

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/036/2005

UA 229/05

Fear for safety

7 September 2005

MEXICO

**Olga Isabel León Victoria (f), and her family
Zoila Reyes Santiago (f)
Other members of the community of San Isidro Vista Hermosa, Oaxaca State**

Olga Isabel León Victoria, a 17 year old girl from the indigenous mixteca community of San Isidro Vista Hermosa, in the Tlaxiaco District, in the State of Oaxaca, was reportedly abducted on 29 August. She was freed on 31 August after having been allegedly raped by her kidnappers. Since then, her relatives and other members of the community have been intimidated and threatened.

Amnesty International believes that Olga Isabel's kidnapping and rape is related to a long running communal conflict between members of the community of San Isidro Vista Hermosa and the authorities of the municipality of Santa Cruz Nundaco. The state government has failed to intervene to prevent violence and was reportedly slow to respond to the abduction and rape of Olga Isabel.

On 29 August, the authorities of Santa Cruz Nundaco arrived in San Isidro, accompanied by approximately 500 supporters. They wanted to impose a new Municipal Authority (*Agente Municipal*) without the consent of the Communal Assembly of San Isidro. Fearing attack, members of the Assembly of San Isidro fled the community for the mountains or the main town of Tlaxiaco. Later that day Olga Isabel's family discovered she had disappeared.

In the evening of 29 August, her family reportedly received an anonymous call in which the caller said "Olga has been kidnapped by authorities of Santa Cruz Nundaco" (*Olga se encuentra secuestrada por autoridades de Santa Cruz Nundaco*). The following day Olga Isabel herself reportedly made a call from her mobile phone to Zoila Reyes Santiago – a well-known leader of the San Isidro group opposed to the Santa Cruz Nundaco authorities. Olga Isabel told Zoila Reyes to be careful as the kidnappers had intended to abduct her daughter instead. Olga Isabel was reportedly able to make this call, as the kidnappers apparently intended to frighten members of the community.

Olga Isabel was freed on 31 August 40 kilometres from Santa Cruz Nundaco. The kidnappers reportedly gave her an envelope addressed to Zoila Reyes, which was later opened by experts from the Prosecutor's Office. It contained a threat to Zoila Reyes and her family, which said: "Today we made a mistake with your family, but next time we will make no mistake, I know your family: Sara, Alvaro, Martha, María, Teresa, Edith, Alfonso, Miguel, Daniel, and mainly you Zoila, and any of them will be targets, and then it is you, friend" (*Hoy nos equivocamos con tu familia, pero a la otra no hay vuelta de hoja, conozco de sobra a tu familia: Sara, Alvaro, Martha, María, Teresa, Edith, Alfonso, Miguel, Daniel, y principalmente tu Zoila, y cualquiera de ellos les tocará y después sigues tu amiga*).

Upon her release, Olga Isabel reported that a masked man had forced her into a van containing another masked man and woman. She was then taken to an unknown destination where she was blindfolded and tied up. She was reportedly raped by her male captors. Since her release, human rights organizations have managed to review the official case file and concluded that no serious investigation has been undertaken into her abduction and rape.

Olga Isabel's family has repeatedly been followed by an unmarked car with blacked out windows. On 4 September, members of San Isidro community held a public assembly in the city of Tlaxiaco during which similar unmarked cars were seen cruising around the area. However, officials were reluctant to accept reports of harassment against the family. Amnesty International is not aware of any precautionary measures taken so far by the local or state authorities to protect the safety of Olga Isabel and her family, or of any

measures to protect the people from the community of San Isidro Vista Hermosa from further intimidation. There is reportedly one police vehicle with four Preventive Police (*Policía Preventiva*) offices patrolling the municipality. The failure of the authorities to prevent escalating violence in the community is also placing the population at further risk.

In July 2005, members of the San Isidro community were reportedly held captive, beaten and threatened by supporters of the municipal authorities of Santa Cruz Nundaco. Despite filing criminal complaints, the local authorities reportedly failed to take action against those responsible for the violence, including the municipal president.

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

- calling for immediate measures to be introduced to protect Olga Isabel León Victoria and her family;
- calling for the safety of Zoila Reyes Santiago and her family and other members of San Isidro Vista Hermosa community to be guaranteed;
- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the allegation of abduction and rape of Olga Isabel León Victoria, with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice;
- calling for all threats and attacks against members of the community of San Isidro Vista Hermosa to be fully investigated and if any members of the municipal authorities are implicated, for them to be held to account;
- urging the authorities to address the underlying causes of the conflict between Santa Cruz Nundaco and San Isidro Vista Hermosa in order to avoid further violence.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Oaxaca

Ulises Ruiz Ortiz

Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca

Carretera Oaxaca, Puerto Angel, Km. 9.5

Santa María Coyotopec, C. P. 71254, Oaxaca, Oaxaca, MEXICO

Fax: + 52 951 511 6879 (if someone answers, ask "tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor

Attorney General of Oaxaca

Lic. Patricia Villanueva Abraján

Procuradora del Estado de Oaxaca

Avenida Luis Echeverría s/n, La Experimental

San Antonio de la Cal, C. P. 71236, Oaxaca,

Oaxaca, MEXICO

Fax: +52 951 511 5519

Salutation: Estimada Procuradora/Dear Attorney General

Director of Human Rights – Federal Interior Ministry

Maestro Ricardo Sepúlveda

Secretaría de Gobernación

Reforma 99, PISO 21, PH

Colonia Tabacalera

C.P. 06030, Mexico D.F. MEXICO

Fax: + 52 55 5128 0234 (if someone answers, ask "tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Estimado Maestro/Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Human Rights NGO

Centro de Derechos Humanos Nu'u Ji Kandii, A.C.

Isabel La Católica #21, Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, MEXICO

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 19 October 2005.