

# URGENT ACTION

## LAND RIGHTS DEFENDERS THREATENED

**Two threatening telephone calls were made to staff members of a human rights organization in Oaxaca State, south-western Mexico. It is believed the threats are a direct result of their work supporting local Indigenous communities who oppose the construction of a wind farm project on their land.**

On 8 July staff at the office of the human rights organization Human Rights Integral Defence Committee Gobixha (Comité de Defensa Integral de Derechos Humanos Gobixha, **CODIGO-DH**) received two threatening phone calls. The first caller warned that CODIGO-DH staff would face serious reprisals for supporting another human rights defender, **Carmen Ruiz**, working with the Popular Assembly for the Community of Juchiteco (Asamblea Popular del Pueblo Juchiteco, **APPJ**). Carmen Ruiz actively supports legal complaints filed by community members for human rights violations committed in the context of the construction of a wind farm project in the Tehuantepec Isthmus, Oaxaca State. The second call was made to the mobile phone of a CODIGO-DH staff member, which again threatened them for supporting the APPJ defender and warned them that the human rights defenders did not know what they were getting involved in.

It is believed that both threatening calls are linked to CODIGO-DH's work representing members of local Indigenous communities in the Juchitán municipality in the Tehuantepec Isthmus who oppose the construction of a wind farm project on their land. The wind farm project and the process of consulting the affected communities has been extremely contentious, which has resulted in those who oppose the project being harassed and attacked. In recent years, members of CODIGO-DH and APPJ have been subject to repeated threats and harassment.

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

- Urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of all members of CODIGO-DH and APPJ, particularly Carmen Ruiz, as well as other communities protesting against the construction of the wind farm in the Tehuantepec Isthmus, and urging them to ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their work without fear of reprisals;
- Urging them to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the telephone threats received by CODIGO-DH staff members on 8 July and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Demanding that any consultation process in the Tehuantepec Isthmus is carried out on the basis of the free, prior and informed consent of all members of Indigenous communities affected, including reliable, accurate and accessible information on the impacts of the project.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 AUGUST 2014 TO:**

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

Minister of the Interior  
Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtémoc,  
Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 6600  
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414  
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx  
**Salutation: Dear Governor**

**And copies to:**  
CODIGO-DH  
Email: contacto@codigodh.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

Some members of the Indigenous communities living in Oaxaca State are opposed to the wind farm being built on their land. They argue that there has not been an adequate consultation process to obtain their free, prior and informed consent in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and they are concerned about the impact the construction would have on their agriculture and land. As a result of their opposition, these communities have been subject to threats and intimidation for several months. The government has initiated a consultation process but has not made public how this will proceed in line with international standards or how it will avoid exacerbating community tensions.

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: CODIGO-DH staff, Carmen Ruiz (f) and APPJ members

Gender m/f: both

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