

URGENT ACTION

DEATH THREATS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders Marisela Ortiz and Maria Luisa Andrade have fled their homes in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state, following death threats, harassment and intimidation. Their lives and those of their families are at risk.

In the early hours of 10 March a large banner displaying a death threat against **Marisela Ortiz** and her son was hung at the school where she teaches. It read "If you want to keep helping the bitch called Malu, fucking teacher Marisela Ortiz, we're going to screw your family starting with your son Rowe, we have him on the list, sincerely JL" ("Si querias seguir apoyando a la pinche culera de la licenciada Malu, maestrita de mierda Marisela Ortiz vamos a chingarnos a tu familia empezando por tu hijo el chapulin del Rowe que ya lo tenemos en la lista, Att JL"). Publicly displayed banners containing threats and other messages are frequently used by organized crime groups in Mexico. On 16 February, the home of **Maria Luisa (Malu) Andrade** was damaged in an arson attack by unknown individuals.

Marisela Ortiz and Maria Luisa Andrade are well known human rights defenders who founded Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa (Our Daughters Return Home) to campaign for justice and an end to impunity for the abduction, rape, and killing of women in Ciudad Juárez. In 2008 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered Mexico to provide Marisela Ortiz and Maria Luisa Andrade with protection measures. To date, however, the Mexican government has failed to grant them any meaningful protection and those responsible for the threats and acts of intimidation have not been identified or brought to justice.

The threats follow a pattern of attacks against women defenders in the state which the Mexican authorities have failed to effectively investigate. In January 2010, Josefina Reyes, who had been active in protests against violence linked to organized crime, and human rights violations committed by the military, was murdered in the east of Ciudad Juárez. In December 2010, local activist Marisela Escobedo Ortiz was murdered on Chihuahua City's main square by an armed man during a protest to demand justice for the murder of her daughter Rubí Marisol Frayre Escobedo. On 10 January 2011, human rights defender Susana Chavez's body was found in central Ciudad Juárez.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of the Marisela Ortiz, Maria Luisa Andrade, their families and other local activists working in Ciudad Juárez;
- Calling for immediate measures to protect Marisela Ortiz, Maria Luisa Andrade and their families to be implemented in accordance with the wishes of those at risk;
- Calling for the threats and arson attack on the home of Maria Luisa García Andrade to be investigated promptly and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 APRIL 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretario, Sec. 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

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Señor Secretario

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. César Duarte
Gobernador del Estado de Chihuahua,
Palacio de Gobierno, 1er piso, C.
Aldama #901, Col. Centro,
Chihuahua, Estado de Chihuahua, C.P.
31000, Mexico
Fax: +52 614 429 3300 (then dial
extension 11066 when prompted)

**Salutation: Señor Gobernador/
Dear Governor**

State Attorney General

Carlos Manuel Salas
Fiscalía General del Estado
Edificio de Procuraduría 3 Piso A,
C. Vicente Guerrero # 616
Col. Centro C.P. 31000 Chihuahua
Fax + 52 614 4150314

Salutation: Dear Sir, Estimado Fiscal Gene

Also send copies to gustavo.delarosa@gmail.com of the state human rights commission and diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

DEATH THREATS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2007, violence linked to organized crime has spiralled in Mexico. The government has reported more than 34,000 organized crime related killings. The majority of these murders have occurred in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state. President Calderón's administration has attempted to combat the drug cartels by deploying thousands of federal police and over 50,000 military personnel in the worst affected areas, particularly Ciudad Juárez. However this has not resulted in a reduction in violence.

Defending human rights is a dangerous job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Mexican human rights defenders have demanded that the federal authorities adopt and implement an effective and comprehensive protection programme. The authorities have acknowledged the importance of establishing a protection programme and have committed to delivering it on many occasions, but so far they have not fulfilled their promise.

UA: 78/11 Index: AMR 41/014/2011 Issue Date: 16 March 2011

