

URGENT ACTION

COMMUNITY MEMBERS THREATENED

Two residents have been threatened in the Democratic Civic Union of Neighbourhoods and Communities Neighbourhood (Colonia Unión Cívica Democrática de Barrios Colonias y Comunidades, UCIDEBAAC), Pinotepa Nacional Municipality, Oaxaca State. This event follows a repeated pattern of threats and intimidation.

UCIDEBAAC community residents **Tobías Alonso Sánchez** and **Yosiveth Nava Herrera** were threatened by two unknown armed men on 25 September. Both managed to escape, but moments later observed the aggressors speaking with members of the Municipal Police (Policía Municipal). Neither Tobías Alonso Sánchez nor Yosiveth Nava Herrera has filed a criminal complaint because they fear reprisals by local authorities, who they suspect are involved. They have, however, informed the Oaxaca state Human Rights Commission (Defensoría de Derechos Humanos de Oaxaca) of the incident.

According to UCIDEBAAC residents, the community have opposed the municipality authorities' measures to push ahead with the construction of a commercial development on disputed land in the community. Residents and leaders of UCIDEBAAC have reported incidents of intimidation and killings over the past decade in response to their opposition to the municipal government, which the authorities have consistently failed to investigate. These incidents have become more frequent and violent in the past year, resulting in the community establishing a neighbourhood police force. Members of the military, state and municipal police entered the UCIDEBAAC neighbourhood on 25 August and detained several community leaders participating in the community policing project.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- ✓ Urging authorities to provide effective protection to Tobías Alonso Sánchez and Yosiveth Nava Herrera and other residents and community activists from UCIDEBAAC;
- ✓ Calling for an investigation into the attacks and threats against residents, including allegations that municipal authorities are involved;
- ✓ Calling for the federal and state government to ensure that members of the UCIDEBAAC community are not attacked or threatened on the basis of their opposition to the municipal authorities..

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:

Governor of Oaxaca State

Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo
Plaza de la Constitución, Centro
Histórico, C.P. 68000,
Oaxaca de Juárez, México
Fax: +52 95 1501 8100, and dial ext.
40068 (ask "tono de fax, por favor")
Email: spagoboaxaca@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Governor

Minister of Interior
Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretario de Gobernacion
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtemoc,
Distrito Federal, C.P. 6600, México
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Local organization
Centro de Derechos Humanos y
Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas,
CEDHAPI
Email: cedhapi@yahoo.com.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The armed men who threatened Alonso Sánchez and Yosiveth Nava Herrera got out of a car and asked them if they belonged to the UCIDEBACC neighbourhood (Colonia). When Tobías Alonso Sánchez and Yosiveth Nava Herreira confirmed they were residents, the men told them: Tell your leaders that they are going to be done in one of these days, even if they are dead we'll get them out of the neighbourhood. They had better leave for their own good ("Diganle a sus lideres que se los va a cargar la chingada en estos dias, aunque sea muertos los vamos a sacar de la colonia, mas vale que salgan por la buena").

According to the community, on 4 September, another resident and community policing guard, Francisco Javier Gasga Flores was killed by an unknown gunman. Wilebaldo Tejada Flores, cousin of Francisco Javier Gasga Flores, was also badly injured in the attack. On 20 August, Eva Lucero Rivero Ortíz, neighbourhood resident and UCIDEBACC activist was shot at by an unidentified gunman but was not injured.

UCIDEBACC's residents are mainly from poor indigenous, afro-Mexican and mestizo backgrounds. The neighbourhood's land was given to the Catholic Church for the poor in 1970, which allowed the community to develop. Its ownership is now contested by the municipal authorities.

Community activists representing marginalized communities in different parts of Mexico often face threats and attacks for opposing official or unofficial local authorities (caciques). Their demands for justice, fair treatment and respect for their rights often go unheard as powerful local interests are allowed to operate by federal and state governments which turn a blind eye to abuses committed against these marginalized communities.

In the context of high criminal violence in several regions of the country and widespread distrust of police and other security forces, some local communities in states such as Guerrero, Michoacan and Oaxaca established unofficial community-based police or guard forces. In several instances, these initiatives operated with approval of state authorities as a means of addressing community concerns and insecurity. In August 2013, military and police operations in several states led to the detention of leaders of the community policing projects, many of whom are facing charges such as kidnapping and illegal use of arms. Those detained and their community supporters argue that the charges are in reprisal for their legitimate efforts to improve the security of their communities and are politically motivated.

Names: Tobias Alonso Sanchez (m), Yosiveth Nava Herrera (f), Francisco Javier Gasga Flores (m), Wilebaldo Tejada Flores (m), Eva Lucero Rivero Ortíz (f) and UCIDEBAAC residents and leaders.

Gender m/f: both

