

URGENT ACTION

JUDGE RULES IN FAVOUR OF INDIGENOUS DEFENDER

A federal judge in Mexico has ruled in favour of Indigenous rights defender Ildfonso Zamora who has been in prison since November 2015. The Mexico State Attorney General should now accept that the case against Ildfonso Zamora is baseless and refrain from appealing the ruling. This will be a key step towards securing Ildfonso Zamora's release.

On 13 June a federal judge found that the case against prisoner of conscience **Ildfonso Zamora**, who campaigns to protect the forest in his community's ancestral land, is baseless because there is no evidence that he was involved in a 2012 robbery. The judge has not seen evidence that the robbery was in itself committed. In principle, the Mexico State Attorney General has until 27 June to appeal this ruling. This is a key opportunity for him to acknowledge that the prosecution against Ildfonso Zamora has failed to respect due process and refrain from appealing the federal judge's decision.

The ruling is a necessary but still insufficient outcome, in itself, to secure Ildfonso Zamora's release. The authorities have reported that there may be other arrest warrants against Ildfonso Zamora and his son, Misael Zamora.

Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:

- Urging the Mexico State Attorney General to refrain from appealing the 13 June ruling in which a federal judge has found in favour of Ildfonso Zamora;
- Calling on the authorities to take all possible steps to ensure that Ildfonso Zamora is immediately and unconditionally released, as he is a prisoner of conscience;
- Calling on them to ensure that no public official carries out any further judicial harassment against Ildfonso Zamora or his relatives;
- Calling on them to publicly acknowledge the legitimate work of human rights defenders, including Ildfonso Zamora.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JUNE 2016 TO:

Mexico State Attorney General
Alejandro J. Gómez Sánchez
Procurador General de Justicia del
Estado de México
José María Morelos Oriente 1300,
Colonia San Sebastián, Toluca, C.P.
50090, Estado de México
Email: gempgj@mail.edomex.gob.mx
Twitter: @ProcuradorMXQ
Facebook: Alejandro Jaime Gómez
Sánchez
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General /
Estimado Procurador**

Minister of the Interior
Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, Col. Juárez, Del.
Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06600, Ciudad de
México, México
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Twitter: @osoriochong
Facebook: Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
**Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimado
Sr. Secretario**

And copies to:
Ildfonso Zamora
c/o Amnistía Internacional México
Luz Saviñón 519, Col. del Valle, Del.
Benito Juárez, C.P. 03100,
Ciudad de México, México
Email: au@amnistia.org.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

HIS EXCELLENCY MR DIEGO GÓMEZ PICKERING, Embassy of Mexico, 16 St. George Street, London, W1S 1FD, Fax: 020 7499 8586,
Email: mexuk@sre.gob.mx Salutation Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 106/16. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/3978/2016/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ildefonso Zamora was arrested on 20 November 2015, accused of a house robbery in his own community of San Juan Atzingo in Mexico state which took place on 11 July 2012. The charge is based on eyewitnesses' testimonies, which are almost identical in content, word selection and sequence, which suggests that the charge is fabricated and may be politically motivated. The testimonies even mention 12 of the alleged thieves, including Ildefonso Zamora, in the same order. He has been in pre-trial detention in Tenancingo, Mexico state, since then.

The Indigenous Tlauica community of San Juan Atzingo, where Ildefonso Zamora is from, is located some 80 kilometres south of Mexico City. Since the 1990s Ildefonso Zamora has spoken out against excessive logging near his community, which is carried out by local men who later sell the logs elsewhere. In 2007 a group of loggers killed Ildefonso Zamora's son, Aldo. Two of them have been brought to justice, the rest are on the run.

Human rights defenders in Mexico often face reprisals for their legitimate work, including threats, intimidation and arbitrary detentions based on trumped-up charges. Those most at risk tend to work in remote or rural communities where perpetrators usually operate in collusion with local political leaders. Defenders are also particularly vulnerable due to considerable obstacles to reach out and support each other, such as distance, geographical barriers and limited means of communication.

For those defenders under physical threat the authorities have established the Federal Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. However, in the vast majority of cases it continues to provide inadequate or insufficient protection to those who most need it, especially women human rights defenders and those who are based in remote or rural communities. The Mechanism lacks political, financial and human resources, and there is poor coordination among authorities at different levels. Virtually all attacks against human rights defenders remain unpunished.

Ildefonso Zamora is married and has three daughters, two sons and six grandchildren. His family visits him regularly in prison and is the key force behind the campaign to release him. Other civil society organizations, like Greenpeace Mexico and the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez), are also campaigning for his freedom.

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