

URGENT ACTION

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS DEFENDERS DISAPPEARED

On 12 February, Mexican Indigenous human rights defenders, Otilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro disappeared while traveling through Guerrero state, southwest Mexico. They were both members of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (OPIM, Organización del Pueblo Indígena Mepha'a). Since 2009, due to their human rights work, Otilia Eugenio and other OPIM members have received several attacks and threats, including death threats. Otilia Eugenio was recently elected member of the Indigenous Municipal Council of the Ayutla de los Libres town (Guerrero state). Their fate or whereabouts are unknown. Authorities must urgently search for them and bring those responsible to justice.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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

Dear Minister,

I write to you in relation of the disappearance of human rights defenders Otilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro, members of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (OPIM) who were last seen on 12 February when they were traveling through Guerrero state.

Otilia Eugenio Manuel is a founder and leader of OPIM and a recognized human rights defender. She was recently elected to the Indigenous Municipal Council of Ayutla de los Libres. 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. but the protection provided by the Mexican government was clearly defective. She informed her colleagues that she had received new threats in the weeks leading up to her disappearance.

I urge you to immediately search for human rights defenders Otilia Eugenio Manuel and Hilario Cornelio Castro to establish their fate or whereabouts and to bring those responsible for their disappearance to justice.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders and activist 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.

Obtilia Eugenio Manuel is a founder and one of the leaders of the Organization of Indigenous Mepha'a People (OPIM, Organización del Pueblo Indígena Mepha'a). Her organization works for the protection of human rights of the Mepha'a Indigenous People 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 in 2009.

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.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 27 March 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: **Obtilia Eugenio Manuel** (She, her, hers) **Hilario Cornelio Castro** (He, him, his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UAs:

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/36000/amr410212010en.pdf>

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/36000/amr410862010en.pdf>

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/28000/amr410392011en.pdf>