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Zeferino Ladrillero

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Mexico – Kenia Hernandez

Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván is a lawyer and long-time human rights advocate in Mexico. She is the founder of the Zapata Vive Collective, an association that fights for the right to land and peacefully resists the neoliberal development models of the Mexican state.

Kenia has dedicated herself to the defense of women's rights, indigenous peoples and their land. As a result of her work, she has received several death threats from armed groups in the state of Guerrero. This situation forced her to leave her territory and seek protection and refuge in Mexico City, from where she continued her activism.

On June 6, 2020, the defender was arrested while peacefully protesting at a highway tollbooth to demand the release of political prisoners from the state of Guerrero. Placed in pretrial detention until June 11 of the same year, she appeared before a judge of the control court and was placed on parole. However, on October 18, 2020, she was once again incarcerated on the charge of robbery with violence.

On October 24 of that year, a judge granted her conditional release while facing this second charge. However, the next day, instead of being released, Kenia was sent to a federal maximum security prison on charges of "attacking communication channels". Since then, Kenia has been deprived of her freedom.

To date, there are ten known criminal cases against Kenia Hernandez. She is currently

undergoing two sentences of more than 20 years in prison for the crime of violent robbery, in which it was shown through investigation that Kenia was actually more than 600 kilometers away from the scene of the events.

In the other eight criminal cases, Kenia is accused of the alleged crime of assault on the public highway. The judge has repeatedly called her a "dangerous and insubordinate woman" who must be remanded in custody to prevent uprisings. Indeed, it was requested that she be transferred to a maximum security prison, where she is currently being held in undignified conditions that threaten her physical and mental health.

The criminalization of Kenia promotes a collective stigma and sends a message of intimidation to land rights defenders in Mexico. In addition, the initiation of unfounded criminal investigations against them has a dissuasive effect on their commitment and may well paralyze their human rights work.

PRAY FOR HER!

SUPPORT HER BY WRITING TO HER:

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