

# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS DEFENDER'S LIFE AT RISK

**An Indigenous human rights defender from the community of Matías Romero in Oaxaca, south-western Mexico, is at risk of death if she returns to her hometown. She has received a series of threats due to her work on Indigenous rights issues and the authorities have so far failed to provide adequate protection measures for her.**

On 19 August **Silvia Pérez Yescas** received information from a reliable source that 100,000 Mexican pesos (around \$US 7,700) had been offered to any gunman prepared to kill her upon her return to the community of Matías Romero. After spending many months outside Oaxaca State due to previous threats, Silvia Pérez had recently returned to Oaxaca City to prepare to return to her community.

Silvia Pérez filed a formal complaint regarding the threat on 19 August with the Oaxaca State Attorney General's office (Procuraduría General de Justicia de Oaxaca). The authorities have said that they cannot investigate it without a formal statement from witnesses, but fear of reprisals is preventing witnesses coming forward. Investigations by the State Attorney General's Office into previous threats made against her have not advanced.

The federal Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists has also been informed of this threat to Silvia Pérez's life, but is still reviewing protection measures in relation to previous threats. A number of measures had previously been agreed in her case, including surveillance equipment installed in her home. However this did not cover the energy costs of using the equipment which are beyond Silvia Pérez's means, putting her at risk of failing to pay her electricity bills. An all-terrain vehicle to allow her to travel more safely while conducting her human rights work had also been promised but has yet to be provided to her.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Urging the authorities to ensure the safety of Silvia Pérez Yescas and strengthening the agreed upon protection measures in accordance with her wishes so that she can return to her community safely;
- Urging the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the apparent threat to kill Silvia Pérez Yescas, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding the authorities of their obligation to respect the right to freedom of expression and association as well 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 7 OCTOBER 2014 TO:**

#### Minister of Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong  
Secretario de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, C.P. 6600,  
México D.F., México  
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)  
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor  
Ministro**

#### Governor of Oaxaca State

Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo  
Plaza de la Constitución, Centro  
Histórico, C.P. 68000,  
Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, México  
Fax: +52 95 1501 8100, ext. 40068  
Email: spagoboaxaca@gmail.com

**Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor  
Gobernador**

#### **And copies to:**

Mexican Commission for the Defense  
and Promotion of Human Rights  
(Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y  
Promoción de los Derechos Humanos  
A.C., CMDPDH)  
Email: info@cmdpdh.org

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

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico often face attacks, threats, abduction and killing in reprisal for their legitimate and vital work. Those behind the attacks are almost never brought to justice. Amnesty International has welcomed the establishment of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in 2012. Nevertheless, many of the more than 100 defenders and journalists at risk who have sought protection have not received a timely or effective response, creating frustration, insecurity and disillusionment. Despite the government's assertions that the mechanism is working effectively, it is far from being fully operational as it lacks trained staff, resources and the high level political support necessary to ensure that its protection measures are implemented by the authorities at all levels. The impunity enjoyed by those responsible for attacks, due to ineffective investigations, often conducted by state authorities who are suspected of involvement in threats, is fostering tolerance of attacks. The Mechanism should be just one part of a comprehensive strategy to address violence against those who defend human rights and journalists. The federal government has so far failed to respond convincingly to this prevailing climate of hostility towards defenders and journalists in several states.

Name: Silvia Pérez Yescas

Gender m/f: f

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