

via FAX: 011 52 95 1501 8100 ext 40068 Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico	via FAX: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Minister of the Interior of Mexico
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October 23, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about threats to **Tobías Alonso Sánchez** and **Yosiveth Nava Herrera**, residents of the Democratic Civic Union of Neighborhoods and Communities (UCIDEBAAC) in Pinotepa Nacional Municipality in Oaxaca State. UCIDEBACC residents are opposing plans for commercial development on disputed land in the community.

On September 25, two armed men got out of a car and asked them if they belonged to UCIDEBACC. Answering yes, the men warned them: "Tell your leaders that they are going to be done in one of these days, even if they are dead we'll get them out of the neighborhood. They had better leave for their own good."

Tobías Alonso Sánchez and Yosiveth Nava Herrera escaped and later observed the same men speaking to Municipal Police officers. They have informed the Oaxaca State Human Rights Commission of the incident, but they have not filed a criminal complaint because they fear reprisals by local authorities, who they suspect are involved.

Municipal authorities are contesting the ownership of the UCIDEBACC neighborhood's land, which was given to the Catholic Church for the poor in 1970, allowing the community to develop. UCIDEBACC residents have opposed measures by municipality authorities to push ahead with construction of a commercial development on the disputed land. The community, whose people are mostly from poor indigenous, afro-Mexican, and mestizo backgrounds, has formed their own police force to respond to increasingly frequent and violent threats.

Violence is not new to the community. On September 4 an unknown gunman killed another resident and community policing guard, Francisco Javier Gasga Flores. Numerous other residents have been shot at and threatened. Authorities have consistently failed to investigate reported incidents of intimidation and killings in the community over the past decade.

We **strongly urge** that you

- provide effective protection to Tobias Alonso Sánchez and Yosiveth Nava Herrera and other residents and activists from UCIDEBAAC;
- investigate attacks and threats against residents, including allegations that municipal authorities are involved;
- ensure that members of the UCIDEBAAC community are not attacked or threatened because of their opposition to the municipal authorities.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: CEDHAPI ~ via email
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 Sprow, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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