

# URGENT ACTION

## WOMAN ATTACKED BY ARMED SECURITY GUARDS

**A Mexican woman living in the northern state of Chihuahua, Carmen Quiñones Ortíz, was assaulted and threatened on 29 June by private security guards hired by local landowners. She and others living in her community, Lomas del Poleo, are at risk of further attack.**

Four armed men arrived at her house on 29 June and knocked down the fence that surrounds it. They then began to remove the fence material. When Carmen Quiñones saw that the men were stealing the fence she ran out and tried to stop them.

One of the armed men pushed her to the ground and told her "Look, if you don't get out of the way, I'll get this out," and pointed to his gun (*Mira Señora, si no se quita la voy a sacar*).

The attack is thought to have been an attempt to intimidate Carmen Quiñones into leaving her property to make way for a major road which is planned to be built in the area.

Lomas del Poleo residents have been harassed and attacked since 2003 by private security guards working for the landowners, who have claimed that the residents are not the owners of the land. An agrarian tribunal is currently processing the dispute, but the case is progressing very slowly.

### **PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern for Carmen Quiñones Ortíz and other residents of Lomas del Poleo, who have been repeatedly attacked by private security guards working for local landowners;
- calling on the authorities to order independent and impartial investigations into the attacks committed against residents, and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Carmen Quiñones Ortíz and other residents of Lomas del Poleo are given appropriate protection according to their wishes;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that private security guards accused of committing human rights abuses are suspended until a full investigation has been completed;
- calling on them to prevent any illegal attempt to drive residents of Lomas de Poleo off their land and to expedite efforts to ensure the dispute is resolved fairly and satisfactorily in the appropriate agrarian tribunal.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 AUGUST 2009 TO:**

#### Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. José Reyes Baeza Terrazas  
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**

#### Attorney General of Chihuahua

Patricia González Rodríguez  
Procuradora del Estado de Chihuahua  
Procuraduría General de Justicia del  
Estado  
Vicente Guerrero 616, Col. Centro  
Chihuahua 31000  
MEXICO

**Fax: +52 614 415 0314**  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/  
Señora Procuradora**

#### Mayor of Ciudad Juárez

Lic. José Reyes Ferriz  
Presidente Municipal de Ciudad Juárez  
Unidad Administrativa Benito Juárez.  
Primer piso, ala norte.  
Av. Francisco Villa # 950 Norte, Cd.  
Juárez, Chihuahua.

**Fax: +52 656 615 0690**  
**Salutation: Dear Mayor/Señor Presidente  
Municipal**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

People living in the disputed area of Lomas del Poleo have been repeatedly attacked and harassed by private security guards since 2003. In 2004, the Lomas del Poleo neighbourhood (over 200 homes, a primary school, a kindergarten and a church) was surrounded by a barbed wire fence erected by private security guards hired by local landowners who contest the ownership of the land. Ever since, Lomas del Poleo has been patrolled by these private armed security guards. In 2005, according to local inhabitants, 40 dwellings were set on fire and a resident was beaten to death by the private security guards for opposing the torchings. As a result of this campaign of intimidation, today only 17 families still reside in the area. They claim that despite reporting the incidents with the local prosecutor's office no serious investigation or arrests have ever been carried out.

The land of Lomas del Poleo has acquired particular value in recent years as it stands between the city of Ciudad Juárez and an area which is to be developed into a new urban and industrial area by a group of businessmen. The residents of Lomas del Poleo and a local landowning family are in dispute over the ownership of the land. An agrarian tribunal is charged with resolving the land dispute and has started a series of hearings.

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