

MEXICO

Indigenous rights defender, prisoner of conscience released after 2 years

Alejandro Feliciano García was murdered January 1, 2008, in the village of El Camalote, Guerrero State.

Fifteen members of OPIM (Me'phaa [Tlapanecas] Indigenous People's Organization) were accused of his murder.

Why? Alejandro Feliciano García was a supporter of the local *cacique* (political boss), a political enemy of OPIM.

Five OPIM members were unjustly charged with the murder and detained on April 17, 2008: Manuel Cruz, Orlando Manzanarez, Natalio Ortega, Romualdo Santiago and Raul Hernández.

RRN wrote letters to Mexican officials expressing concern about the imprisonment of these five, particularly after a federal review judge ruled that the evidence presented did not implicate four of the men (all but Raul Hernández) and ordered their release.

Good News

In March 2009, officials dropped charges and unconditionally released four of the OPIM members: Manuel Cruz, Orlando Manzanarez, Natalio Ortega and Romualdo Santiago. RRN is urging protective measures for them. However, the fifth prisoner, **Raul Hernández Abundio**, who was not at the scene of the crime on the date or at the time of the murder, was not released. Human rights groups believed his detention to be politically motivated because of his work with OPIM.

More Good News

On August 27, 2010 a judge finally ordered the **immediate and unconditional release of Raúl Hernández Abundió**, stating officially that the human rights defender "is neither guilty nor judicially responsible for the murder of Alejandro Feliciano García. Since his release however, there have been new threats and assaults against members of OPIM and OFPM (Mixteco Indigenous People's Organization).