

URGENT ACTION

POLICE ABUSES AGAINST COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS

A group of municipal police have arrested beaten and threatened members of the Coyotepec community in Mexico state. There is a fear for their safety.

According to information received, on 13 May, a group of around 60 municipal police detained, beat and threatened to “disappear” Coyotepec community activists, **Sergio Velázquez Morales**, **Florian Harvey Solano** and **Anselmo Zarate Pérez**. A doctor has confirmed injuries to their faces, shoulders, chests and ankles. Most of this ill-treatment was inflicted on route to the offices of the state public prosecutor in Cuautitlan Izcalli, Mexico state, where they remain in custody. They are facing charges of opposing public works (Oposición a la ejecución de obras o trabajos públicos).

Sergio Velázquez Morales, Florian Harvey Solano and Anselmo Zarate Pérez were in the central square of the Coyotepec community waiting for a meeting with municipal authorities who had promised to consult the local community before work begins to build a library (with access to the online materials) to replace the only public park in the community. According to witnesses, approximately 60 people waiting for the mayor, were attacked by municipal police. The police beat and chased those present and arrested the three community activists.

Sergio Velázquez Morales, a human rights defender is supposed to receive protection measures from the Mechanism for Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists (Mecanismo de Protección para Personas Defensoras y Periodistas). At the time of his detention, he tried to use the panic button that federal authorities had provided him with, as well as contact the Federal Police but was reportedly told that they had no record of him and that they did not have time to provide assistance. All three detainees have filed complaints for ill-treatment and illegal detention with the Mexico state public prosecutor’s Office (Procuraduría General de Justicia del estado).

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging authorities to ensure the safety of Sergio Velázquez Morales, Florian Harvey Solano and Anselmo Zarate Pérez and other members of the community of Coyotepec;
- Calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the apparently arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of Sergio Velázquez Morales, Florian Harvey Solano and Anselmo Zarate Pérez by municipal police and the police operation against members of the community in order to bring all those responsible to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure the rights of the three detainees, including the right not to be subject to unfair trial and misuse of the criminal charges in order to unfairly prosecute those involved in legitimate and peaceful protests;
- Urging an immediate review of the protection measures provided to Sergio Velázquez Morales in order that those responsible for failing to take action to protect his rights, including physical safety and personal liberty, are held to account.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JUNE 2014 TO:

Governor of Mexico state

Eruviel Ávila Villegas
Lerdo Poniente No. 300
Palacio del Poder Ejecutivo, Col. Centro,
C.P. 5000, Toluca, Estado de México
México
Fax: +52 722 2760046
Email: eruviel.avila@edomex.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor

Minister of Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretario de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, C.P. 6600,
México D.F., México
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Local Human Rights Organization
Centro de Derechos Humanos Zeferino
Ladrillo
Email: cdhzl.presidencia@gmail.com

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. This is the second update of UA 252/13. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/012/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico 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.

Local community activists who highlight abuses power or misuse of resources by local authorities are frequently subject to threats, attacks and spurious criminal charges in order to deter their activism.

Name: Sergio Velázquez Morales (m), Florian Harvey Solano (m), Anselmo Zarate Pérez (m) and community members of Coyotepec
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 252/13 Index: AMR 41/019/2014 Issue Date: 15 May 2014

