

PUBLIC

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16 February 2009

UA 41/09 Possible disappearance/ Fear for safety

MEXICO **Manuel Ponce Rosas (m)**
Raúl Lucas Lucía (m)
Their relatives and other members of the Organization for the Development of Mixtec Indigenous Peoples

Manuel Ponce Rosas and Raúl Lucas Lucía were abducted on 13 February in Ayutla de los Libres municipality, Guerrero State by armed men who local human rights organizations believe may be connected to the authorities. Their whereabouts remain unknown and Amnesty International is concerned that they may have been subjected to forced disappearance.

At the time of their abduction, the two members of the Organization for the Development of Mixtec Indigenous Peoples (Organización para el Desarrollo del Pueblo Mixteco, ODPM) were attending an event marking the beginning of the building of a local secondary school in the town of Ayutla de los Libres. The event was attended by several municipal authorities. According to Raúl Lucas' wife, who was also present, an armed man arrived at the school at 1.15pm and threatened Manuel Ponce with a gun. Raúl Lucas intervened to try to help him and was subsequently hit by the armed man.

A second man with a gun then arrived on the scene and both men forced Raúl Lucas and Manuel Ponce into a vehicle with tinted windows and no number plates which then driven away. No attempt was made to stop the abduction and neither man has been seen since. When relatives tried to report the abduction to the police and prosecutor's office, the authorities refused to open a criminal investigation. Relatives and a local human rights organization who believe the two men may have been abducted by police, subsequently filed a habeas corpus petition (amparo) against their illegal detention and possible torture. The state authorities have denied that the men were detained or are in custody.

Amnesty International believes that Manuel Ponce Rosas and Raúl Lucas Lucía's disappearance may be on account of their work to promote the rights of Mixtec Indigenous peoples in the region.

According to local human rights organizations, Raúl Lucas was temporarily arrested and interrogated by members of the Mexican Army in Ayutla de los Libres on 18 October 2005. On 15 February 2007 he was ambushed near Ayutla and nearly killed by unknown gunmen who left him with a bullet wound to his neck.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the years, Amnesty International has documented a pattern of harassment and intimidation against indigenous rights organizations in Guerrero state such as the Me' phaa Indigenous People's Organization (Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me' phaa, OPIM) and the Organization for the Development of Mixtec Indigenous Peoples (Organización para el Desarrollo del Pueblo Mixteco, ODPM). OPIM members have been attacked and threatened on numerous occasions. Currently, five members of OPIM are in detention and Amnesty International has adopted all of them as prisoners of conscience and believes that the charges against them are politically motivated.

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

- insisting the authorities take immediate steps to establish the whereabouts of Manuel Ponce Rosas and Raúl Lucas Lucía, members of the Organization for the Development of Mixtec Indigenous Peoples;
- calling on the authorities to take steps to ensure the safety of Manuel Ponce Rosas and Raúl Lucas Lucía, their family and other members of the Organization for the Development of Mixtec Indigenous Peoples;
- if they are in custody, calling on the authorities to order their immediate release or ensure they are immediately brought before a judge to face recognised criminal charges;
- calling on the authorities to order an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the abduction of the two men on 13 February and ensure that any official who is directly or indirectly implicated is suspended pending a full investigation and that all those responsible are brought to justice;
- calling for a full and thorough investigation on why police and prosecutors refused to initiate an immediate investigation into the men's abduction and disappearance despite the complaint filed by witnesses.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza

Procuraduría General de la República,

Av. Paseo de la Reforma N° 211-213, Piso 16

Col. Cuauhtémoc, Del. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P. 06500, MÉXICO

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

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador

Minister of Defence

General Guillermo Galván Galván

Manuel Ávila Camacho, esq. con Av. Industria Militar S/N, Col. Lomas de Sotelo, México DF, MEXICO

Fax: +52 55 5557 5571

Email: dn_sdn@mailsedena.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Minister of Defence/Señor Secretario

Governor of Guerrero

Lic. Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo

Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero

Palacio de Gobierno, Edificio Centro, piso 2, Ciudad de los Servicios, CP 39075, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, MEXICO

Email: gobernador@guerrero.gob.mx

Fax: +52 747 471 9956

Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor

Attorney General of Guerrero

Lic. Eduardo Murueta Urrutia

Procurador del Estado de Guerrero

Carretera Nacional México-Acapulco Km. 6+300, Tramo Chilpancingo-Petaquillos

Chilpancingo 39090, Guerrero, MÉXICO

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Email: cprocurador@pgjgro.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney / Señor Procurador

COPIES TO:

Human rights organisation

Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan" AC., Calle Mina, no. 77, Col. Centro, Tlapa de Comonfort, C.P. 41304, Guerrero, MEXICO

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 29 March 2009.