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## **MEXICO**

### **INDIGENOUS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS RELEASED BUT REMAIN AT RISK**

Armed men abducted Mexican Indigenous human rights defenders, Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro on 12 February 2019 in Guerrero state. Their captors released them on 16 February amidst an increasing national and international outcry over their disappearance. They will continue to be at risk until those responsible for the attack are brought to justice because they continue to carry on their human rights work.

Both human rights defenders are members of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (OPIM, Organización del Pueblo Indígena Mepha'a). Obtilia Eugenio is a founder and leader of OPIM and a recognized human rights defender. Obtilia Eugenio is also an elected member of the Indigenous Municipal Council of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero state, in southern Mexico. She has received serious threats in the past due to her human rights work and is recipient of provisional measures ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights since 2009. So far, the protection provided by the Mexican government has been ineffective.

The authorities must implement protection measures on behalf of Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro, investigate their abduction and bring those responsible to justice.

#### **Please send a letter or tweet to the Minister of Interior.**

\* Urge her to immediately take all necessary measures to guarantee the lives and safety of Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro so they can continue their work in defence of human rights without fear of reprisals.

\* Ask the minister to deliver a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into their abduction, bringing to justice anyone found to have been responsible.

#### **Write to**

Olga Sánchez Cordero  
Minister of Interior  
Calle Abraham González No. 48  
Col. Juárez, Cuauhtémoc  
Ciudad de México, C.P. 06600  
MÉXICO

Twitter: @SEGOB\_mx @M\_OlgaSCordero

Postage: \$2.65

## **Please send a copy to**

His Excellency Arturo Hernández Basave  
Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Mexico  
45 O'Connor Street, Suites 1000 & 1030  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1A4  
Fax: 613 235 9123  
Phone: 613 233 8988 or 613 233 9272  
Email: [infocan@sre.gob.mx](mailto:infocan@sre.gob.mx)  
Twitter: @EmbaMexCan

Héctor Astudillo Flores  
Gobernador Constitucional del estado de Guerrero  
Boulevard René Juárez Cisneros 62  
Cd. de los servicios  
Chilpancingo de los Bravo, C.P 39074  
Estado de Guerrero, México  
Twitter: @HectorAstudillo @Gob\_Guerrero

## **Additional information**

Human rights defenders and activists constantly face threats, intimidation and harassment in Mexico. A federal mechanism for protection of human rights defenders and journalists was established in 2012 but has failed to effectively protect them.

OPIM works for the protection of human rights of the Mepha'a Indigenous People, in Guerrero state and had participated in emblematic cases such as the case of Inés Fernández Ortega, who was subjected to torture by military personnel in Guerrero state in 2002 and whose case has decided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in a 2010-judgment condemning Mexico.

Members of OPIM have faced attacks and intimidation in past years and since 2009. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to provide Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, her family and other members of OPIM with effective protection measures and to investigate the attacks that same year.

Raúl Hernández, an OPIM activist, spent more than two years in prison on unsubstantiated charges. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience in 2008 and was eventually released on 30 August 2010 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/059/2008/en/>). Four other activists were also imprisoned with him for 11 months until they were released.