

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Lic. Fernando Francisco Gomez-Mont Urueta Minister of the Interior of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 951 517 5890 Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz Governor of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico
via fax: 011 52 951 511 5519 Lic. Evencio Nicolas Martinez Ramirez Attorney General of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico	

February 2, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned about the attack on **Ruben Valencia Nunez** in Oaxaca City on January 10. He is an activist with **Oaxacan Voices Building Autonomy and Liberty (VOCAL)**, which is part of the umbrella organization Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), which led widespread protests in Oaxaca in 2006 and 2007 calling for the resignation of the state's governor.

On the night of January 10, as Ruben Valencia was walking with a friend in Oaxaca City, he was accosted by three men in a car who shouted insults at him, including "bloody APPO." One of the men tried to get out of the car but was persuaded not to by the others, and the car drove away. Fearing for their safety, Ruben Valencia and his friend went into a café. Minutes later, the man who had tried to get out of the car came into the café and stabbed Ruben Valencia with a knife, wounding him in the head and neck. In the struggle, a waiter was also stabbed in the neck. Ruben Valencia was taken to hospital, but has since been discharged.

Ruben Valencia had publicly spoken out against state and municipal police following a raid they carried out on December 8, 2008, on a house where a group of young activists organize cultural and political activities. The police used batons and tear gas to force their way into the house. We are concerned that because Ruben Valencia is a prominent member of VOCAL, he is at continued risk of attacks and intimidation.

We are extremely concerned about the violence against demonstrators by state authorities in Oaxaca that began with the teachers' strike in May 2006. We have written several letters to federal and Oaxaca State officials (Sep 13, Oct 26, Nov 21, Dec 26, 2006; Jan 26, Apr 25, Jul 11, Jul 16, Aug 14, 2007; Nov 1, 2008) asking that they quell the police violence against supporters of the People's Popular Assembly (APPO), Oaxacan Voices Building Autonomy and Liberty (VOCAL), Comité 25 de Noviembre, and the SNTE teachers' union in Oaxaca. On April 25, 2007, we wrote to federal and Oaxaca State officials regarding VOCAL member David Venegas, who was detained by state police without a warrant. He was kept incommunicado and tortured. He was released on bail one year later after winning several federal injunctions against his detention.

We strongly urge that you

- ensure that Ruben Valencia Nunez is given appropriate protection, in accordance with his wishes;
- initiate immediately an independent and impartial investigation into the attack and bring those responsible to justice;
- take steps to prevent and punish all acts of intimidation or attacks against political activists.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Comité 25 Noviembre ~ via email
 Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
 Antonio O. Garza, Jr., US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5207-0091
 Mary Stickles, 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 Representatives Boccheri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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