

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER HARASSED BY SOLDIERS

**A female Mexican human rights defender, who is an outspoken critic of human rights violations by the army, was harassed by soldiers in her home in Culiacán, Sinaloa state, northern Mexico. Her colleague was shot and injured by an unidentified man in August.**

In the early hours of 12 November, over 20 soldiers called on the home of Mercedes Murillo Monge, who is the president of the Sinaloan Civic Front (Frente Cívico Sinaloense, FCS), an organization working to defend human rights across Sinaloa state. When Mercedes Murillo went to open the door, at least five soldiers pointed their guns at her, while another 20 were standing along the length of the road. They claimed they needed to check her identity and address, and enquire about members of her family. However, Mercedes Murillo believes that this visit was a pretext to harass her, as the soldiers accepted a simple business card as valid identification. They also told her they had been sent there on the orders of their general.

As president of FCS, Mercedes Murillo has repeatedly spoken out about cases of abuses committed by Mexican soldiers. Her colleague Salomón Monárrez was shot three times on 31 August by a man wearing a balaclava. He was injured but is now recovering. Mercedes Murillo's brother, Ricardo Murillo Monge, also one a founder member of the FCS, was abducted and killed in September 2007. The investigations into both of these attacks have yielded no result. Protection measures have not been offered to the members of FCS.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- √ Calling on the authorities to ensure that continuous and adequate protection measures for Mercedes Murillo and other members of staff at the Sinaloan Civic Front are put in place immediately, in accordance with their wishes;
- √ urging the authorities to carry out a prompt and independent investigation into the harassment of Mercedes Murillo by members of the army, with those responsible brought to justice.
- √ reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without obstacles or fear of reprisals.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2010 TO:

#### Minister of Interior

Lic. Fernando F. Gómez-Mont Urueta  
*Secretario de Gobernación*  
 Secretaría de Gobernación  
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso,  
 Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc,  
 México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO  
**Fax: +52 5550 93 34 14**  
**E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx**  
**Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister**

#### Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza  
 Procuraduría General de la República  
 Av. Paseo de la Reforma nº  
 211-213, Piso 16  
 Col. Cuauhtémoc, Del. Cuauhtémoc  
 México D.F., C.P. 06500, MEXICO  
**Fax: +52 5553 46 09 08**  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador General**

#### Governor of Sinaloa

Lic. Jesús Alberto Aguilar Padilla  
 Gobernador del Estado de Sinaloa  
 Palacio de Gobierno  
 Av. Insurgentes, S/N 3er. Piso  
 Culiacán 80129, Sinaloa  
 MÉXICO  
**Fax: +52 6677 14 78 70**  
**E-mail: gobernador@sinaloa.gob.mx**  
**Salutation: Dear Governor /Señor Gobernador**

**COPIES TO:** Human Rights Organization - Frente Cívico Sinaloense, Angel Flores # 355 Pte. (interior) Col. Centro, Culiacán, Sinaloa. C. P. 80000, Mexico

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. This is the first update of UA 232/09 (AMR 41/045/2009). Further information:

[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/045/2009/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/045/2009/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders in Mexico face threats, attacks, politically motivated criminal charges and imprisonment for leading protests or promoting respect for human rights. The government has agreed to provide protection measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to several human rights defenders, but some have reported that no effective protection has been provided. Substantial efforts have not been made to investigate cases of abuses against human rights defenders; impunity is the general rule in these cases, leaving open the possibility of further attacks.

In the last three years, violence linked to organized crime has spiralled in Mexico: the media has reported more than 14,000 drug cartel-related killings. President Calderón's administration has attempted to combat the drug cartels by deploying thousands of federal police and 50,000 military personnel in the worst affected areas. However this has not resulted in a reduction in violence. According to the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), reports of abuses by the military, including unlawful killings, torture, arbitrary detentions and illegal house searches increased six-fold between 2006 and 2008. These cases are routinely investigated and tried by the military justice system, which does not guarantee an impartial and independent investigation, resulting in impunity for the vast majority of perpetrators. As a result victims and their relatives are denied an effective recourse to justice, and military officials are aware that they are extremely unlikely to be held to account.

Further information on UA 232/09 Index: AMR 41/060/2009 Issue Date: 20 November 2009

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