

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

02 November 2006

MEXICO

**LIMEDDH (*Liga Mexicana para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos*) Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights**

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The Oaxaca office of the *Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos* (Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights – LIMEDDH) has reportedly been targeted by unknown individuals. Amnesty International believes that human rights defenders working at this office may be in danger.

As LIMEDDH activists arrived at work on 31 October they found graffiti by the entrance of their city centre office. The graffiti said “*aquí se reúne la APPO*” (“this is where APPO meet”) and “*las barricadas son contra los derechos humanos*” (“barricades are against human rights”). APPO (*Asamblea Popular del Pueblo de Oaxaca* – Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca) is an umbrella organisation which has led protests against the Oaxaca state governor, Ulises Ruiz. The APPO has repeatedly been attacked by officials linked to the state government, which has resulted in several deaths (see UA 227/06, 24 August 2006, AMR 41/041/2006 and follow ups).

The graffiti may endanger LIMEDDH activists by making them a target of retaliatory actions by APPO opponents. It is also intended to damage their credibility and work. Prior to this incident, LIMEDDH activists had noticed that they had been under surveillance by unidentified individuals since 27 October, when violence around protests in Oaxaca began to escalate. LIMEDDH activists and other human rights defenders have been documenting and denouncing the resulting human rights violations and Amnesty International believes that this latest incident may be an attempt to stop their work.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Members of the National Union of Education Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*, SNTE) and APPO supporters have been protesting and demanding the resignation of the Oaxaca governor since last May, occupying the main square and blockading the surrounding streets of Oaxaca City. Since 27 October, violence and insecurity in the city escalated when armed men, including plain clothed state police officers and municipal security officials, attacked protesters at the barricades in different parts of the city, causing the death of at least 3 people. This apparently triggered the intervention of the Federal Preventive Police on 29 October, which ended the occupation of the city centre. During the operation 2 people died, with scores others injured and detained. The arrests of SNTE members and APPO supporters as well as house searches continue. More than 50 people are reportedly in detention.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of LIMEDDH activists;
- urging the authorities to carry out a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the acts of intimidation against them, including the graffiti incident on 31 October and the reported surveillance by unknown individuals;
- calling for the results of the investigation to be made public, and those responsible brought to justice;-
- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of LIMEDDH activists in order to allow them to continue their essential human rights work in Oaxaca;
- reminding the authorities that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Carlos Abascal Carranza

Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

**Fax: + 52 55 5093 3414**

**Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado Secretario de Gobernación**

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Daniel Cabeza de Vaca

Procurador General de la República, Procuraduría General de la República

Reforma Cuauhtémoc esq. Violeta 75, Col. Guerrero, Delegación Cuauhtémoc

México D.F., C.P. 06 500, MEXICO

**Fax: + 52 55 5346 0908 (if someone answers, say "me da tono de fax, por favor")**

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

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, say "me da tono de fax, por favor")**

**Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor**

President of the National Human Rights Commission

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández

Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH)

Periférico Sur 3469, 5º piso, Col. San Jerónimo Lídice

México D.F. 10200, MÉXICO

**Fax: + 52 55 5681 7199**

**Salutation: Dear President / Estimado Presidente**

**COPIES TO:**

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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 14 December 2006.