

via fax: 011 52 951 501 6900 ext 20635 Lic. Manuel de Jesús López López Attorney General of Oaxaca State, Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Dr. Alejandro Poiré Romero Minister of the Interior, Mexico
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July 14, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are deeply distressed over the shootings of **Bertín Vázquez Ruíz** and **Guadalupe Andrés Vázquez Ruiz** on June 16, especially in light of the killing of leaders of their organization (CPUVO) in January and March of this year. The shooting of Bertin and Guadalupe Vázquez Ruiz took place in the city hall of San José del Progreso in Oaxaca State! There is a clear and appalling connection to this violence and the politics and mining industry active in the area.

On the evening of June 16, both men, who are members of the Coordinating Body of United Peoples of the Valley of Ocotlán (CPUVO), were standing with other CPUVO members outside the city hall of San José del Progreso. They were shot and wounded by three men in a pick-up truck. Bertín Vázquez Ruíz was hit in the stomach; Guadalupe Andrés Vázquez Ruiz was hit in the leg and hand. According to the CPUVO and a local human rights organization, the three men in the car were identified as a municipal official, the son of the municipal president and an employee of a local mining company.

The CPUVO is a community organization that opposes the presence of a mine that has been operating in the municipality of San José del Progreso since 2006, when the municipal authorities granted a company called Cuzcatlán (a subsidiary of the Canadian mining company Fortuna Silver Mines Inc.) a concession for exploitation of silver and gold. The CPUVO and a local human rights organization claim that the municipal authorities granted the company the mining concession without consulting with or informing the affected communities. The CPUVO has carried out various protests against its operation.

For many years, the communities of San José del Progreso have suffered social and political tension, particularly in relation to the political control exercised by the municipal authorities. The presence of the mine has exacerbated these tensions, and the authorities have failed to ensure that attacks on those opposed to the mine are prevented or punished. Two CPUVO members were murdered earlier this year: **Bernardo Méndez Vázquez** (January 18) and their former leader **Bernardo Vázquez Sánchez** (March 15).

Because of our concern over the shootings of **Bertín Vázquez Ruíz** and **Guadalupe Andrés Vázquez Ruiz** and for the safety of all the members of the **Coordinating Body of United Peoples of the Valley of Ocotlán (CPUVO)**, we urgently call upon your humanity and integrity to take the following actions:

- carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the shooting of Bertín Vázquez Ruíz and Guadalupe Andrés Vázquez Ruiz and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide protection to Bertín Vázquez Ruíz and Guadalupe Andrés Vázquez Ruiz, and all other members of the CPUVO, in accordance with their wishes;
- carry out a full and impartial investigation into the murders of Bernardo Méndez Vázquez and Bernardo Vázquez Sánchez and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos Bartolome Carrasco Briseño ~ 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
 Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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