

via fax: 011 52 95 1501 81100 Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Minister of the Interior, Mexico
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November 21, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are gravely concerned for the safety and well-being of **Juan Sosa Maldonado**, leader of the Organization of Indigenous Zapotec People (OPIZ) in San Felipe del Agua in Oaxaca State, and his family. On October 16 unidentified men on a motorcycle shot at him while he and his wife were driving their children to school. Juan Sosa Maldonado narrowly escaped injury when he dodged a pothole; one of the bullets hit the head restraint on his car seat. A complaint was filed with the Oaxaca Human Rights Ombudsman and a request for protection measures (*medidas cautelares*) has been issued, neither Juan Sosa Maldonado nor his family had received by the end of October. The Mechanism for Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was also informed of the incident but has not as yet taken any action.

Since being the victim of temporary disappearance and imprisonment during the 1990s, Juan Sosa Maldonado has led his organization in campaigning for the release of indigenous people in Loxicha in Oaxaca State, many of whom were arrested and accused of common crimes in 1997 after the appearance of the Popular Revolutionary Army.

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. However, the mechanism has yet to function effectively for all those who have sought protection. Operational protocols, binding commitments of federal and state-level institutions to comply with protection orders, resources and high-level political support are all urgently needed to guarantee its effectiveness.

Based on the facts presented above, we **strongly urge** you to:

- provide immediate and effective protection for Juan Sosa Maldonado and his family;
- call for a thorough investigation into the attack against him and his family on October 16; and
- take all necessary steps as quickly as possible to establish all necessary protocols, binding commitments of federal and state-level institutions, resources and support needed to guarantee the effectiveness of protection measures approved by law.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

cc: Consorcio para el Dialogo Parlamentario y la Equidad ~ 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

UA 297/13 Mexico

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