

Attorney General of Oaxaca, Mexico Lic. Rosa Lizbeth Cana Cadeza Fax: 011 52 951 51 1 5519	Director of Human Rights - Federal Interior Ministry, Mexico Maestro Ricardo Sepulveda Fax: 011 52 55 5128 0234
Governor of Oaxaca, Mexico Ulises Ruiz Ortiz Fax: 011 52 951 5020530	

May 15, 2006

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are extremely concerned for the lives of **Jaime Loeza Juárez** and his brother **Aquilino Loeza Juárez**, indigenous leaders of the Chatino community of Temaxcaltepec, in Juquila municipality, Oaxaca state.

In January they set up the Organization of Peoples United to Defend their Land to resist the replacement of their traditional leadership selection system by an imposed municipal authority. They are also defending their community land against acquisition by private businesses. Since then they have suffered threats, harassment, spurious criminal charges, and have been shot.

On January 5 Jaime Loeza was falsely accused of stealing livestock and detained by police officers of the Special Operations Unit (UPOE) who threatened to kill him. He was later released for lack of evidence.

On March 8 Jaime and Aquilino participated in a protest demonstration against the way police had arrested eight other community members during a peaceful demonstration. Municipal police arrested Jaime and Aquilino, together with five others, and beat them in custody. They were charged with sedition, resisting arrest and blocking public roads. On March 15 a judge dismissed the charges and released them.

On April 3 three men sat next to Jaime and Aquilino Loeza at a bus station in Oaxaca City and threatened them with a gun. On April 19, as they were driving to their community from Oaxaca City, a pick-up truck stopped beside them and its occupants shouted, "... you escaped from jail but you won't escape a bullet. Your days are numbered." On April 30, on their way to Oaxaca City, men inside a pick-up truck started shooting at them, but the brothers accelerated and escaped unharmed. They have filed a complaint about these threats with the State Public Prosecutor's office.

Because of all these serious events we urge that you:

- Guarantee the safety of Jaime and Aquilino Loeza Juárez and ensure that they receive protective measures, in line with their own wishes;
- conduct a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the threats and attacks they have experienced, publish the findings, and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

copies:

- Human Rights NGO Centro de Derechos Humanos y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas ~ via US mail
- State Human Rights Commission of Oaxaca: Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Estado de Oaxaca ~ via US mail
- Ambassador Carlos Alberto De Icaza Gonzalez, Ambassador of Mexico to the US ~ via fax
- Ambassador Antonio O. Garza, Jr, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax
- William Duncan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax
- US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email
- US Reps Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

The following people hereby urge that you take action on this matter as indicated in this letter.