

URGENT ACTION

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST EVICTED COMMUNITY

The inhabitants of San Antonio Ebulá, outside the state capital of Campeche, were forcibly evicted and some were beaten on 13 August by private security guards aided by police. The village was razed to the ground, but the inhabitants are planning to return peacefully. Violence may be used by police and private security guards to prevent their return.

On 13 August, about a hundred private security guards hired by a private developer, forcibly evicted the inhabitants of the village of San Antonio Ebulá. The operation was observed by a hundred state police officers who surrounded the area. Eye witnesses and human rights observers have stated that several villagers were beaten by the security guards and two were temporarily detained by police but were released later without charge. Over sixty houses were destroyed and all the trees and crops were cut down and farm animals were stolen or escaped.

The village was established in 1968 on land that was apparently owned by the state. Until recently, the village was acknowledged by the authorities who provided the community with development grants. The inhabitants of the village were also recognised on the electoral register. For decades, its inhabitants have attempted to legalize their right to the land. The case is now with the Federal Agrarian Tribunal, which has yet to rule on the legal ownership of the land. The conflict over the land started in 2002 when a private developer claimed that the land belonged to him, and the situation got worse when he used private security guards and state police, in March 2007 and on 26 May 2009, to evict the villagers. In May 2009 six community members were detained and then released, three of whom are on bail pending prosecution for serious criminal charges, which the community believe have been fabricated to deter efforts to resist eviction.

Neither the government or the developer have offered compensation to the community or alternative housing in order to ensure that community members, if their claim to land fails, are not forcibly evicted. All three eviction operations have violated international human rights standards and have made members of community, including women and children, homeless and left them without livelihoods. Villagers have now announced that on 8 September they intend to return to the site where their houses once stood and to continue their legal battle. There are fears that their return may be met with violence by police and security guards.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern that the inhabitants of San Antonio Ebulá have been forcibly and violently evicted without warning or a legal warrant and were not provided with an adequate alternative;
- calling on the authorities to investigate the allegations of beatings and damages against private property and dwellings;
- calling on the authorities to provide the inhabitants of San Antonio Ebulá with protection from further forced eviction or abuses by private security guards or police, should they wish to return to their village pending the outcome of legal proceedings in relationship to the ownership and use of the land;
- Calling on the authorities to promptly resolve the ownership of the land and engage in genuine consultation with the community, including provision of adequate alternative housing with security of tenure and compensation, should this be necessary.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 OCTOBER 2009 TO:

Governor of Campeche

Jorge Carlos Hurtado Valdez
Gobernador del Estado de Campeche
Palacio de Gobierno, Calle 8 entre
61 y Circuito Baluartes S/N, San
Fco. de Campeche 24009, MEXICO.
Fax: +52 98 1811 4004

Salutation: Dear Governor/ Señor Gobernador

Public Security Minister, Campeche

Lic. Carlos Miguel Aysa González
Secretario de Seguridad Pública
Av. López Portillo por Av. Lázaro
Cárdenas S/N Col. Laureles, San Fco.
de Campeche, C. P. 24085, Mexico.
**Fax: +52 98 1 811 9110 (ask: "me
puede dar tono de fax por favor")**

Salutation: Dear Minister/ Señor Ministro

COPIES TO: Equipo Indignación:

informativo@indignacion.org.mx
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.

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UA 235/09 Index: AMR 41/046/2009 Issue Date: 03 September 2009

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