

Via fax: 011 503 2523 7421

**Romeo Benjamin Barahona Melendez**  
Attorney General of El Salvador

Via fax: 011 503 2527 1145

**Carlos Antonio Ascencio Giron**  
Head of National Police of El Salvador

June 12, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the continuing threats to Radio Victoria's human rights journalists in Cabañas Department, especially **Pablo Ayala, Oscar Beltran, Cristina Starr, Manuel Navarrete, and Marixela Ramos**. For the third time this year, on May 24 at 6.30pm and 7.00pm, Pablo Ayala, received two threatening text messages sent via the internet to his mobile phone and signed by "death squad" (*grupo de exterminio*). One message read: "Leave the radio immediately because we are not joking afterwards it will cost you your life to work for a rubbish media outlet".

On the same day, Oscar Beltran, a Radio Victoria staff member, received two threatening text messages signed by "death squad." One said: "Look Oscar we are not joking, shut this radio up or you will die too. . ." The threat referred to Pablo Ayala, Manuel Navarrete and Marixela Ramos, who had received death threats by text message several times between April 30 and May 4 (cf our letter of 5/15/11).

Cristina Starr, a founding member of Radio Victoria, also received a threatening text message on May 24 which read, "griga [sic] today it's time to act against people from your radio enough manuel pablo oscar and maricela are going to get killed [sic]".

Radio Victoria is a community radio station committed to social and human rights reporting. Because the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has deemed the threat to Radio Victoria staff to be so great, it has issued Precautionary Measures, which require that the authorities ensure their safety. Those responsible for sending the threats have not been identified, and no one has been brought to account for the persistent threats against the journalists.

This is our eighth letter to El Salvador authorities (three in 2009, two in 2010, three in 2011) concerning threats and assassinations of Radio Victoria staff. Because we believe they continue to be at serious risk for their lives, we **again strongly urge you to:**

- take immediate steps to fully provide appropriate protection to staff at Radio Victoria, in accordance with their wishes and in compliance with the Precautionary Measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against staff at Radio Victoria, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

CC: Radio Victoria ~ via email  
Francisco Altshul Fuentes, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of El Salvador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-234-383  
Mari Carmen Aponte, US Ambassador to El Salvador ~ via fax: 503-2-278-6016/4444  
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992  
Maria Silvia Guillén, El Salvador member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992  
Melanie Bonner, El Salvador Desk, US State Dept. ~ via fax: (202)458-3650  
Oscar Humberto Luna, Ombudsman for Defense of Human Rights ~ via fax: 503-2222-0655  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA\_131/11Update\_ElSalvador

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