

**DUBLIN**

Front Line Defenders – Head Office
First Floor, Avoca Court
Temple Road, Blackrock
Co. Dublin, A94 R7W3, Ireland

info@frontlinedefenders.org
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +353 1 212 3750
fax +353 1 233 8695

BRUSSELS

Front Line Defenders – EU Office
Square Marie-Louise 72
1000 Brussels
Belgium

euoffice@frontlinedefenders.org
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +32 2 230 9383
fax +32 2 230 0028

24 May 2024

Mexico: Killing of human rights defender Antonio Regis Nicolás from the community of Santa María Ostula

On 17 May 2024, indigenous Nahua leader and human rights defender **Antonio Regis Nicolás** was shot dead after being stopped by an armed group, part of the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación*, on his way home in the town of Aquila, Michoacán.

[Antonio Regis Nicolás](#) was a Nahua leader, human rights defender, and member of the [Nahua indigenous community of Santa María Ostula](#). He was in charge of non armed security in the community council, from which he worked on protecting the community and territory against the invasions and dispossessions from organized crime groups. He also protected the territory from parties who sought to mine the land and exploit its resources.

On the night of 17 May 2024, at around 8 p.m, the human rights defender was on his motorcycle on his way home with his wife and two-year-old son after a medical emergency of the latter, when they were stopped by an armed group wearing military attire with the acronym CJNG, belonging to the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación*. The armed group took the human rights defender away from his wife and son and, after they suspected that he was part of the Santa María Ostula community, shot him several times, causing his death moments later.

The Nahua indigenous community of Santa María Ostula had already reported to country authorities the high risk situation they are currently living in, having faced attacks, threats, disappearances and killings by criminal groups who invade their territory. The community states that these criminal groups are guarding the roads to access their community, restricting their safe transit, and denounces that the federal and state authorities are aware of this situation but have not taken measures to solve it.

Front Line Defenders condemns the murder of human rights defender Antonio Regis Nicolás and expresses concern over the constant threats against human rights defenders in the Nahua indigenous community of Santa María Ostula, linked to their legitimate human rights work, particularly in the face of armed criminal groups in their territories who are actively targeting any member of the community for this reason. Front Line Defenders also expresses concern regarding the recurrent attacks against human rights defenders who had previously reported the high-risk situation they face, particularly in cases where the authorities are aware of such attacks.

Front Line Defenders urges the Mexican authorities to:

1. Publicly condemn the murder of social leader and human rights defender Antonio Regis Nicolás;
2. Launch an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the assassination of Antonio Regis Nicolás in order to identify those responsible, bring them before a competent and impartial tribunal, and apply the sanctions provided by Mexican law;
3. Ensure the integral safety of the wife and son of human rights defender Antonio Regis Nicolás;
4. Develop coordination mechanisms with the community council of Santa Maria Ostula in order to ensure safety conditions for its habitants and the efficient protection of their territory;

5. Provide effective protection measures to human rights defenders facing high-risk situations, adapted to their context, and respond swiftly to the concerning situation they face in the country;
6. Guarantee, in all circumstances, that all human rights defenders in Mexico are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders Board of Directors

Denis O'Brien, Jim Conway, Roja Fazaeli, María Mulcahy, Kieran Mulvey, Mary Jane Real (Philippines), David Sykes, Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe), Verónica Vidal (Uruguay)

Front Line Defenders International Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Maryam Elahi, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani, Mary Lawlor

Front Line, The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders trading as Front Line Defenders, is registered in Ireland as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Registered Office: First Floor, Avoca Court, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 R7W3, Ireland.

Company No. 593190; Registered Charity No. 20204494; CHY 22404