

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

MEXICO

Gustavo Jiménez Pérez (m)
Luis Gabriel Ramírez Cuevas (m)

] members of *Alianza Cívica-Chiapas*
] (Civic Alliance-Chiapas)

Human rights activist Gustavo Jiménez Pérez was severely beaten on 20 November, by six men who forced their way into his house and threatened to kill him. He and his housemate, Gabriel Ramírez, have recently been involved in exposing alleged official corruption in the distribution of humanitarian relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Stan, which struck Southern Mexico in October. Both men are members of a grassroots organization promoting social activism called *Alianza Cívica-Chiapas* (Civic Alliance-Chiapas). Amnesty International believes this may be the reason for the attack, and fears that both men are in danger.

According to Gustavo's testimony, at around 9.30pm on 20 November he heard someone knocking at his front door. When he went to answer it, six men carrying knives stormed into the house, pushing him violently. They cut his face and neck, and kicked him in the head. While they were beating him they told him, "We have come to kill you" (*venimos a matarte*). As he lay on the floor he overheard one of them saying, "let's go, he is already dead" (*vámonos, ya está muerto*). They left the house, taking the TV, the VCR and a backpack containing valuables including an identification card and a bank card.

At around 10pm, Gabriel Ramírez Cuevas returned home to find Gustavo Jiménez almost unconscious. It is not clear whether the six men intended to attack Gustavo Jiménez or Gabriel Ramírez, since both have been working to expose alleged corruption.

On 22 November, Gustavo Jiménez and Gabriel Ramírez were returning to their house from a press conference organized to condemn the 20 November attack, at around 2.30pm, accompanied by a lawyer from a local human rights organization, the Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, when they saw a man inside their house. Fearing that they were in danger, they went away. The intruder ran away from the house. He had searched the place thoroughly, but taken nothing.

Gustavo Jiménez and Gabriel Ramírez have now filed a complaint with the State Attorney General's Office (*Fiscalía General de Justicia del Estado*).

In October 2005 Enrique Zamora, director of the newspaper *El Orbe* in Tlapachula, Chiapas, was detained overnight by police and interrogated under harsh libel legislation, which came into effect in May 2004. His newspaper had repeatedly reported allegations of official corruption in the response to Hurricane Stan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Social activists and human rights defenders have frequently been the target of threats, harassment and smear campaigns, particularly at the state and municipal level. Those responsible are rarely identified or brought to justice, principally because official investigations are ineffective. The authorities also often fail to clearly demonstrate their commitment to the legitimate role of human rights defenders in the country.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Gustavo Jiménez, who was allegedly severely beaten and threatened with death by unidentified individuals on 20 November;
- expressing concern for the safety of Gabriel Ramírez, who may be also at risk due to his involvement in the activities to expose alleged irregularities in the authorities' efforts to help the victims of Hurricane Stan;

- calling for a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the attack on Gustavo Jiménez, for the findings to be published and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Gustavo Jiménez and Gabriel Ramírez do not suffer any further attacks as a result of their work as human rights activists, and to guarantee that they will receive protection in accordance with their own wishes;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Chiapas

Lic. Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas,
Palacio de Gobierno, Piso 1,
Col. Centro 29000,
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico.

Fax: +52 961 61 209 17

+52 961 61 256 18 (if someone answers, ask “tono de fax, por favor”)

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

Attorney General of Chiapas

Fiscal General de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas
Libramiento Norte s/n
Infonavit “El Rosario”, CP 30064
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico

Fax: + 52 961 61 657 24

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Attorney General

Director of Human Rights – Interior Ministry

Dr. Ricardo Sepúlveda
Secretaría de Gobernación
Reforma 99, Piso 21, PH
Colonia Tabacalera
CP. 06030, México DF, Mexico

Fax: +52 55 51 28 0234 (if someone answers, say “tono de fax, por favor”)

Salutation: Estimado Doctor/Dear Dr Sepúlveda

COPIES TO:

Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas A.C
Brasil No. 14 Barrio Mexicanos, CP. 29240, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico

Fax: +52 967 67 83551 (if someone answers, say “tono de fax, por favor”)

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 5 January 2006.