



Centro de Derechos Humanos
Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, AC



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Press Release No. 37

Evidence of a strategy of hostility against social movements in Chiapas

- * The state government of Chiapas liberates paramilitaries involved in the attack upon a human rights lawyer.**
- * Risk of aggression towards adherents of the Other Campaign in the *ejido* of Jotolá, municipality of Chilón.**

This Human Rights Center has received information from adherents to the Other Campaign from the *ejido* of Jotolá, municipality of Chilón, about the imminent risk of aggression by members of the Organization for the Defense of Indigenous and Peasant Rights (OPDDIC from its Spanish acronym), and possibility of irreparable injury to their lives and physical integrity.

Following the testimony of members of the Other Campaign of the *ejido*, Juan Cruz Méndez, Guadalupe Cruz Méndez, Rogelio Cruz Méndez and Agustín Hernández Sántiz, (who were detained November 3rd, 2009 by the ministerial police for their participation in the aggressions against a human rights lawyer on September 18, 2009) were liberated yesterday, November 11th, 2009, from the prison, the State Center for Social Reinsertion of the Sentenced, No. 14, “El Amate” (CERSS. No 14, El Amate). Following their liberation the men returned to the community of Jotolá at 11pm.

Upon their return to the community, the residents of the *ejido* reported that between 1am and 3am today, the liberated members of the OPPDIC were seen walking around the house of a member of the Other Campaign in a state of inebriation and threatening attitude. The house belongs to the mother of Cándido Cruz, a witness in the case against the liberated aggressors.

In earlier events, we were informed by the *ejido* residents that while several women (adherents of the Other Campaign) walked along the highway, the brothers Cruz Méndez and other members of the OPPDIC began to scream at the women that they would kill and rape them, one by one.

Following this incident this Center solicited the implementation of preliminary measures number 031-026-09/157/2009 from the state. This solicitation was made under the consideration that there exists the risk of imminent aggression by the OPPDIC to the residents of the *ejido* who are members of the Other Campaign and their families.



This Human Rights Center insists upon the Governor Juan Sabines Guerrero that this recent event confirms the use of the Justice System to repress social protest and maintain impunity in the case of the political prisoners Jerónimo y Antonio Gómez Saragos. This repression also serves to protect paramilitary groups.

Earlier Events:

This past 18th of September, 2009, residents of the *ejido* Jotolá, adherents to the Other Campaign along with Ricardo Lagunes (employee of this Human Rights Center) were attacked with fire arms, stones and sticks (see Press Release No. 30).

Considering these recent events, corresponding denouncements were made to the Public Minister, who solicited an order of apprehension from the Judge Carlos Alberto Bello Avendaño, second district court judge in Tuxtla Gutierrez. This order was solicited for the crime attempted homicide, denial of liberty, and injury. This past November 3rd, as a result of the authorization of the order of apprehension, Juan Cruz Méndez, Guadalupe Cruz Méndez, Rogelio Cruz Méndez y Agustín Hernández Sántiz were detained. However, yesterday, the second district court judge liberated the four aggressors. This act of liberation took place in the face of the continued imprisonment of the Gómez Saragos brothers in CERSS No. 14, El Amate, in the municipality of Cintalapa, Chiapas.