

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 <b>Lic. Fernando Francisco Gomez-Mont Urueta</b> Minister of Interior of Republic of MEXICO	via fax: 011 52 55 5346 0908 <b>Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza</b> Attorney General of Republic of MEXICO
via fax: 011 52 951 517 5890 <b>Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz</b> Governor of State of Oaxaca, MEXICO	

January 23, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are gravely concerned for the entire **community of Santo Domingo Ixcatlan, Oaxaca state, as well as for workers of the Center for Human Rights and Advice for Indigenous People (CEDHAPI).**

Inhabitants of Santo Domingo Ixcatlan have been under siege from a group of armed men working for a local political boss (cacique) who is closely connected to the municipal authorities. For months, the group has been intimidating members of the community who oppose the sale of communal lands. On December 3, 2008 a group of 50 men wearing balaclavas and armed with rifles and AK-47s surrounded Santo Domingo Ixcatlan. They forced state police officers out of town and threatened to kill all residents who didn't flee within 48 hours. As of January 3, no police reinforcements had been sent in; roads were blocked and electricity cut off.

In our letter of May 25, 2008, we expressed our dismay at the deaths of three community members who opposed the land sale. These killings prompted the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to order protection measures for 60 people, extended to 177 people in August.

CEDHAPI has reported that the protection provided by the state police is insufficient, and there has been little progress in arresting and bringing to justice a number of people involved in the killings and intimidations, even though arrest warrants have been issued for least 16 men. So far only four men, including the local political boss, have been arrested. The latest attack may be an attempt to make the authorities release those arrested.

Because of our concern for the safety of the inhabitants of Santo Domingo Ixcatlan, we **urgently call** upon your humanity and integrity to take the following actions:

- immediately mobilize security forces to protect the community of Santo Domingo Ixcatlan, restore order, and open routes into and out of the town.
- carry out an immediate, independent and impartial investigation into the activities of the armed group and its intimidation of the inhabitants of Santo Domingo Ixcatlan, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice.
- Promptly carry out the arrests that are pending for the April 2008 killings in this community.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

cc: Centro de Derechos Humanos y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas ~ via U.S. mail  
 Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698  
 Antonio O. Garza, Jr., US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5207-0091  
 Mary Stickles, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752  
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email  
 US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, Latta, LaTourette, Ryan, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UAUpdate129/08Mexico

**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**