

# URGENT ACTION



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*Note: Please write on behalf of these persons even though you may not have received the original UA when issued on March 15, 2010. Thanks!*

21 June 2011

Further Information on UA 63/10 (15 March 2010) and follow-up (2 December 2010) – Fear for safety

MEXICO

Obtilia Eugenio Manuel (f)  
Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez (m)

Indigenous activists, Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez, have received a threatening letter. A week earlier they and other members of OPIM were subject to an aggressive and intimidating search by members of the Mexican army.

On 16 June a hand-written threat was found at the house of Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez telling them to stop pressuring the government about the Inter American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) sentences on the cases of Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández. The note also made threats against the Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre, which has worked with the two activists. The note warned them that: “we will never let you alone even if you ask for protection from the government, .. if you don’t keep quiet we kill you ... protection is worth shit, we are protected” (*nunca dejamo libre aunque pidan protección del gobierno ...si no callán le matamos ...protección vale mierda nosotros somos protegido*).



Obtilia Eugenio Manuel is the president of the Me’phaa Indigenous People’s Organization (*Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me’pha*, OPIM) and her husband Cuauhtémoc Ramírez is one of its leaders. Both human rights defenders and Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre have been repeatedly threatened for their work with OPIM and supporting Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández, two indigenous women who recently won their demand for justice before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) for their rape by members of the military in 2002.

On 6 June Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez and other OPIM members were outside their office in Ayutla, Guerrero state when soldiers stopped and began to interrogate them. According to members of OPIM, the soldiers failed to explain the reasons for the stop and search and were aggressive and rude. One soldier allegedly kicked Obtilia Eugenio Manuel in the ankle as she tried to stop what they believed was to be the illegal arrest of Cuauhtémoc Ramírez. Eventually the military withdrew with no further action. Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez are among 107 human rights defenders in Guerrero state subject to protection orders (*medidas provisionales*) by the IACtHR, which the authorities have failed to comply with effectively.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Defending human rights can be a life-threatening job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Some of them have been killed for doing their job. The authorities

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**Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.**

have recognized that adopting and implementing an effective and comprehensive protection programme (*mecanismo de protección*), as requested by human rights defenders, is paramount. However, they are yet to fulfil their promise.

As founder and director of OPIM, Otilia Eugenio Manuel has been the target of numerous threats, acts of intimidation and surveillance. One of the most recent threats was a written message delivered to the OPIM office on 6 March 2010 and, later that day, a man was seen overtly watching the OPIM office and taking pictures on his mobile phone. (UA: 63/10 Index: AMR 41/021/2010 Mexico Date: 15 March 2010 and follow ups). On 17 March 2009 Otilia Eugenio Manuel received three death threats by text message to her mobile phone. One of the messages also warned her that no human rights organization could protect her. In January 2009 Otilia Eugenio Manuel was followed several times. She recognized one of the men following her as a supporter of a local political boss (*cacique*).

On 9 April 2009 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to provide Otilia Eugenio Manuel, her family and others with effective protection measures and to investigate the attacks. To date, only some of the agreed measures have been put in place and those behind the attacks remain at large.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Expressing concern for the safety of Otilia Eugenio Manuel, Cuauhtémoc Ramírez, other members of OPIM and Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre;
- Urging the authorities to provide them with effective protection measures, in strict accordance with their wishes, and as ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a swift, full and impartial investigation into the anonymous threat against them on 16 June and the aggressive military stop and search on 6 June, for the results to be made public and for those responsible for threats and intimidation against them to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Minister of the Interior**

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,  
Delegación Cuauhtémoc,  
México D.F., C.P. 06600  
MÉXICO

**Fax:** 011 52 55 5093 3414  
**Email:** [secretario@segob.gob.mx](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister/  
Estimado Señor Secretario

**Federal Attorney General**

Marisela Ibañez Morales  
Procuraduría General de la República  
Av. Paseo de la Reforma 211-213,  
Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P. 06500,  
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**Salutation:** Dear Attorney General/  
Estimada Señora Procuradora

**COPIES TO:**

**Human Rights Organization**

Red Solidaria Década Contra la Impunidad  
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**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**

Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 2 August 2011.