



Mr. Fernando Francisco Gómez-Mont
Secretary of the Interior
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso,
Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtemoc,
Mexico D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

March 29, 2010

Dear Mr. Fernando Francisco Gomez-Mont,

We are writing to you today to convey our deep concerns following repeated threats and harassment of members of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Me'phaa (OPIM) and the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, both located in the state of Guerrero. On several prior occasions we have expressed to Mexican government authorities our concern for the safety of members of these organizations and we are alarmed by the ongoing threats against them.

On March 6th of this year, the headquarters of OPIM, based in the city of Ayutla de los Libres in the state of Guerrero, was under surveillance all day starting at approximately four in the morning. That night, the organization received a sheet of paper with a death threat written on it which also referred to the organization's activities to defend human rights. On this same day, the president of the organization, Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, was harassed by an unidentified individual while outside of the OPIM offices.

On March 16th, members of the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, based in Tlapa de Comonfort, noticed a man photographing both the premises and organizational staff entering and exiting the building. On March 17th, Andrea Eugenio Manuel, the sister of Obtilia and an active member of OPIM, also received threats while in Ayutla de los Libres.

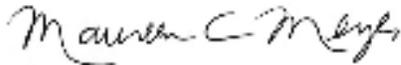
It is crucial to note that the two organizations and many of their members that have received threats have been supporting two cases currently being considered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and some of these individuals have been proposed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to serve as witnesses in these cases. We are concerned that these recent threats are tied to the cases before the Inter-American Court and have been made to intimidate the individuals who support them.

Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, for example, has actively participated in the documentation, advocacy and accompaniment of the cases involving the rape and torture of two indigenous women, Inés Fernández Ortega and Valentina Rosendo Cantú, perpetrated by members of the Mexican army in the state of Guerrero in 2002. She has also actively participated in the struggle to free the indigenous leader Raúl Hernández, who is imprisoned and accused of participating in a murder based on fabricated evidence and who is considered as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

Members of OPIM have received ongoing threats for several years, resulting in the IACHR granting precautionary measures to OPIM members on January 14, 2005. As these measures were not implemented, the Commission requested that the Inter-American Court grant them provisional measures. These measures were subsequently granted in April 2009. However, information received since this time indicates that these provisional measures have not been fully or effectively implemented.

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the Latin America Working Group (LAWG) have been aware of these threats since they began. We are concerned that the failure to identify those responsible for these actions contributes to a high-risk situation for these human rights defenders. In this regard, we respectfully urge you to carry out a thorough, impartial and timely investigation of the threats made against Otilia Eugenio Manuel, her sister Andrea, and the other members of OPIM and Tlachinollan, sanction those responsible, and make public the results of these investigations. We also request that the State guarantee the safety and physical wellbeing of the members of OPIM and Tlachinollan and that they ensure there are no violations of these individuals' rights. Specifically, we call for full compliance with the provisional measures granted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and that they be implemented in accordance with the wishes of those that have been affected to protect the life and personal wellbeing of these human rights defenders.

Sincerely,



Maureen Meyer
Program Coordinator for Mexico and Central America
Washington Office on Latin America



Jennifer Johnson
Coordinator of Mexico Program
Latin America Working Group

CC: Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo, Governor of the State of Guerrero
Albertico Guinto Sierra, Acting Attorney General of the State of Guerrero
Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the United States