

URGENT ACTION

MEXICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER THREATENED

A human rights defender received a threatening phone call at his home in San Francisco de Tepojaco, Mexico State on 10 July. There are fears that he and his family could be in danger.

On 10 July, **Jorge Arzave Orihuela** received a threatening phone call at his home. The caller initially identified himself as a commander of the Federal Police ("*comandante de la Policía Federal*") and said that they had been investigating Jorge Arzave Orihuela's life and his family, due to the belief that he was selling drugs. The caller demanded money from Jorge Arzave Orihuela in relation to the investigation, then claimed to be a commander of a notorious drug gang and said they had been investigating him for 25 days. Jorge Arzave Orihuela refused to agree to the demand and told the caller he had protection measures as he was a human rights activist who had been threatened in the past. The caller said he could help him to get further protection through his contacts with the local authorities. The caller stressed that they had contacts with the authorities and warned him not to file a complaint as he would hear about it straightway. He told Jorge Arzave Orihuela that his family could go to hell ("*se los puede llevar la chingada*") and any protection measures would be useless unless they were provided by the caller's group.

Local police are supposed to conduct daily police visits to Jorge Arzave Orihuela's house as part of the security measures provided by the State of Mexico Attorney General's Office (*Procurduría General de Justicia del Estado de México*) to protect him. However, he has questioned the effectiveness of these measures, as on 10 July he was unable to contact the police responsible for his protection.

Jorge Arzave Orihuela has reported previous harassment since he started to challenge the authorities for their failure to prevent and remedy the poor state of 11,000 homes in Conjunto Urbano Lomas de San Francisco Tepojaco, Mexico State. The houses were reportedly built on land inappropriate for housing and have begun to collapse after less than 10 years, placing residents who bought their homes through a local government incentive scheme at risk. In recent months, Jorge Arzave Orihuela has criticized the housing project in news articles.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- ✓ Urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of Jorge Arzave Orihuela and his family and that he is able to carry out his activism without fear of reprisal;
- ✓ Urging them to order a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threatening message received by Jorge Arzave Orihuela on 10 July and bring those responsible to justice;
- ✓ Reminding the authorities of their duty to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 AUGUST 2013 TO:

Attorney General of the Republic
 Jesús Murillo Karam
 Paseo de la Reforma 211-213
 Col. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F.
 C.P. 06500, México
 Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (keep trying)
 Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Governor of Mexico State
 Eruviel Avila Villegas
 Palacio del Poder Ejecutivo
 Lerdo Poniente No. 300
 Col. Centro, C.P. 50000
 Toluca, Mexico State, Mexico
 Fax: +52 722 276 0046
 Email: eruviel.avila@edomex.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Governor
And copies to:
Local NGO
 Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel
 Agustín Pro Juárez
 Email:
 accionesurgente@centroprodh.org.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jorge Arzave Orihuela bought his house in the low-income Conjunto Urbano Lomas de San Francisco Tepojaco, Mexico State in the outskirts of Mexico City in the state of Mexico in 2003. His home and many others soon began to fall apart and the ground where the houses were built started to sink. Despite commitments made by the authorities to provide services and improve the environment of the housing scheme, the area has scarce running water, no health clinics, poor transportation system, overcrowded schools, and is by an open-air landfill. Some residents have abandoned their houses for their own safety. Jorge Arzave Orihuela has been demanding action from the developers and the local government.

A Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was unanimously approved by both houses of Mexico's parliament, and signed by the President, in 2012. The process for implementing the law has now started, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society, but operational protocols, clear guidelines on cooperation between the federal and state authorities and resources urgently need to be put in place to guarantee its effectiveness. It is vital that the authorities do not assume that their responsibilities are restricted to establishing a protection mechanism and that there is a vital flow of communication between the federal, state and municipal governments.

Name: Jorge Arzave Orihuela (m) and family

Gender m/f: m & f

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