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**Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza**

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Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Mexico

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**Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz**

Governor of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico

April 3, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are gravely concerned for the safety of **Marcelino Coache Verano**, a well-known activist with the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), and for his family, particularly his 15 year old son, **Edgar Coache Verano**. On March 20, Edgar and a friend were walking home from school when they encountered a group of twelve young men on a street corner. One of the men shouted his name. When Edgar saw that the men were laughing at him, he and his friend walked faster. The men got into a van and caught up with Edgar. One of the men shouted at him from the van, mentioning his father, "we warned your father, we know where you are."

On March 4, Edgar's father, Marcelino Coache Verano, was abducted in Oaxaca City by three men, one of whom wore a blue uniform. Before releasing him the following morning, they punched and hit him repeatedly with the butt of a gun and burned around his nipples and genitals with cigarettes for several hours. Marcelino Coache has been the victim of several other threats and physical attacks:

- August 2007: he was struck with a gun and had his face held to the ground by a policeman who told him to stop being a rebel;
- January 2008: a man attempted to stab him in the abdomen as he was getting out of his car;
- August 2008: his son received a phone call saying "we're going to smash your father's head in."

A local human rights organization has sent his case details to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to apply for protection measures.

In the light of these incidents of intimidation, kidnapping and torture, we **strongly urge** that you

- ensure that Marcelino Coache, Edgar Coache and their family are given appropriate protection in accordance with their wishes, following the abduction and torture of Marcelino Coache on March 4 and subsequent threats to Edgar Coache on March 20;
- conduct a prompt and impartial investigation into the abduction and torture of Marcelino Coache Verano so as to establish if security officials were involved and bring those responsible to justice.

We have written several letters to Mexican officials since mid-2006 about the violence (some state sponsored) against supporters of the APPO and teachers' union (SNTE). We are disturbed to learn that human rights abuses against these activists are still occurring.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai

Coordinator

cc: Centro de Derechos Humanos "Bartólome Carrasco Briseño" ~ US mail  
 Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Oaxaca ~ via fax: 011 52 95 1503 0220  
 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, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA68/09/Mexico

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