

via FAX: 011 52 55 5093 3414
Sr. Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
 Minister of Interior of Mexico

via FAX: 011 52 95 1501 8100 ext 40068
Sr. Gabino Cué Monteagudo
 Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico

January 25, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about threats to **Silvia Pérez Yescas**, a defender of women's, indigenous, and land rights from the community of Matías Romero in Oaxaca State. On January 13 she learned that members of her organization, Indigenous Women for the Conservation, Research and Use of Natural Resources (CIARENA) were threatened by people claiming to have been sent by a local political chief (*cacique*) who told them, "Stop f... around, because you could even be thrown in jail for being Silvia's accomplices, she's going to be f... for meddling in the land problem and there are people waiting for her when she shows up."

Silvia Pérez Yescas, an indigenous Zapotec woman, is the founder and director of CIARENA, a grassroots organization that defends the rights of indigenous communities and women, including victims of domestic violence, in Oaxaca. She has been threatened repeatedly. On August 19, 2014 she received information from a reliable source that 100,000 Mexican pesos (around \$US 7,700) had been offered to any gunman prepared to kill her upon her return to the community of Matías Romero. Although she filed a formal complaint regarding this threat, the authorities have said they cannot investigate it without an official statement from witnesses. Fear of reprisals has prevented witnesses from coming forward. In January 2013 the Mexican government agreed to grant her protection measures. To date these measures have been ineffective, so Silvia Pérez has not yet been able to return to Matías Romero to resume her legitimate human rights work.

We **strongly urge** that you

- ensure the safety of Silvia Pérez Yescas and strengthen the agreed upon protection measures, in accordance with her wishes, so that she can return to her community safely;
- carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threats made against Silvia Pérez Yescas and members of her organization, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice
- provide the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists the sufficient resources and trained staff so that it can effectively implement and carry out protection measures for those under threat who need and seek government protection

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Mexican Commission for Defense and Promotion of Human Rights ~ 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 email: andinocl@state.gov
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA/214/14 Update_Mexico

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