

URGENT ACTION

ATTACKED INDIGENOUS WOMEN RISK REPRISALS

On 7 September, armed men attacked two Indigenous women from the San Juan Copala town in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. One was raped and the other one was shot at. After reporting the attack to the authorities, they and their families could be at risk of reprisals.

The two Indigenous Triqui women, whose names are withheld to protect their integrity, were attacked by armed men at around 1pm. They were returning on foot to their home town of San Juan Copala, in the Triqui region of Oaxaca state, after buying food in a neighbouring town. According to what they told the community leaders in San Juan Copala, one of the women was raped and the other one was shot at while she was running away. Both women survived the attack and made their way back to San Juan Copala, which was five kilometres away.

San Juan Copala has been under siege for more than nine months, and is surrounded by armed groups. As there are no medical facilities in the town, medical attention was only available to the women on 9 September when an ambulance with two doctors reached San Juan Copala. The ambulance was guarded by more than 40 police officers. The women have been taken to a hospital in a neighbouring town, but they and their families may be at risk of reprisals. The authorities are not providing them and their families with adequate protection.

In recent years, the activities of armed groups operating with impunity in the Triqui region of Oaxaca has resulted in increasing reports of killings and attacks. On 27 April 2010, human rights defender Alberta Cariño Trujillo and Finnish observer Jyri Jaakkola were ambushed and killed by armed men. Some of the armed groups are alleged to have links to local authorities, which on several previous occasions have failed to take action to prevent attacks or hold those responsible to account, including in cases of abduction and rape of women and girls.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of the two Indigenous women and their families;
- Urging the authorities to provide them and their families with effective protection, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to conduct full, prompt and impartial investigations into the recent attack on the two women, and into all previous attacks on residents of San Juan Copala, and to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to guarantee all human rights for the residents of San Juan Copala, who have been under attack for years, and to investigate alleged links between armed groups and local authorities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 OCTOBER 2010 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretaría 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

State Attorney General

Lic. María de la Luz Candelaria Chiñas
Procuradora General de Justicia del
Estado de Oaxaca
Centro Administrativo del Poder
Ejecutivo y Judicial, Edificio Jesús
"Chu" Rasgado A, ala 2, 2do nivel,
Reyes Mantecón, San Bartolo
Coyotepec, C.P. 71257
Oaxaca, MÉXICO

Fax: (+52) 951 501 6900 ext. 20635

Email: lpedroarenag@hotmail.com

Salutation: Dear Attorney

General/Estimada Procuradora

And copies to:

Local human rights organization
Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos
"Bartolomé Carrasco"
Email: barcadh09@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 110/10 (AMR 41/039/2010). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR41/039/2010/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR41/042/2010/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 700 Indigenous Triqui inhabitants of San Juan Copala and other nearby Triqui communities established the autonomous municipality of San Juan Copala on 1 January 2007. As it governs itself, it does not recognize the authority of existing public officials in the main non-Triqui towns of the region.

The mainly Indigenous Triqui region is one of the poorest and most troubled in the country. For more than 30 years it has been ridden with inter-community conflict in which scores of people have been killed, several of them in the last few months. The state and federal authorities have rarely taken action to hold those responsible to account, and the ruling political party in the state, the Revolutionary Institutional Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) has been accused of exacerbating conflict in the region via the creation of violent, armed political groups.

On 17 April 2010, José Celestino Hernández Cruz, a man from San Juan Copala, was killed by members of an armed group. On 20 May, Indigenous leader Timoteo Alejandro Ramírez, and his wife, Cleriberta Castro Aguilar, were shot dead in their home in San Juan Copala. Timoteo Ramírez was one of the main leaders of San Juan Copala. Nobody has been brought to justice for these and other killings.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that “Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of [...] violence.”

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