

## ACAT (Harrow) - prayer case of the month (May 2022)

Please pray as you feel led for indigenous community leader and environmental rights defender **Pablo Lopez Alavez**: He is currently serving a 30-year sentence in **Mexico** following a flawed trial which has been denounced by NGOs and the UN.



Prior to his detention, **Pablo Lopez Alavez** fought for decades to raise awareness on environmental protection and sustainability and to protect both local forests from logging and rivers (a fresh water source) in the district of Ixtlán (State of Oaxaca). This led to rivalries between the inhabitants of San Miguel Aloápam, who rely on the forest, and San Isidro Aloápam, where some profit from the logging.

On 15 August 2010, the López Alavez family was attacked by a group of 15-20 unidentified hooded gunmen who beat up and kidnapped **Pablo Lopez Alavez**, as well as attacking his wife, 22- and 25-year-old daughters and 5-year-old grandson. Hours later, he was handed over to the state police and transferred to the prison in Villa de Etla, Oaxaca, on a groundless charge of shooting and killing two men in a neighbouring village in 2007.

Following 7 years in detention he was eventually tried. Although **Pablo Lopez Alavez**, who has a proven alibi, denied any involvement in the crimes, and pointed out inconsistencies and contradictions in witness statements, the judge found him guilty. The 30-year sentence was confirmed in 2018.

The trial and conviction are believed to be in retaliation for his campaign against logging. His wife, also an environmental rights defender, has been the target of death threats and intimidation and, for her own protection, has had to move from her mountain home.