

URGENT ACTION

TWO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE KILLED IN MEXICO

Five members of an Indigenous people's organization in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca were ambushed by armed men on 16 October. Two of the victims were killed and two others were wounded. The three survivors could be at risk of further attacks.

Armed men believed to have links with local authorities ambushed and opened fire against five members of the Independent Movement for Triqui Unity and Struggle (Movimiento de Unificación y Lucha Triqui Independiente, MULTI) in the afternoon of 16 October. Two of the MULTI members, **Teresa Ramírez Sánchez** and **Serafín Ubaldo Zurita**, were killed. Two men and a woman, whose names are withheld to protect them, survived the attack. The two men were wounded and one of them remains in hospital. The three survivors could be at risk of further attacks and have not been provided with protection.

The ambush took place near the village of Tres Cruces on the road between the towns of Santiago Juchitán and Yosoyuxi in the Triqui region of Oaxaca.

MULTI supported the 700 Indigenous Triqui inhabitants of San Juan Copala and other nearby Triqui communities who established the autonomous municipality of San Juan Copala on 1 January 2007. In September 2010, armed members of two Indigenous people's organizations, the Social Welfare Union for the Triqui Region (Unión para el Bienestar Social de la Región Triqui, UBISORT) and the Unified Movement of Triqui Struggle (Movimiento Unificado de Lucha Triqui, MULT), took over the local government of San Juan Copala and occupied the town. All residents identified as belonging to MULTI fled the town and relocated to neighbouring areas such as Yosoyuxi.

MULT, UBISORT and MULTI have come into conflict over control of the San Juan Copala area for many years. Armed groups belonging to UBISORT and MULT have operated in the area with impunity and are alleged to have links with local authorities. To date the authorities have failed to take action to disarm the groups, to protect these communities or to hold to account those responsible for the attacks.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to provide the three people with effective protection in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into this incident and into other killings and attacks which have taken place in the Triqui region, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to investigate alleged links between armed groups operating in the Triqui region and local authorities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 01 DECEMBER 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 third update of UA 110/10 (AMR 41/039/2010). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/039/2010/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Indigenous community of San Juan Copala was under siege from November 2009 to September 2010. Armed groups surrounded it and fired into the streets on a daily basis in an attempt to intimidate local residents. Most of the residents had supported the MULTI in its attempt to run the local government independently.

According to the State Attorney General Office, none of those responsible for the killings or acts of violence against MULTI supporters which have taken place in the last three years, including sexual violence against women and girls, have been brought to justice. On 27 April 2010, armed men ambushed a humanitarian convoy near San Juan Copala and killed human rights defenders Alberta Cariño Trujillo, also known as Bety, and Jyri Antero Jaakkola. On 7 September, armed men attacked and wounded two Indigenous women from San Juan Copala. Nobody has been brought to justice for these crimes. On 7 October, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called on the Mexican authorities to protect the communities.

The mainly Indigenous Triqui region is one of the poorest and most troubled in the country. For more than 30 years armed groups believed to have links with local and state authorities have harassed and killed Triqui Indigenous people because of their affiliation or perceived affiliation with one of the local Indigenous organizations. The situation has deteriorated since November 2009. 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.

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 form of [...] violence.”

FU UA: 110/10 Index: AMR 41/079/2010 Issue Date: 20 October 2010

