

Who is Xinachtli?

Xinachtli (state name Alvaro Luna Hernandez) is a Chicano activist and political prisoner serving 50 years in prison for an alleged assault on an Alpine, Texas police officer. He has been a long-time anti-police brutality and prison abolition activist, which led to constant harassment by local and state police.

In 1976, Xinachtli was convicted and sentenced to life for a murder he did not commit. Media exposure of the injustice of his conviction led to his eventual release. In the 1980s, Xinachtli was brutally beaten by police in Alpine. He responded by successfully suing the Pecos County Sheriff's department. These two incidents further politicized Xinachtli and gave birth to his long career and dedication as an anti-prison and anti-police brutality activist.

Throughout the 1990s, Xinachtli worked as the national coordinator of the Ricardo Aldape Guerra Defense



Xinachtli on the street in the '90s

Guerra Committee, which led the struggle to free Mexican national Aldape Guerra from Texas' death row after being framed by Houston police. The committee led a campaign that successfully stopped two scheduled executions and eventually won Aldape Guerra his release in 1997.

In March 1993, Xinachtli was a non-governmental organization (NGO) delegate before the 49th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. Before the U.N. General Assembly, he exposed the U.S. government's dismal human rights record and its human rights violations of U.S. political prisoners.

In addition, Xinachtli spearheaded the National Movement of La Raza, Stop the Violence Youth Committee, and the Prisoner Solidarity Committee in Houston. He frequently spoke at colleges, universities, and conferences around the country, addressing issues ranging from injustices in the criminal system against people of color, to self-determination, human rights, and political prisoners.

On July 18, 1996, Sheriff Jack McDaniel, of Alpine, Texas, went to arrest Xinachtli at his home on a charge of aggravated robbery (later dismissed with Xinachtli serving as his own counsel). No warrant for the arrest was issued. When the unarmed Xinachtli questioned the sheriff's action, McDaniel drew his weapon. Before McDaniel could fire, Xinachtli disarmed him and fled.

Xinachtli was aware the police had



been monitoring him since his arrival in Alpine and had often expressed fears of being assassinated by police.

At trial, police said they felt Xinachtli was a "troublemaker" and Xinachtli knew his history as a barrio organizer made him a target of law enforcement who were accustomed to little resistance from the Chicano/Mexicanx community. The police in west Texas have a history of abuse, frame-ups, and brutality against Chicanos in a county whose population is 50% Mexican-American.

In fear for his life, Xinachtli eluded police. Days later, Xinachtli returned to his mother's house. A heavily armed law enforcement contingent converged on the home. Without identifying themselves, police began indiscriminately shooting at the house, cars parked in front, and at public streetlights. At trial, witnesses described the shooting as a "war zone." Xinachtli returned fire in self-defense, but never shot nor injured anyone. Xinachtli called 911 and alerted other officers that police were shooting at him and would not allow him to surrender. Eventually, the situation

deescalated and Xinachtli was taken into custody.

Xinachtli was charged with two counts of aggravated assault—one count for disarming the sheriff and one count for a wound suffered by Sergeant Curtis Hines from a ricocheting police bullet. Xinachtli's elderly mother was charged with "hindering apprehension" and jailed.

Protests demanding Xinachtli's release were staged outside the courthouse in Odessa during the trial. Other protests were held in El Paso, Texas; San Diego, California; and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. On June 2-9, 1997, Xinachtli was convicted of "threatening" the sheriff, but acquitted on the charge of shooting Sergeant Hines. He received a 50 year sentence.

Since his imprisonment, Xinachtli has continued to be harassed by prison authorities. They have gone so far as to accuse him of gang affiliations and transferring him to administrative segregation, aka "the hole." Xinachtli has consistently denied gang affiliations and states he was targeted because of his political views, and connections he made with fellow Mexicano captives.

Due to outside pressure from Xinachtli's supporters, he was finally transferred out of segregation. Despite the small victory, Xinachtli is still monitored and harassed.

FREE XINACHTLI

Write Xinachtli:

Xinachtli* #255735

James V. Allred Unit

2101 FM 369 North

Iowa Park, Texas 76367

**Address envelope to Alvaro Luna Hernandez*

Local groups working with Alvaro:

NYC Anarchist Black Cross

Post Office 110034

Brooklyn, New York 11211

electronic mail: nycabc@riseup.net

nycabc.wordpress.com

[facebook/nycabc](https://www.facebook.com/nycabc)

[twitter and instagram @nycabc](https://twitter.com/nycabc)

NYC Jericho Movement

Post Office Box 670927

Bronx, New York 10467

electronic mail: nycjericho@gmail.com

jerichony.org

[twitter @Jericho4PPs](https://twitter.com/Jericho4PPs)

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fka Alvaro Luna Hernandez

