



San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, México  
09 of December, 2009  
Press Bulletin No. 39  
Human Rights Defender's Day

**In Chiapas the defense of Human Rights is the target  
of intimidations, attacks and murders.**

- **The Mexican State doesn't respect the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders**

It is important to consider and remember the basic context of a human rights defender, as described in the Declaration, on the right and duty of individuals, groups and institutions to promote and protect human rights and fundamental civil liberties acknowledged in "the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders"; its first article states: *"Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels."*

Following this, it is essential to show that the UN declaration on human rights defenders, indicates that: *"Each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms, inter alia, by adopting such steps as may be necessary to create all conditions necessary in the social, economic, political and other fields, as well as the legal guarantees required to ensure that all persons under its jurisdiction, individually and in association with others, are able to enjoy all those rights and freedoms in practice."*

This year the work of human rights defenders has been criminalized to the point that human rights defenders are considered part of an organized delinquency, or as part of a supposed network of subversion that will destabilize the state in 2010.

A small recount of this harassment and aggression against human rights defenders in this second semester of 2009 goes as follows:

- On **June 16 and 19** this centre (Frayba) reported<sup>1</sup> acts of persecution and harassment against its own members, by the Center for Investigation and National Security (CISEN). The facts show that the CISEN, using different vehicles without number plates, undertook excessive security and persecution work.
- On **June 22** this Center announced<sup>2</sup> that the State government, in its eagerness to intervene in social conflicts, manipulated and controlled information contributing to a polarization of the tense atmosphere in different zones of Chiapas.

---

<sup>1</sup> Boletín de prensa No. 24 "Vigilancia a integrantes del Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas", disponible en web en: [http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/boletines/090616\\_24\\_hostigamiento\\_frayba.pdf](http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/boletines/090616_24_hostigamiento_frayba.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Pronunciamiento "Gobierno de Chiapas tergiversa información sobre conflictos sociales", disponible en web en: [http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/boletines/090622\\_contexto\\_libertad\\_de\\_miguel\\_vazquez.pdf](http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/boletines/090622_contexto_libertad_de_miguel_vazquez.pdf)



- On **September 2** a state published newspaper released<sup>3</sup> a press release in which it implied that this Centre was “responsible” for a confrontation that occurred in the Santo Tomás community, in Ocosingo municipality; one day after the cited source: the ARIC organization (Union de Uniones-Historica), denied this version of events.
- From **April to September** the newspaper “Péndulo de Chiapas”, by means of several columns and press releases, published<sup>4</sup> information, distorting facts that put the personal integrity of members of this Human Rights Center at risk, without grounds nor sustained facts and has actively stigmatized the work of the integral human rights defence that is undertaken in various communities.
- The OPDDIC – “La Organización Para la Defensa de los Derechos Indígenas y Campesinos” a paramilitary organization, working under the protection of the State Government, ambushed and assaulted Ricardo Lagunes Gasca who works for Frayba as an integral member. In the process the OPDDIC shot and wounded a member of the cooperative “San Sebastián Bachajon” while he was attempting to rescue Ricardo.
- On **September 26** of this year, at approximately 20:00, a man dressed in black and wearing a balaclava on his face gained entry to the buildings of the Training Centre of Women of the Civil Association “K’in al Antsetik”, in the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, with the intention of causing damages to the infrastructure of the organisation. He doused it with gasoline and set alight to its wooden beams. Some of the young residents who live in the Training Centre managed to put out the fire.
- In the same vein, in past months, the cofounders of K’in al Antsetik, Yolanda Castro Apreza and Daniel Alfonso Luna Alcántara, members of the National Front for the Struggle for Socialism (FNLS) suffered repeated harassment by means of police surveillance. Similarly they also raided the home of Yolanda Castro, stealing a USB memory device from her. These acts, at the time of their execution, were publicly denounced by the FNLS<sup>5</sup>.
- The raiding by the Ministerial Police (PM – Policía Ministerial) of Adolfo Guzmán Ordaz’s House, of the Civil Network, Communication and Training, A.C., and the serious emotional damage and fear caused to his family, his youngest children in particular. These have been denounced formally in public communications by civil and human rights organizations that promote and defend the rights of the child.
- On **September 30, 2009** of this year, at approximately 11:00, José Manuel Hernández Martínez, *Chema*, member of The Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization– Carranza Region (OCEZ – Región Carranza) was arrested. He was arrested in the “28 de Junio” community in the municipality of Venustiano Carranza, Chiapas in a joint operation by the Attorney General’s Office of the Republic (PGR) and the State Justice Attorney General’s Office of Chiapas (Prosecutor’s) (PGJE). According to the reports, they entered the community in a Federal Commission of Electricity (CFE) pickup, dressed in CFE company uniforms and did not present any form of identification at the time of arrest.

---

<sup>3</sup> Nota de prensa y notas aclaratorias de la ARIC, disponible en web en:

[http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/noticias/090909\\_notia\\_contra\\_frayba\\_aricc\\_desmiente.pdf](http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/noticias/090909_notia_contra_frayba_aricc_desmiente.pdf) y [http://noticias.cuarto-poder.com.mx/4p\\_apps/periodico/pag.php?ODA1MzY%3D](http://noticias.cuarto-poder.com.mx/4p_apps/periodico/pag.php?ODA1MzY%3D)

<sup>4</sup> Enlace a historial de notas de prensa y columnas con información tergiversada, disponible en web en:

[http://www.pendulodechiapas.com/index.php?option=com\\_search&Itemid=99999999&searchword=frayba&submit=Buscar&searchphrase=any&ordering=newest](http://www.pendulodechiapas.com/index.php?option=com_search&Itemid=99999999&searchword=frayba&submit=Buscar&searchphrase=any&ordering=newest)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/revistas/090915\\_yorail\\_maya\\_electronico\\_v.pdf](http://www.frayba.org.mx/archivo/revistas/090915_yorail_maya_electronico_v.pdf)



- On **October 24** Mr Roselio de la Cruz González and Mr José Manuel de la Torre Hernández, members of OCEZ - Region Carranza were arbitrarily arrested and deprived of their liberty in the Municipal capital of Venustiano Carranza. Similarly their family homes were raided by the Preventive State Police, Ministerial Police and General Prosecutors of the State Justice Department (PGJE) and other Police Departments
- **November 28.** Despite the existence of a report of death threats the PGJE did not implement the necessary measures to safeguard the life of Mariano Abarca Roblero. He was murdered, according to the evidence, for his activism against mining exploitation. Civil and social organizations and any human rights defenders that campaign against mining are now at imminent risk.
- Behind the pretext of a supposed social uprising in 2010, the Mexican Army are currently undertaking illegal body searches supposedly with to disarm. In various communities in Chiapas, these operations have the full support of the police, public ministry officials and federal agents. They put personal integrity at risk, not only of the leaders and the defenders of these movements but of the general population as a whole.

Up until now, despite the public and legal reports made to the Mexican State, they have not taken, nor even considered the minimal measures taken to assure that the Human Rights Defenders of Chiapas can undertake their work without risk to their personal integrity.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Corte-IDH) has emphasized the work of Human Rights Defenders indicating/stating that *“the respect for human rights in a democratic state largely depends on the effective and adequate guarantees of human rights defenders to freely undertake their activities and that it is advisable to pay specific attention to any actions that limit and hold up the work of human rights defenders.”*

Human Rights defenders in Mexico, will continue individually and in association with others to promote and defend human rights and fundamental civil liberties in our country and in the World, despite the fact that 2009 has been a difficult year full of adversity as has been shown.

--