

# URGENT ACTION

## MEXICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ARRESTED

**Mexican human rights defender Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez was arrested on 22 February. The information available suggests that she is the target of unfounded criminal charges and detention in reprisal for defending the rights of Indigenous people.**

On 22 February agents from the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República) arrested **Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez** in the municipality of Santa María Xadani, in Oaxaca State, as she left a meeting with the Federal Electricity Commission accompanied by a human rights lawyer Maribel González Pedro. The agents did not show a warrant authorising her arrest or explain the reasons for her detention or where she was being taken to.

She was held incommunicado for four hours before being taken to Tehuantepec prison to face charges of illegally detaining staff of the Federal Electricity Commission. She is due to be brought before a judge today, who has the authority to release her on bail. Amnesty International is concerned that the charges have been fabricated to prevent her from carrying out her work as a human rights defender and that she may be denied a fair judicial process. Her arrest forms part of a pattern of arrests of human rights defenders on unfounded charges of illegal detention of public officials which have resulted in unfair criminal proceedings and long periods in prison for the activists.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Call on the authorities to ensure that Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez will not be subject to torture or other ill-treatment, and to ensure she has access to the lawyer of her choice and her family;
- Urge them to ensure judicial proceedings have not been brought on the basis of unsupported or unreliable evidence in reprisal for Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez's legitimate human rights work and that her right to a fair trial is guaranteed in accordance with international fair trial standards, including the right to bail related to these charges;
- Urge them to ensure the safety of all members or Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Defence of Land and Territory and that they are not subject to unfounded judicial persecution.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2012 TO:

#### Attorney General of the Republic

Marisela Morales Ibáñez  
Paseo de la reforma 211-213  
Col. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P. 06500,  
México  
Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (keep trying and ask  
for "fax")  
Email: [ofproc@pgr.gob.mx](mailto:ofproc@pgr.gob.mx)

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

#### Minister of the Interior

Dr. Alejandro Poiré Romero  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez  
Delegación Cuauhtémoc  
México D.F., C.P.06600, México  
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414  
Email: [secretario@segob.gob.mx](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)

Salutation: Dear Minister

#### And copies to:

Proyecto de Derechos Economicos Sociales  
y Culturales (Project on Economic, Social  
and Cultural rights, AC)  
Email: [proyectodesc@gmail.com](mailto:proyectodesc@gmail.com)  
(Local NGO who is working with Lucila  
Bettina Cruz Velázquez)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez is a member and co-founder of the Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Defence of Land and Territory (Asamblea de los Pueblos Indígenas del Istmo de Tehuantepec en Defensa de la Tierra y el Territorio). The Assembly campaigns to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and has carried out work to protest against the construction of wind-turbines on land belonging to indigenous peoples. In November 2011, the Ombudsman for Human Rights of Oaxaca State issued precautionary measures to protect Lucila Bettina Cruz in the light of threats and attacks that she suffered as a result of her human rights work in October and November of 2011.

On 21 October 2011, Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez and Maribel González Pedro were threatened with death, when around fifty workers from a wind farm company arrived on land belonging to the indigenous Zapoteca community of Unión Hidalgo in Oaxaca State. Members of the indigenous community are opposed to the wind farm being built on their land. They argue the construction is taking place without their free, prior and informed consent in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and they are concerned about the impact of the construction on their agriculture and land.

On 28 October 2011, members of the People's Assembly of the Isthmus in Defence of Land and Territory and the Resistance Committee to Wind farm Project of Union Hidalgo (El Comité de Resistencia al Proyecto Eólico de Unión Hidalgo) held a protest on the La Venta-Union Hidalgo section of the Panamerican highway, against the construction of wind-turbines on their land. According to information received, members of the nearby community of La Venta in favour of the wind-farm arrived and threatened the group to stop their protest. The protesters argued their right to peacefully protest, but more men arrived, armed with pistols and machetes. Leaders of the protesters, including Lucila Bettina Cruz Velazquez and Juan Regalado Martinez, were kicked and punched to the ground and threatened with death. Two people were killed and members of the community including Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez were falsely accused of being responsible.

Industrial and development projects affecting Indigenous and peasant farming communities in Mexico are frequently implemented without reliable information or consultation and free prior and informed consent with the Indigenous communities affected is not obtained. As a result members of communities protest against the projects and demand their right to be heard and consulted. Amnesty International has frequently documented the misuse of the criminal justice system against human rights defenders and community activists who carry out peaceful protest to demand respect for their rights which has resulted in judicial harassment, unfair trials and unsafe convictions.

Name: Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez

Gender m/f: Female

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