

# URGENT ACTION

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER MUST BE RELEASED

**Ildfonso Zamora, an environment and territory defender from an Indigenous community in central Mexico, has been detained since November 2015 in an apparent attempt to stop him from speaking out against logging in the Great Water Forest in his ancestral territory. He is accused of a 2012 robbery but the charge is unsubstantiated and seems to be politically motivated. He is a prisoner of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released.**

**Ildfonso 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 Ildfonso Zamora, in the same order. Although the investigation into the robbery had been ongoing since 2012, authorities never informed Ildfonso Zamora about it or gave him the chance to mount a defence until after his arrest. He has been in pre-trial detention in Tenancingo, Mexico state, since then. On 27 April 2016, a federal judge presided a hearing on a constitutional challenge against the criminal charge. The judge will issue his judgment in the following weeks.

Ildfonso Zamora is from the Indigenous Tlauica community of San Juan Atzingo, some 80 kilometres south of Mexico City. Since the 1990s he 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 Ildfonso Zamora's son, Aldo. Two of them have been brought to justice, the rest are on the run.

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

- Urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ildfonso Zamora as he is a prisoner of conscience and the charge against him is unsubstantiated and seems to be politically motivated;
- Calling on them to investigate all irregularities, bring those suspected of criminal responsibility to account and provide redress to the Ildfonso Zamora and his family;
- Calling on them to publicly acknowledge the legitimate work of human rights defenders, including Ildfonso Zamora.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 JUNE 2016 TO:**

Mexico state Governor  
 Eruviel Ávila Villegas  
 Gobernador del Estado de México  
 Palacio del Poder Ejecutivo, Lerdo  
 Poniente Nro. 300, Colonia Centro, C.P.  
 50000, Toluca,  
 Estado de México, México  
 Email: [eruviel.avila@edomex.gob.mx](mailto:eruviel.avila@edomex.gob.mx)  
 Facebook: Eruviel Ávila  
 Twitter: @eruviel\_avila  
**Salutation: Dear Governor / Estimado Gobernador**

President of the Republic  
 Enrique Peña Nieto  
 Presidente de la República  
 Residencia oficial de Los Pinos, Col. San Miguel Chapultepec, C.P. 11850,  
 Ciudad de México, México  
 Email via website:  
[www.gob.mx/atencion/](http://www.gob.mx/atencion/)  
 Facebook: Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto  
 Twitter: @epn  
**Salutation: Dear President / Estimado Presidente**

**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](mailto:au@amnistia.org.mx)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR DIEGO GÓMEZ PICKERING  
 Embassy of Mexico, 16 St. George Street, London, W1S 1FD Phone: 020 7499 8586 E-Mail: [mexuk@sre.gob.mx](mailto:mexuk@sre.gob.mx) Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Embamex-Reino-Unido/197866996938638> twitter: @Embamexru Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 due to distance, geographical barriers and limited means of communication.

For those defenders under physical risk 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.

Ildfonso 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 supporting the campaign for his freedom.

Name: Ildfonso Zamora

Gender m/f: m

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