

BAR HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMITTEE OF  
ENGLAND AND WALES

Fernando Francisco Gómez-Mont Urueta  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso,  
Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc,  
México D.F., C.P.06600  
MÉXICO

London, 22 April 2010

Dear Fernando Francisco Gómez-Mont Urueta

**RE: Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me'phaa /Organisation of the Me'phaa Indigenous Peoples**

The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales is the international human rights arm of the Bar of England and Wales. It is an independent body concerned with defending the rule of law and internationally recognised legal standards relating to human rights and the right to fair trial.

The Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC) is contacting to express its serious concerns regarding reports received about the safety of members of the Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me'phaa (OPIM), as well as the members of the Mountain Human Rights Centre, Tlachinollan.

BHRC has been informed that on 6 March 2010 Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and on 17 March 2010 Andrea Eugenio Manuel suffered harassment, including death threats. On 17 March, members of Tlachinollan observed that they were being photographed as they left their offices. Obtilia Eugenio Manuel is a witness in the cases of Inés Fernández Ortega against the United Mexican States, which will be heard before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on 15 April and 28 and 29 May respectively. As such, you will be aware that these people are beneficiaries of provisional measures granted by the Inter-American Court, making the Mexican state responsible for the guarantee of their safety.<sup>1</sup>

BHRC has been alarmed by these facts, which in the context of continuation of these attacks and the impunity in which they have taken place is extremely worrying.

These organisations have been working in the state of Guerrero since the 1980s defending the rights of the indigenous and rural populations. BHRC recalls that further to the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,<sup>2</sup> it is the responsibility of States to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms, *inter alia*, by adopting such steps as may be necessary to create

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<sup>1</sup> Provisional Measures of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to protect the life and integrity of Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and others, Resolution of April 30, 2009 / Resolución de la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos de 30 de abril de 2009, Medidas provisionales respecto de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, asunto Fernández Ortega y otros.

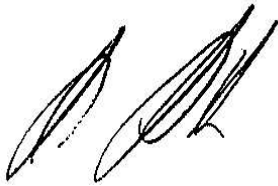
<sup>2</sup> Adopted by the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144 during the 53<sup>rd</sup> session on 8 March 1999.

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.

In view of the above, BHRC expresses concerns about OPIM and Tlachinollan member's situation, which we believe amounts to harassment, and urges the authorities to take immediate and effective steps to protect them and their relatives, and investigate the matters thoroughly and openly in order to put an end to any perception of impunity in such serious matters and preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice.

We therefore respectfully urge you to use all powers vested in you to ensure that the safety of these witnesses before and after the trial.

Yours sincerely



**Mark Muller QC**  
**Chairman**  
**Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales**

Copies sent to:

- Arturo Chávez Chávez, Procurador General de la República
- Dr. Raúl Plascencia Villanueva, Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos
- Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo, Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero
- Mtro. Albertico Guinto Sierra, Encargado de Despacho de la PGJE de Guerrero
- Eduardo Medina Mora I., Ambassador of Mexico to the United Kingdom
- Judith Macgregor LVO, British Ambassador to Mexico