

PUBLIC

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UA 134/07 Fear for safety

MEXICO **Isidoro Pío Ortiz, (m), union activist**
Other members of the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores y Empacadores de Importadoras y Empacadoras de Alimentos Ultramarinos, Aceites y Derivados de la República Mexicana* (National Union of Workers of Industries Importing and Packing Groceries, Oils and Derivatives)

Trade union activist Isidoro Pío Ortiz was reportedly abducted, beaten and threatened with death by members of a rival trade union on 15 May in front of the factory where he works, in the town Ecatepec, Mexico State. Other members of the same trade union are in danger of intimidation and assault.

According to reports, on 15 May, factory employee Isidoro Pío Ortiz was distributing information leaflets about his union, *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores y Empacadores de Importadoras y Empacadoras de Alimentos Ultramarinos, Aceites y Derivados de la República Mexicana*, in front of the food processing plant. An unknown number of members of the existing union at the factory, the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria del Café, Productos Alimenticios y Similares del Estado de México*, and three others, grabbed him and forced him into a van. While the van was driven around the area for half an hour, the assailants beat Isidoro Pío Ortiz in the back of the van, telling him to stop supporting the newer union or they would kill him.

In August 2006, dissident workers at a multinational food processing factory based in Ecatepec, joined a new trade union, the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores y Empacadores de Importadoras y Empacadoras de Alimentos Ultramarinos, Aceites y Derivados de la República Mexicana* (National Union of Workers of Industries Importing and Packing Groceries, Oils and Derivatives), as they felt that the existing union representing workers at the factory, the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria del Café, Productos Alimenticios y Similares del Estado de México*, affiliated to *Confederacion Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos* (Revolutionary Federation of Workers and Farmers, CROC) was not adequately defending their labour rights. The workers' decision to join the new union has caused an ongoing dispute over which union should represent the factory's workers in collective negotiations with the factory management on pay, benefits and working conditions.

Previously, members of the newer union at the factory had alleged in the national press that in September 2006, a group of 200 people were paid to beat and intimidate them on the day when workers at the factory were due to vote on which union should represent them in the collective negotiations with the factory managers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mexico is home to many *maquiladoras*, or factories owned by transnational companies who are seeking to take advantage of favourable manufacturing and trading conditions. Officially recognised trade unions are frequently used to prevent the establishment of independent trade unions or to enforce agreements imposed by management or local governments. Dissident workers who try to establish independent trade unions may face threat or harassment for their legitimate union activities.

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

- expressing concern at the beating and harassment of union activist Isidoro Pío Ortiz on 15 May in Ecatepec;
- expressing concern for the safety of members of the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores y Empacadores de Importadoras y Empacadoras de Alimentos Ultramarinos, Aceites y Derivados de la República Mexicana*;

- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the abduction and beating of Isidoro Pío Ortiz, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Mexico State

Lic. Enrique Peña Nieto
Gobernador del Estado de México,
Palacio de Gobierno, 1º piso
Lerdo Poniente No. 300 Poniente, Col. Centro
Toluca C.P. 50000, Estado de México, MEXICO
Fax: (+52 722) 276 0046
Email: gob@gem.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor/ Señor Gobernador

Public Prosecutor of Mexico State

Lic. Abel Villacaña Estrada
Procurador del Estado de México
Av. Morelos Ote. No. 1300, Piso 6
Centro Estatal de Justicia
Col. San Sebastián
Toluca 50090, Estado de México, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52 722) 215 3123
Email: abel.v.e@edomex.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Señor Procurador

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña
Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, piso 1, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO
Fax: (+52 55) 5093 3414
E-mail: frjramirez@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Minister of Labour

Lic. Javier Lozano Alarcón
Secretario del Trabajo y Previsión Social
Periférico Sur No. 4271, Col. Fuentes del Pedregal, Del. Tlalpan, México D.F., C.P. 14149, MEXICO
Fax: (+52 55) 3000 2107
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C., Serapio Rendón 57-B, Col. San Rafael, 06470, México D.F., 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 16 July 2007.