

PUBLIC

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Fear for

MEXICO **Maurilio Santiago Reyes, lawyer] Human rights**
 María del Pilar Marroquín (f), lawyer] defenders in
 Moisés Cruz Sánchez] Oaxaca state

The three people named above have reportedly suffered harassment, including a death threat, since they filed a criminal complaint on behalf of indigenous people illegally detained and ill-treated by police.

Maurilio Santiago Reyes and María del Pilar Marroquín are lawyers working with the *Centro de Derechos y Cultura Indígena de Tlaxiaco*, Tlaxiaco Centre for Indigenous Rights and Culture. On 13 April, with help from Moisés Cruz Sánchez, leader of the *Red Indígena Oaxaqueña*, Oaxacan Indigenous Network, they filed a complaint against a group of state police officers alleged to have illegally detained and ill-treated seven indigenous people in the state capital four days earlier.

The next day Moisés Cruz Sánchez's brother-in-law was reportedly abducted and held for three days. On 5 May a helicopter buzzed Moisés Cruz Sánchez's house, in Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca.

On 9 May 2000 Maurilio Santiago Reyes was at his house in Tlaxiaco with María del Pilar Marroquín when they saw a van with no number plates pass repeatedly in front of the house. The following night the phone rang repeatedly. At first the caller said nothing, and they hung up, but after they had answered several times he told María del Pilar Marroquín: "We're going for your head" ("*vamos por tu cabeza*").

They reported all these acts of intimidation to the *Procuraduría de Justicia del estado de Oaxaca* (PJE), Oaxaca State Attorney General's Office.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented a worrying pattern of threats and harassment of human rights defenders in Mexico. This concern was reflected in resolution 1998/4 of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which asked the Mexican authorities to "ensure full respect for the international instruments to which Mexico is a party and...attach the highest priority...to promoting the action of human rights defenders and guaranteeing their safety".

On 7 June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a resolution on Human Rights Defenders in the Americas which urged member states "to persist in their efforts to provide Human Rights Defenders with the necessary guarantees and facilities to continue freely carrying out their work of promoting and protecting human rights, at the national and/or regional levels, in accordance with internationally recognized principles and agreements".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Maurilio Santiago Reyes, María del Pilar Marroquín and Moisés Cruz Sánchez, who are facing a campaign of intimidation, including a death threat, apparently intended to prevent their legitimate human rights work;

- asking the authorities to take all measures deemed appropriate by those at risk to guarantee their safety;
- calling on the authorities to promptly and effectively investigate the death threat and other acts of intimidation, and bring those responsible to justice;
- asking to be sent a copy of the findings of the investigation;
- urging the government to adhere to its commitment to the resolution on Human Rights Defenders in the Americas, adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) on 7 June 1999, and to ensure all state agents act in accordance with principles contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998.

APPEALS TO:Governor of the State of Oaxaca

Lic. José Murat Casab

Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca, Palacio de Gobierno
Bustamente s/n, Oaxaca 68000, Estado de Oaxaca, MEXICO**Telegrams: Gobernador del Estado, Oaxaca****Faxes: + 52 951 6 37 37 / 5 50 77****Salutation: Señor Gobernador/ Dear Governor**Attorney General of the State of OaxacaLic. Sergio H. Santibañez, Procurador General de Justicia del Estado
Avenida Luis Echeverría, La Experimental San Antonio de la Cal
Oaxaca 71236, Estado de Oaxaca, MEXICO**Telegrams: Procurador del Estado, Oaxaca****Faxes: + 52 951 1 55 19****Salutation: Señor Procurador General/ Dear Attorney General**President of the State Human Rights Commission in Oaxaca

Dr Evencio Nicolás Martínez

Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Oaxaca
Calle de los Derechos Humanos No. 210, Col. América
68050 Oaxaca, Estado de Oaxaca, MEXICO**Faxes: + 52 951 35185 / 35158****Salutation: Estimado Dr. / Dear Dr. Martínez**Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo, Procurador General de la República

Av Reforma, esq. Violeta, Col Guerrero, Mexico DF, CP 06300, MEXICO

Faxes: + 52 5 346 0906**Salutation: Señor Procurador General/ Dear Attorney General****COPIES TO:**Non-governmental human rights organizationComisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
Tehuantepec 155, Col. Roma Sur, 06760, 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 29 June 2000.