

via fax: 011 52 213 8805 Lic. Mario Marin Torres Governor of the State of Puebla, Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 51 28 02 34 Dr. Ricardo Sepulveda Director of Human Rights–Interior Ministry of Mexico
via fax: 011 52 222 240 8105 Maestra Blanca Laura Villeda Martinez Attorney General of Puebla	

February 16, 2006

We are very concerned for the safety of **Martin Barrios Hernández**, President of the Human and Labor Rights Commission of Tehuacan Valley in the state of Puebla. We also fear for the safety of his family and of other Commission members after a recent death threat.

He was released from police custody on January 12, having been detained on false blackmail charges made by an assembly plant (maquiladora) owner in the Tehuacan Valley. This was an apparent attempt to prevent him from carrying out his legitimate human rights work. In recent months, maquiladora owners have publicly accused Martin Barrios and the Commission of discouraging foreign investment by organizing protests and strikes.

Now on February 12, during a public forum held in Altepexi municipality, a family member was told by a friend to “Take care, all of you, and take care of Martin because a person has been hired and is going for Martin’s head.” This information came from a reliable source linked to the owners of the maquiladoras. Later the same day, Martin Barrios was approached by another man who reaffirmed the threat.

These threats and attacks against Martin Barrios are on-going. On December 30, 2003 he was seriously assaulted outside his home. No one has been brought to justice for that attack. Lawyers working on behalf of Martin Barrios have submitted a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights calling for protection measures to be implemented to ensure his safety.

We strongly urge that you

- take action to guarantee the safety of Martin Barrios Hernández, his family, and members of the Human and Labor Rights Commission of Tehuacan Valley, in accordance with their wishes;
- call for an impartial, prompt and full investigation into the threat on the life of Martin Barrios Hernández and bring those responsible to justice;
- carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the prosecution of Martin Barrios Hernandez and the fabrication of charges against him, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.
- recognize the right of labor organizers to carry out their legitimate work without any fear of reprisals, as stated in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Ambassador **Carlos Alberto De Icaza Gonzalez**, Embassy of Mexico ~ via fax : 1 202 728 1698
Antonio O. Garza, Jr., U.S. Ambassador to Mexico ~ fax : 011 52 55 5511 9980
 William Duncan, Desk Officer for Mexico ~ fax : 202.647.9894
 U.S. Senators **DeWine and Voinovich** ~ via email
 U.S. Representatives **Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones** ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: