

MEXICO

OPIM: Release of prisoners of conscience

Alejandro Feliciano García was murdered January 1, 2008, in the village of El Camalote, Guerrero State.

Fifteen members of OPIM (Me'phaa [Tlapanecas] Indigenous People's Organization) were accused of his murder.

Why? Alejandro Feliciano García was a supporter of the local *cacique* (political boss), a political enemy of OPIM.

Five OPIM members were unjustly detained for the murder of Alejandro Feliciano García on April 17, 2008: Manuel Cruz, Orlando Manzanarez, Natalio Ortega, Romualdo Santiago and Raul Hernández.

On December 2, 2008, RRN wrote to Mexican officials expressing concern about the continued imprisonment of these five, particularly after a federal review judge had ruled on October 20 that the evidence presented did not implicate four of the men (all but Raul Hernández) and ordered their release. According to their families, since the men were detained, their children have been stigmatized and discriminated against in their school by the head teacher, who the families say is one of the *cacique's* supporters. Other students have called them "sons and daughters of criminals." RRN called for the unconditional release of the five.

In February 2009, Rafael Rodríguez Dircio, another of the 15 OPIM members accused of the murder, received a death threat by a supporter of this same *cacique* (RRN letter 3-3-09).

Good news: March 19, 2009

Officials dropped charges and unconditionally released four of the OPIM members: Manuel Cruz, Orlando Manzanarez, Natalio Ortega and Romualdo Santiago. RRN is urging protective measures for them.

April 17, 2010

Raul Hernández Abundio has now been detained for two years. Human rights groups believe his detention is politically motivated because of his work with OPIM. We believe that he is a **prisoner of conscience** and is likely to face an unfair trial. As we indicated in our letter of December 2, 2008, eyewitness testimonies that he was not present at the time of the murder have not been taken into consideration. **RRN continues to advocate for dropping charges against Raul Hernández and for his unconditional release.**