

PUBLIC

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01 September 2008

UA 238/08 Intimidation

MEXICO **Abdallán Guzmán Cruz (m), human rights defender, Morelia, Michoacán State**

Abdallán Guzmán, a member of the human rights organisation, the Diego Lucero Foundation (*Fundación Diego Lucero A.C.*) and his family were intimidated by armed soldiers who entered their family home without authorisation on 19 August.

At 9.30pm on 19 August, Abdallán Guzmán drove home with his wife. As he got out of the car to open the gate outside his house, the vehicle was surrounded by six armed soldiers. The couple were ordered to get out of the car and to stand against a wall. Abdallán Guzmán noticed that about 20 more soldiers were waiting 30 metres further down the street that he lives on. The soldiers then searched Abdallán Guzmán and his wife, claiming they were looking for weapons, and asked them whether they were carrying weapons or drugs. Finding nothing, the soldiers then allowed the couple to enter their home.

One hour later, Abdallán Guzmán's wife and daughter left their home to go to a local shop, but found a group of armed soldiers outside their front door. One of the soldiers was holding a device which he claimed had detected the presence of weapons in the house. The soldiers then forced their way into Guzmán's family home and searched the house, apparently scanning it with the device. Finding nothing, the soldiers left at 11pm. They did not have a search warrant authorising them to raid the Guzmáns' home. Abdallán Guzmán has not reported the incidents.

Amnesty International fears that these acts of intimidation may be linked to a robbery at the family's home on 7 July, in which press cuttings and documents collected by Abdallán Guzmán detailing the enforced disappearance of five of his family members in 1974 were stolen. A large sum of money was also taken, but other valuable objects were left in place.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Diego Lucero Foundation campaigns to demand justice for the serious human rights violations, including abductions, torture and murder committed between the 1960s and the 1980s in Mexico.

In recent months, high levels of violence have been recorded in Michoacán state in the context of the state combating drug trafficking networks. There is a heavy military presence in the state.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to take immediate and appropriate protection measures to guarantee the safety of Abdallán Guzmán Cruz and his family;
- calling on the authorities to investigate the unauthorised entry of armed soldiers into the home of Abdallán Guzmán Cruz on 19 August; to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to clarify the function of the device used to scan Abdallán Guzmán's home;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior

Lic. Juan Camilo Mouriño Terrazo

Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.06600, MEXICO

Fax: +52 55 5093 3414

E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister

Governor of Michoacán state

Mtro. Leonel Godoy Rangel

Gobernador del Estado de Michoacán

Palacio de Gobierno, 1er. Patio planta alta, Av. Madero Poniente No. 63, Morelia, Mich., C.P. 58000, MEXICO

Fax: +52 443 322 9000; then type in extension: 5573

Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of Michoacán state

Lic. Miguel García Hurtado

Periférico Independencia # 5000

Col. Sentimientos de la Nación, Morelia, Mich., C.P. 58170, MEXICO

Fax: +52 443 299 6460

Email: contacto.pgje@michoacan.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Special Prosecutor/Señor Fiscal Especial

COPIES TO:

Liga Nacional por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos A.C.

1era Cda Calle Tehuiztita, 44

Col. Los Reyes

Del.Coyoacan

CP 04330 Mexico Distrito Federal

Fax: +52 55 5846 1045

Email: enlace.limeddh@gmail.com

And diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 October 2008.