

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST AT RISK AFTER DENOUNCING POLICE ABUSE

A human rights activist and her family from San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora state, have faced repeated threats and intimidation by local police in reprisal for denouncing police abuses. Their safety remains at risk.

Martha Solórzano Martínez, a local activist from San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora state, on Mexico's northern border has faced repeated threats from municipal police due to complaints she has made against police for abuse of power, corruption and ill-treatment. According to information received, on 25 February she organized a peaceful protest outside police headquarters in San Luis Rio Colorado after a young person was detained the day before by municipal police and beaten so severely that he was hospitalized. The police involved warned Martha Solórzano Martínez to keep quiet and not to file a complaint, telling her "Damn woman...I am going to throw you into the hands of the police and military" (*Pinche vieja...te voy a echar a los policías y a los militares...*). The municipal police commander refused to meet demonstrators and apparently threatened to "Get her out of the way with a beating (*quitarla a chingadazos*) if she participated in the protest. On 21 March Martha Solórzano Martínez called on the municipal president to support the local council's condemnation of abuses by municipal police.

On 9 March 2012 Martha Solórzano Martínez's son, **Jorge Luis Zavala**, was detained by municipal police for his alleged involvement in a violent incident. He was later convicted, however he and his family believe the case was fabricated in reprisal for Martha's activism. Jorge Luis Zavala says that police stated on his detention "We know you. You're the son of the busybody. Now we are going to fuck her" (*Ya te conocemos, eres el hijo de la vieja grillera. Ahora si nos la vamos a chingar*). He remains in prison pending appeal.

Jorge Luis Zavala was transferred 600km to the state capital without explanation on 1 March 2014. He and his mother have been informed by third parties that his life is at risk in the prison as a result of his mother's human rights activism. Amnesty International is concerned that Martha Solórzano Martínez may also face reprisals.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure the safety of Martha Solórzano Martínez, Jorge Luis Zavala and other members of their family, providing protection in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into threats and intimidation made against members of the family and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- Urging a full investigation of all allegations of human rights violations committed by members of the municipal police of San Luis Rio Colorado, for those under investigation to be suspended and for the results of the enquiry to be made public.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 MAY 2014 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, Col. Juárez, C.P. 06600
Distrito Federal, México
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr.

Secretario

Governor of State of Sonora

Guillermo Padrés Elías
Comonfort y Dr. Paliza
C.P. 83260, Hermosillo
Sonora, México
Fax: +52 662 212 0001 (keep trying)
Email: guillermo.padres@sonora.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr.

Gobernador

And copies to:

Mexican Commission for the Defense
and Promotion of Human Rights

Email: info@cmdpdh.org

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.

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In November 2013, the federal human rights defenders protection mechanism ordered police protection for Martha Solórzano Martínez, which was provided by two Sonora state police officers. However, this protection does not cover a journey to visit her son in detention.

Human rights defenders and journalists often face attacks, threats, intimidation and abduction and killing in reprisal for their legitimate and vital work. Those behind the attacks are almost never brought to justice. Amnesty International has welcomed the establishment of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in 2012. Nevertheless, many of the more than 100 defenders and journalists at risk who have sought protection have not received a timely or effective response, creating frustration, insecurity and disillusion. Despite the government's assertions that the mechanism is working effectively, it is far from being fully operational as it lacks trained staff, resources and the high level political support necessary to ensure that its protection measures are implemented by authorities at all levels. The impunity enjoyed by those responsible for attacks due to ineffective investigations, often conducted by state authorities who are suspected of involvement in threats, continues to foster tolerance of attacks. The Mechanism should be just one part of a comprehensive strategy to address violence against those defending human rights and journalists. The federal government has so far failed to respond convincingly to this prevailing climate of hostility to defenders and journalists in several states.

Name: Martha Solórzano Martínez (f), Jorge Luis Zavala (m) and other members of their family

Gender m/f: both

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