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UA 86/13 8 April 2013 **URGENT ACTION** AMR 41/017/2013

HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION ATTACKED IN MEXICO

MEXICO

CEDEHM members (m & f) and Estela Castro (f)

The office of a human rights organization in Chihuahua in northern Mexico has been attacked. This could be connected to their work on human rights and the staff's security may be at risk.

On 4 April, members of the Women's Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres, CEDEHM) found a window broken in their office. The attackers had smashed the window with stones and there was broken glass inside the office. Members of CEDEHM alerted the Municipal Police (Policía Municipal) but despite there being a pre-arranged system in place for the Municipal Police to react rapidly to threats, they only arrived after one and a half hours.

CEDEHM has reported the attack to the Chihuahua State Attorney's Office.

Since 2008 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos) has requested that the government of Mexico puts precautionary measures in place for CEDEHM. In February 2013, the Inter American Court of Human Rights ordered provisional protection measures specifically for Estela Castro, CEDEHM's general co-ordinator, due to the increasing threats and hostility against her as a result of her human rights work.

The attack happened two days after CEDEHM members and officials from the Chihuahua State government held a meeting to review the implementation of the additional precautionary measures for members of CEDEHM and other human rights defenders.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- * Express concern for the safety of all CEDEHM members, including Estela Castro, and urge the authorities to provide them with effective protection in strict accordance with their wishes and with the precautionary and provisional measures granted by the Inter American Commission and Court of Human Rights;
- * Call on the authorities to carry out a full, swift and impartial investigation into the attack on CEDEHM's office on 4 April, for the results to be made public and those responsible held to account, and to review the rapid response agreement with the Chihuahua city Municipal Police;
- * Remind the authorities of their duty to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 MAY 2013 TO: (Time difference = GMT - 6 hrs / BST - 7 hrs)

Governor of Chihuahua State	Minister of the Interior	And copies to:
Lic. Cesar Duarte Jáquez Palacio de Gobierno, 1er piso, C. Aldama #901, Col. Centro, Chihuahua, Estado de Chihuahua, C.P. 31000,	Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Secretario de Gobernación Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtemoc, Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 6600	Local organization Women's Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres) Email: comunicacion.cedehm@g

México Fax: 0052 614 429 3464 Email: despachodelejecutivo@hotmail.com Salutation: Dear Governor	Fax: 0052 55 5093 3414 (please keep trying) Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx Salutation: Dear Attorney General	mail.com
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PLEASE SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEAL TO

His Excellency Mr Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza, Embassy of Mexico, 16 St George Street, Hanover Square, London W1S 1FD

Fax: 020 7 495 2035 Email: Emgbretana@sre.gob.mx Website: <http://www.sre.gob.mx/reinounido/>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

CEDEHM is a human rights organization which provides advocacy and protection to victims of domestic and sexual violence, killing of women, enforced disappearance and other serious human rights violations. This organization also legally represents other defenders in the region who are in extreme risk.

Defending human rights can be a dangerous job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Some of them have been killed for doing their job.

A Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was unanimously approved by both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and signed by the President, in 2012. The process for implementing the law has now started, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society, but operational protocols, clear guidelines on cooperation between federal and state authorities and resources urgently need to be put in place to guarantee its effectiveness. It is vital that the authorities do not assume that their responsibilities are restricted to establishing a protection mechanism and that there is a vital flow of communication between the federal, state and municipal governments.

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE INDIVIDUALS AT RISK PROGRAMME AT AIUK BEFORE SENDING APPEALS AFTER 20 MAY 2013

Individuals at Risk Programme, Amnesty International UK, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA, 0207 033 1572, iar@amnesty.org.uk.