

URGENT ACTION

NEW THREATS AGAINST INDIGENOUS ACTIVISTS

Mexican Indigenous rights defenders Otilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez have received new death threats. They have been campaigning to bring soldiers to account for the rape of two Indigenous women in 2002. Their lives are at risk.

On 28 November a written death threat was delivered to the house where Indigenous rights defenders Otilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez live with their children in southern Mexico. Otilia Eugenio Manuel is the president of the Me'phaa Indigenous People's Organization (Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me'pha, OPIM) and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez is one of its leaders. They have been vocal in pursuing the case of two Me'phaa Indigenous women, Inés Fernández Ortega and Valentina Rosendo Cantú, who were raped by Mexican soldiers in 2002. In August the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to deliver truth, justice and reparation and to take steps to avoid the repetition of this kind of abuses.

Parts of the threatening hand-written letter read: "Hello Otilia. Now we know where you live why are you messing around with the Ines and Valentina issue stop fucking around with the issue of the sentence of the two women ... calm down your organization's members otherwise you're dead" and "Cuauhtémoc calm down or you're dead ... stop fucking around saying that the government has to comply with the sentence the government is angry that's why we are here stop fighting ines and valentina sentence" (Hola Otilia. Ahora ya sabemos donde vive por que tanto molesta de la asunto Ines y Valentina deje estar chingando en la asunto sentencia de las dos mujeres ... calmate con tu gente de la organización porque sino te va carga la chingada ... calmate Cuauhtémoc porque se van carga la chingada ... dejen estar chingando que el gobierno tiene cumplir la sentencia si esta enojado los gobierno por eso estamos aquí deje estar peleando sentencia ines y valentina) (sic).

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Otilia Eugenio Manuel, Cuauhtémoc Ramírez and their family;
- Urging the authorities to provide them with effective protection measures, in strict accordance with their wishes, and as requested by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a swift, full and impartial investigation into these and previous threats and attacks, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice.
- Calling on the authorities to promptly and fully comply with the Inter-American Court sentences on the cases of Inés Fernández and Valentina Rosendo.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 JANUARY 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,
Delegación Cuauhtémoc,
México D.F., C.P. 06600, MÉXICO

Fax: (+52) 55 5063 3405

Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado
Señor Secretario**

Federal State Attorney General

Lic. Arturo Chávez Chávez
Procuraduría General de la República
Av. Paseo de la Reforma 211-213,
Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F.,
C.P. 06500, MÉXICO

Fax: +52 55 5346 0908

Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Attorney
General/Estimado Señor Procurador**

And copies to:

Local human rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos de la
Montaña "Tlachinollan"
Mina 77, Col. Centro, Tlapa de
Comonfort, C.P. 41304, Guerrero,
MÉXICO

Email: tlachinollan.difusion@gmail.com

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 first update of UA 63/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/021/2010/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Defending human rights can be a life-threatening job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Some of them have been killed for doing their job. The authorities have recognized that adopting and implementing an effective and comprehensive protection programme (mecanismo de protección), as requested by human rights defenders, is paramount. However, they are yet to fulfil their promise.

As founder and director of OPIM, Otilia Eugenio Manuel has been the target of numerous threats, acts of intimidation and surveillance. One of the most recent threats was a written message delivered to the OPIM office on 6 March 2010 and, later that day, a man was seen overtly watching the OPIM office and taking pictures with on his mobile phone. On 17 March 2009 Otilia Eugenio Manuel received three death threats by text message to her mobile phone. One of the messages also warned her that no human rights organization could protect her. In January 2009 Otilia Eugenio Manuel was followed several times. She recognized one of the men following her as a supporter of a local political boss (cacique).

On 9 April 2009 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to provide Otilia Eugenio Manuel, her family and others with effective protection measures and to investigate the attacks. To date, only some of the agreed measures have been put in place and those behind the attacks remain at large.

OPIM activist Raúl Hernández spent more than two years in prison on fabricated charges. Amnesty International named him prisoner of conscience and he was eventually released on 30 August 2010. Four other activists had also been imprisoned with him for 11 months.

On 30 and 31 August 2010 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to address the human rights violations suffered by Me'phaa Indigenous women Inés Fernández Ortega and Valentina Rosendo Cantú. They were raped by soldiers in two separate incidents in early 2002. The state must now fulfil its international obligation to deliver truth, justice and reparation for the two women and to take steps to avoid the repetition of these abuses. This includes scrapping military jurisdiction for human rights violations committed by members of the military.

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