

VIA FACSIMILE: 011 52 951 50 20 530 <b>Ulises Ruiz Ortiz</b> Governor of Oaxaca	VIA FACSIMILE: 011 52 951 51 1 5519 <b>Lic. Patricia Villanueva Abrajan</b> Attorney General of Oaxaca
VIA FACSIMILE: 011 52 55 51 28 02 34 <b>Maestro Ricardo Sepulveda</b> Director of Human Rights – Interior Ministry	

January 25, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are extremely concerned for the safety of human rights defender **Erendira Cruzvillega**, Director of the National Center for Social Communication (CENCOS). On January 15, during a stay in Oaxaca City to meet with other non-governmental organizations, she witnessed a group of people get out of a vehicle and throw two bricks at the windshield of her parked car.

In December 2004 Cruzvillega received a number of anonymous email threats at her office in Mexico City, which said she should stop interfering in the affairs of others. We believe that these incidents are part of a campaign to prevent CENCOS and other human rights defenders from carrying out their peaceful and legitimate work, such as ensuring that traditional indigenous elections are respected.

Violence has erupted since the October 2004 municipal elections. At least 20 indigenous communities that conduct their elections according to traditional customs are locked in dispute with local authorities, which frequently favor one faction against another and do not apply the law evenly. CENCOS is working with human rights organizations in Oaxaca State to protect indigenous election processes.

We urge you to

- conduct an impartial, prompt and full investigation into the attack and threats described above, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate measures to guarantee the safety of **Erendira Cruzvillegas, other members of CENCOS and all human rights defenders in Oaxaca State;**
- ensure impartiality and respect for the electoral processes of indigenous communities
- take effective and timely action to prevent violence.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Dr. Sergio Segreste Ríos, President, Human Rights Commission of Oaxaca State ~ fax: 011 52951 51 35185  
 Ambassador Carlos Alberto De Icaza Gonzalez, Embassy of Mexico ~ fax: 1 202 728 1698  
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 US Senator Voinovich & US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email, fax