

PUBLIC

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UA 267/05

Fear for safety

MEXICO

Agustin Chavez (m), journalist

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Radio journalist Agustín Chávez, who has been reporting on alleged corruption by the municipal authorities in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca State, was allegedly attacked in the street and beaten up on 4 October by two brothers of the former Municipal President. Amnesty International fears his life may be in danger.

Agustín Chavez was walking with another man when the two men approached reportedly and said, "We've been looking for you, you son of a bitch." (*hijo de la chingada, a ti te andamos buscando*). They apparently threatened to kill him because his reports were damaging their brother, and beat him for about ten minutes, until he lost consciousness. They also stole his camera, a mobile phone and some money.

Some colleagues of the journalists arrived and took Agustín Chavez to a doctor.

Agustín Chavez had been reporting on alleged corruption by the administration that governed Tlaxiaco from 2002 to 2004. The 4 October attack follows a string of attempts to intimidate him. On 3 June he received a call on his mobile phone from a man who reportedly told him to "lower his voice" (*le bajara el tono*) or else he would not be alive to talk to anyone. On 17 September a member of the current municipal administration of Tlaxiaco allegedly stopped him on the street and asked him to retract what he had written in an interview with him. Agustín Chavez asked the man not to threaten him, and he apparently responded by beating him up.

Agustin Chavez has submitted a formal complaint to the local Public Ministry detailing all the aggression he has experienced. He has also filed a complaint with the Oaxaca office of the Federal Special Attorney's Office for Crimes against Journalists (*Fiscalía Especial para la Atención de Delitos Contra Periodistas*).

Agustin Chavez is a former correspondent of the local newspaper *Noticias*, which has been consistently critical of the state administration. Journalists at the newspaper have reportedly been threatened and were forcibly evicted from the newspaper's office by members of a state-sponsored trade union in June and July 2005 (for details see UA 175/04, 24 June 2005, AMR 41/021/2005 and follow-up). This is one of a number of cases recorded by Amnesty International, where journalists are intimidated after investigating corruption by local public officials or the activities of organized crime groups in Mexico.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of journalist Agustín Chavez, who was allegedly attacked and beaten by brothers of the former municipal president of Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca State, on 4 October;
- calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the attack and other assaults on Agustín Chavez, for the findings to be published and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Agustín Chavez does not suffer any further intimidation or harassment as a result of his work as a journalist;
- reminding the authorities that they are obliged to guarantee freedom of expression in Oaxaca.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of Oaxaca  
Ulises Ruiz Ortiz

Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca  
Carretera Oaxaca, Puerto Angel, Km. 9.5  
Santa María Coyotopec, C. P. 71254, Oaxaca, Oaxaca, MEXICO  
**Fax: + 52 951 511.6879 (if someone answers, ask "tono de fax, por favor")**  
**Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor**

Attorney General of Oaxaca  
Lic. Patricia Villanueva Abraján  
Procuradora del Estado de Oaxaca  
Avenida Luis Echeverría s/n, La Experimental  
San Antonio de la Cal, C. P. 71236, Oaxaca,  
Oaxaca, MEXICO  
**Fax: +52 951 511 5519**  
**Salutation: Estimada Procuradora/Dear Attorney General**

Director of Human Rights – Federal Interior Ministry  
Maestro Ricardo Sepúlveda  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Reforma 99, PISO 21, PH  
Colonia Tabacalera  
C.P. 06030, Mexico D.F. MEXICO  
**Fax: + 52 55 5128 0234 (if someone answers, ask "tono de fax, por favor")**  
**Salutation: Estimado Maestro/Dear Sir**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Organisation  
Centro de Derechos Humanos Y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas, A.C.  
Leon #15, Barrio San Diego, Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, CP 69800, MEXICO

State Human Rights Commission of Oaxaca  
Lic. Jaime Pérez Jiménez, Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos, Calle de los Derechos Humanos No. 210, Colonia América, C. P. 68050, Oaxaca, 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 18 November 2005.