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Coordinación Alemana
por los Derechos Humanos
en México



13 March 2025

Joint statement: Organisations reject the thirty-year imprisonment sentence against human rights defender Pablo López Alavez

On 6 March 2025, the First Court for the Conclusion of Traditional Criminal Cases of the State of Oaxaca sentenced human rights defender Pablo López Alavez to thirty years imprisonment and a fine of 112,000 Mexican pesos (over 5,000 euros) as reparation for the fabricated crime of aggravated homicide.

The indigenous Zapoteco defender has already remained unjustly deprived of his liberty for more than fourteen years since his arbitrary detention in August 2010, facing an unfair criminal process marred by multiple irregularities and violations of due process. His detention has been confirmed as arbitrary by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in their opinion No. 23/2017, which called for his immediate release.

For more than fourteen years, national and international human rights organisations have repeatedly spoken out in favour of the release of Pablo López Alavez, as his arbitrary detention is in reprisal for his community leadership work in the indigenous community of San Isidro Aloápam in Oaxaca, where he denounced the presence of illegal activities operating in the area and affecting the community's territory and environment.

The defender was initially sentenced in 2017, but in October 2020 the proceedings were ordered to be reinstated due to the multiple violations of his right to due process. The criminal proceedings restarted from the pre-trial stage and finally, on 6 March 2025, the sentencing hearing on this new trial was held. The sentence against the defender was expeditiously notified only hours after the hearing.

The new thirty-year imprisonment sentence against human rights defender Pablo López Alavez confirms that the imposition of long sentences against indigenous human rights defenders is a systematic and alarming pattern in Mexico, which attempts to criminalise and silence those who defend their land and indigenous territory from private interests.

Human rights organisations have asserted that the impact of these sentences is exacerbated when the person detained or sentenced is part of an indigenous people and community, since, according to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, “the separation of indigenous persons from their community and territory, basic components of their cultural identity, may lead to deep suffering that goes beyond that inherent in confinement in prison and may have a negative impact on members of the indigenous community”.

The signing organisations reiterate their rejection of the constant human rights violations against human rights defender Pablo López Alavez and express their support for the appeal of the conviction, reiterating their call for his release.

Signatories:

- Consorcio Para el Diálogo Parlamentario y Equidad, Oaxaca
- Coordinación Alemana por los Derechos Humanos en México / Deutsche Menschenrechtskoordination Mexiko
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- Front Line Defenders
- World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders