

via FAX: 011 52 95 1501 8100 ext 40068 Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico	via FAX: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Minister of the Interior of Mexico
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August 13, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the murder of human rights defender **Herón Sixto López** near the community of San Sebastián Tecomaxtlahuaca in Oaxaca State. His body was found on July 20. He had been shot at least six times. He had been reported missing on July 15 after he was last seen at his office in the Guidance and Advice Centre for Indigenous Peoples (COAPI). A formal complaint has been filed at the State of Oaxaca Prosecutor's Office (Ministerio Público) in Juxtahuaca.

Herón Sixto López worked defending indigenous people's rights in local communities. One of his activities was to represent local Mixteco indigenous people in land rights disputes. He had received anonymous phone calls during the last few months. One of them said he was going to be disappeared.

On July 21, after the burial of Herón Sixto López, his family saw a car following them. They have reported other threatening incidents which indicate they may also be at risk.

The Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was unanimously approved by both houses of Mexico's parliament, and signed by the president, in 2012. The process for implementing the law is ongoing, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society. However, the mechanism has yet to function effectively for all those who have sought protection. To guarantee effectiveness of the law, these things need to be put into place: operational protocols, binding commitments of federal and state-level institutions to comply with protection orders, resources, and high-level political support. Elected officials need to do more than approve the law.

We **strongly urge** that you

- provide effective protection to Herón Sixto López's family and other members of the COAPI;
- order a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the abduction and killing of Herón Sixto López and acts of intimidation against his family, and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

cc: Centro de Derechos Humanos Y Asesoría a Pueblos Indígenas A.C. ~ via email
Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
Earl Anthony Wayne, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
Chris Andino, 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 ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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