

via fax: 011 52 951 501 6900 (*20635)
Lic. Manuel de Jesús López López
 Oaxaca State Attorney, Mexico

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414
Dr. Alejandro Poiré Romero
 Minister of the Interior of Oaxaca, Mexico

April 2, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of staff members of the women's rights organization **Consortio Oaxaca**. On March 3 laptop computers and case information were stolen in an office break-in. A manual on the protection of human rights defenders was left out on clear display and personal photos of family members of staff were spread out on a desk. Consortio Oaxaca staff believe this was intended to threaten them.

Consortio Oaxaca is a human rights organization which campaigns for women's rights such as equality, non-discrimination, women's sexual and reproductive rights, and an end to gender-based violence. They also provide legal advice and support to women who have been victims of violence.

During February, Consortio Oaxaca staff members were forced to disconnect the telephone line for periods each day because of repeated harassing calls from a woman who swore at them. On February 17 two men in a car parked for two hours outside the office said they were State Police from the Ministry for Public Security. On February 21 a Consortio Oaxaca staff member reported being followed by a man on a motorbike who continued following her after asking for directions.

Consortio Oaxaca and the Human Rights Commissioner have filed formal complaints with the State Attorney General's Office. The Oaxaca State Government's Human Rights Commissioner has asked the Public Security Ministry to guarantee the security of Consortio Oaxaca staff, but the ministry has not yet done anything. Investigations into a break-in four months ago have produced no results.

Because of the continuing climate of impunity in Oaxaca, we believe the work of Consortio Oaxaca is at risk and **we strongly urge** you to:

- provide protection to workers at the Consortio Oaxaca, in accordance with their wishes, to enable them to continue their human rights work;
- order a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the recent and previous break-in at the office of Consortio Oaxaca and intimidation of staff in recent months and bring those responsible to justice;
- fulfill your responsibility to ensure that human rights defenders can carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Consortio Oaxaca ~ via email
 Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
 Earl Anthony Wayne, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
 Greg Sprow, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
 Dinah Shelton, Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, First Vice Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 329/11 MEXICO

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