

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414

Lic. Jose Francisco Blake Mora
Minister of the Interior of Mexico

via fax: 011 52 951 502 0530

Lic. Gabino Cue Monteagudo
Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico

November 1, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our deep concern for the safety of members of the **indigenous Zapoteca community of Unión Hidalgo, Oaxaca State** who have received death threats from security staff of a wind farm construction company that has been building on their land without the free, prior and informed consent of the community, in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The community is concerned about the impact of the construction on their agriculture and land.

They have been subject to threats and intimidation for several months. On October 21, approximately fifty workers from the wind farm company arrived in the community and destroyed the fence surrounding the land. A former police officer employed by the company to guarantee security of the project told human rights defender **Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez** "if you come back here again we'll burn and kill you." Another human rights defender, **Maribel González**, was told to "leave this place now, we're going to kill you." Four men, believed to be employed as security by the company, punched a local teacher, **Arquimides Gómez**, in the ribs several times and threatened him with a hammer.

Although construction was halted on May 24, the wind farm company has continued to exert pressure on the community and to enter their lands. The community has filed a complaint with the state Public Prosecutor's Office about the company's threats and acts of aggression.

Based on the facts presented above, we urge you to:

- provide appropriate protection to the community of Unión Hidalgo and human rights defenders supporting their protest, especially those who have already been threatened by security staff working for the wind farm company;
- carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the attacks and intimidation, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that the wind farm company takes measures to prevent misconduct by its staff;
- ensure that the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities is obtained on the basis of reliable and accurate information on the impacts of the project.

It is the responsibility of state and federal authorities in Mexico to hold accountable those responsible for abuses such as those described here. As a consequence of your high office, you have the power and the responsibility to see that human rights of all people within your jurisdiction are protected. We strongly urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
Earl Anthony Wayne, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
Greg Spro, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Mexico member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 315/11 Mexico

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