

# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK

Armed men abducted Mexican Indigenous human rights defenders, Otilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro on 12 February 2019. Their captors released them on 16 February amidst an increasing national and international outcry over their disappearance. They continue doing their human rights work and continue at risk, while their attackers are at large. Both HRDs are members of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (*OPIM, Organización del Pueblo Indígena Mepha'a*). Otilia Eugenio is also an elected member of the Indigenous Municipal Council of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero state, in southern Mexico. The authorities must implement protection measures on their behalf, investigate the attack they suffered, and bring those responsible to justice.

### TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action XX.XX**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

#### **Olga Sánchez Cordero**

Minister of Interior

Calle Abraham González No. 48

Col. Juárez, Cuauhtémoc

Ciudad de México, C.P. 06600

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#### **Ambassador Martha Bárcena Coqui**

Embassy of Mexico

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Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Dear Minister,

I write to you in relation to the attack against human rights defenders **Otilia Eugenio Manuel** and **Hilario Cornelio Castro**, members of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (OPIM) who were held captive by armed men from 12 to 16 February, in Guerrero state. They will continue to be at risk until those responsible for the attack are brought to justice because they continue to carry on their human rights work.

Otilia Eugenio Manuel is a founder and leader of OPIM and a recognized human rights defender. She was recently elected to the Indigenous Municipal Council of Ayutla de los Libres, in Guerrero state. She has received serious threats in the past due to her human rights work and is recipient of provisional measures ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights since 2009. So far, the protection provided by the Mexican government has been ineffective.

**I urge you to immediately take all necessary measures to guarantee their life and safety, so they can continue their work in defence of human rights without fear of reprisals; and to deliver a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into their abduction.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders and activists constantly face threats, intimidation and harassment in Mexico. A federal mechanism for protection of human rights defenders and journalists was established in 2012 but has failed to effectively protect them.

Obtilia Eugenio Manuel is a founder and one of the leaders of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (OPIM, Organización del Pueblo Indígena Mepha'a). Her organization works for the protection of human rights of the Mepha'a Indigenous People, in Guerrero state and had participated in emblematic cases such as the case of Inés Fernández Ortega, who was subjected to torture by military personnel in Guerrero state in 2002 and whose case has decided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in a 2010-judgment condemning Mexico.

Members of OPIM have faced attacks and intimidation in past years and since 2009. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to provide Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, her family and other members of OPIM with effective protection measures and to investigate the attacks that same year.

Raúl Hernández, an OPIM activist, spent more than two years in prison on unsubstantiated charges. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience in 2008 and was eventually released on 30 August 2010 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/059/2008/en/>). Four other activists were also imprisoned with him for 11 months until they were released.

### PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

### PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 3 April 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN** Obtilia Eugenio Manuel (She, her, hers) Hilario Cornelio Castro (He, him, his)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/9856/2019/en/>