

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Lic. Francisco Javier Ramirez Acuna Minister of the Interior of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 951 511 5120 Lic. Evencio Nicolas Martinez Ramirez Attorney General of Oaxaca, Mexico
via fax: 011 52 951 502 0530 Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz Governor of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 3686 6028 Emb. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano Foreign Affairs Minister, Mexico

September 2, 2007

Dear Sirs/Madam:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of **Francisco Velasco Hernandez**, who, on January 13, was arrested in Oaxaca City by three state judicial police officers after they beat him in the street, forced him into their car and drove him to a secluded spot where they were joined by two civilians who also beat him and sexually assaulted him. They drove him to the State Public Prosecutor's Office (PGJE), beating and threatening to kill him. During his interrogation by a prosecutor, he was beaten in an attempt to force him to confess to stealing a car and other offenses. He was forced to sign a statement, which he was not allowed to read, and charged with attempted extortion, bodily harm and resisting arrest. He was released on bail on January 23 after a judge rejected all charges except one. On his release he filed a complaint of "abuse of authority, bodily harm, rape, robbery and threats" with the PGJE against the arresting officers. An investigation was opened.

On February 5, when he was summoned to the PGJE, the three police officers who had tortured him told family members that if the complaint was not withdrawn they would "take action against him." On June 25, while attending a court hearing related to the prosecution of the police, he was again threatened by one of the officers. On June 29 an armed man approached him and told him to drop the case. On August 27 he was followed by a car in which he could see one of his January 13 civilian attackers accompanied by three other men. That evening two men approached him and threatened to kill him either outside or back in prison.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Mexican authorities to provide protection measures to guarantee his safety, but state and federal authorities have taken no substantial action. In light of these facts, **we strongly urge you to:**

- guarantee the safety of Francisco Velasco Hernandez and his family, as requested by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- order immediate, impartial and exhaustive investigations into the threats against him, publish the results of these investigations and bring those responsible to justice;
- suspend from duty the police officers implicated in his torture until the enquiry into their conduct is completed.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Centro de Derechos Humanos y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas via US mail
 Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana ~ via fax: 202.728.1698
 Ambassador Antonio O. Garza, Jr ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5207-0091
 William Duncan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: 202.458.3992
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Reps. Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 226/07 MEXICO

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