

H.E. Mr Ulises Canchola Gutiérrez c/o Embassy of Mexico in Norway
Postboks 4080 AMB
0244 Oslo

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the state of religious freedom in Rancho Nuevo in Hidalgo State.

On December 21, Maria Concepcion Hernández Hernández was tied to a tree and brutally beaten. The attack was motivated by her removal of two trees on her own land. Local authorities in Rancho Nuevo do not allow for the cultivation of crops on land belonging to Protestant Christians. She has not received any legal remedy and the violators are not held accountable.-

The incident reflects a recurring and subsistent issue in the religious freedom in Rancho Nuevo. Members of the Catholic majority in Rancho Nuevo systematically oppress and discriminate against religious minorities. They have prohibited religious minorities from cultivating crops on their own land. Since 2018, children of religious minorities have been barred from attending the local school. And should she die as a result of the brutal assaults, Maria Concepcion will not be allowed to be buried in the village.

Mexico's ratification of core human rights instruments legally binds the state in actualizing human rights without distinction to religion. Further, the first article of your Constitution states that the 'State must prevent, investigate, penalize and rectify violations to Human Rights, according to the law'. Realising religious freedom, securing effective remedies for victims of human rights violations, and ensuring the safety of all Mexican citizens without discrimination on basis of religious convictions are crucial aspects of this commitment.

On the basis of Mexico's legal obligations and the situation in Nuevo Rancho, I humbly ask your intervention in ensuring that:

- Maria Concepcion is recompensed for the wrongdoing committed against her, and that those who assaulted her are held accountable.
- Religious minorities gain free access to their own land and that their children gain access to the local school.
- Hidalgo State works towards actualizing religious freedom in Rancho Nuevo, protecting the right of all to not be discriminated against on basis of religious convictions and the safety of its citizens.

Sincerely,