

URGENT ACTION

MEXICAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER HARASSED

Mexican human rights lawyer Alba Cruz has received a new intimidatory text message on her mobile phone. This is part of a pattern of death threats and harassment against her in an attempt to stop her from defending victims of torture and unfounded prosecution in Oaxaca State. Her life could be at risk.

On 11 January at 11.33am Alba Cruz received a text message on her mobile phone. The message included the following phrase: "We know more about your protégés, how many steps you walk per block (...) you didn't accept what we offered (...) we're back" (sabemos mas de tus protegidos que tu cuantos pasos por cuadra (...) no aceptaste lo que te ofrecimos (...) ya bolvimos [sic]). The message was sent from the same mobile number as previous threats against her and one of her defendants.

Alba Cruz received threatening text messages on 26 January and 11 March 2010. On 29 January 2010 an unknown man grabbed her by the arm as she was leaving her office. He told her "calm down asshole, it would be so easy to take you" (cálmate pendeja, sería tan fácil llevarte).

In 2007 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered Mexico to provide Alba Cruz with protection measures. The government has agreed with Alba Cruz on a number of steps to be taken. To date, however, it has failed to grant her any meaningful protection and those responsible for the threats and acts of intimidation remain at large.

Alba Cruz has represented victims of torture, ill-treatment and politically motivated prosecution in connection with widespread demonstrations and police abuses that took place in Oaxaca State in 2006.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to implement all protection measures agreed with Alba Cruz following the request by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into all acts of harassment, intimidation and death threats against Alba Cruz, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to adopt and implement an effective and comprehensive protection programme (mecanismo de protección) for all human rights defenders at risk.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 FEBRUARY 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretario, Sec. de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,
Delegación Cuauhtémoc,
México D.F., C.P. 06600, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado
Señor Secretario

Oaxaca state Governor

Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo
Gobernador, Ciudad Administrativa
Benemérito de las Américas, Edificio 7,
Nivel 3, Carretera Oaxaca-Istmo Km.
11.5, Tlaxiactac de Cabrera, C.P. 68270,
Oaxaca, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 951 502 0530 to 0538
Email: j.castillo.oax@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimado
Señor Gobernador

Oaxaca state Attorney General

Lic. Manuel de Jesús López López
Procurador General de Justicia, Centro
Administrativo Gral. Porfirio Díaz,
Edificio Jesús "Chu" Rasgado A, ala 2,
2do nivel, Reyes Mantecón, San Bartolo
Coyotepec, C.P. 71257, Oax., México
Fax: (+52) 951 501 6900 ext. 20635
Email: procuradoroaxaca@hotmail.com
Salutation: Dear Attorney
General/Estimado Señor Procurador

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country and to Alba Cruz (codigo.dh@gmail.com). Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the 1st update of UA 52/10. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/018/2010/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

MEXICAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER HARASSED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Widespread protests erupted in the state of Oaxaca in June 2006, in a campaign to force the state governor to resign. Political violence and demonstrations continued throughout the year. At least 18 civilians were killed, 370 injured and 349 arrested during the conflict. There was widespread use of excessive force, arbitrary detention, torture and fabrication of criminal charges against protesters. In 2009, a special investigation by Mexico's Supreme Court concluded that senior state officials should be held accountable for human rights violations committed during the crisis. However, virtually none of the federal, state or municipal authorities responsible for abuses have been held to account. Alba Cruz and other local human rights defenders are still campaigning for justice over the human rights violations.

Defending human rights can be a dangerous job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Some of them have been killed for doing their job. Mexican human rights defenders have demanded that the federal authorities adopt and implement an effective and comprehensive protection programme. The authorities have acknowledged the importance of establishing a protection programme and have committed to delivering it on many occasions, but so far they have not fulfilled their promise.

A new state administration took office in Oaxaca on 1 December 2010. The new governor, Gabino Cué Monteagudo, has promised to address long-standing human rights concerns in the state including the situation of human rights defenders.

FU 52/10 Index: AMR 41/001/2011 Issue Date: 12 January 2011

