Lomas del Poleo, who have been threatened and intimidated by security guards working for local landowners, are given appropriate protection according to their wishes;
- Urging them to order independent and impartial investigations into the attacks and intimidation, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on them to order an investigation into the Federal Police and military operations in Lomas del Poleo in late March, to establish why these were conducted;
- Urging them to prevent any attempt to drive residents of Lomas del Poleo off their land, and to ensure the dispute is resolved fairly and satisfactorily in the Agrarian Tribunal.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 MAY 2011 TO:

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. César Duarte Jaquez
 Gobernador del Estado del Chihuahua,
 Palacio del Gobierno, 1er piso, C.
 Aldama #901, Col. Centro,
 Chihuahua, Estado del Chihuahua, C.P.
 31000, Mexico
 Fax: +52 614 429 3300 (ext. 11066)

Salutation: Dear Governor

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
 Secretario, Sec. del Gobernación
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,
 Delegación Cuauhtémoc,
 México D.F., C.P. 06600
 Fax: +52 55 30032900 (a voice will
 ask for the extension: dial 32356)

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mayor of Ciudad Juárez

Ing. Héctor Murgía Lardizábal
 Presidente Municipal de Ciudad Juárez
 Unidad Administrativa Benito Juárez.
 Primer piso, ala norte.
 Av. Francisco Villa # 950 Norte, Cd.
 Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico
 Email: presidente@juarez.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Mayor

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 15/09. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/004/2009

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The land of Lomas del Poleo has become much more valuable over the last few years, as it stands between the city of Ciudad Juárez and an area which a group of businessmen are developing into a new urban and industrial area.

An Agrarian Tribunal has been considering the dispute over the ownership of the Lomas del Poleo land for over a year. Negotiations between the local landowner, the federal government and the residents of Lomas del Poleo broke down in early 2011. Since then, despite its apparent commitment to seeking a solution, the federal government has made no attempt to communicate with the residents of Lomas del Poleo.

Further information on UA: 15/09 Index: AMR 41/018/2011 Issue Date: 01 April 2011

