

via fax: 011 52 95 1501 8100, ext. 40068 Estimado Gobernador Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Estimado Secretario Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Minister of the Interior of Mexico
via email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx Estimada Señora Procuradora Arely Gómez González Attorney General of Mexico	

June 14, 2015

Dear Governor, Minister of the Interior, and Attorney General:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of **Omar Esparza**, widower of human rights defender Bety Cariño, who was assassinated in 2010. On May 17, he was informed by a reliable source that an armed group of hired assassins had been contracted to kill him. This information was corroborated by a number of sources. In the early morning of June 1, unidentified persons attempted to enter the house where his children have been residing with family members.

On April 2, 2010, men belonging to an armed group linked to state and municipal authorities killed Bety Cariño Trujillo and Finnish human rights observer Jyn Antero Jaakkola (cf our letters May 12, 2010, June 1, 2010 and September 15, 2010). Both activists were part of a humanitarian convoy that was trying to reach the remote Triqui Indigenous community of San Juan Copala in Oaxaca State. Bety Cariño was head of the Working Together Community Support Center in the city of Huajuapán de León in Oaxaca State. She ran workshops to promote women's rights in the local Indigenous communities and had supported many women in setting up community radio stations. Bety Cariño had also campaigned for truth and justice in the killing of two community radio broadcasters, Felicitas Martínez and Teresa Bautista, in San Juan Copala, in 2008 (cf our letter of May 24, 2008).

For five years, Omar Esparza has demanded progress in the criminal investigation of the assassination of Bety Cariño. Two suspects have been arrested in 2015. However, two indigenous Triqui women who were eyewitnesses to the killing were threatened following one of these arrests (cf our letter of March 1, 2015). Then, just weeks after a second suspect was arrested in March 2015, Omar Esparza received a call from a relative of the arrested man demanding that he retract his public statements against the suspect.

Because we believe that Omar Esparza is in extreme danger from the most recent threats that hired assassins have been contracted to kill him, we **strongly urge** that you

- provide effective protection for Omar Esparza, in strict accordance with his wishes;
- conduct a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threats against Omar Esparza, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- conduct a full investigation into the assassination of Bety Cariño and Jyri Jaakkola, as well as the killing of many other people from San Juan Copala in recent years;
- investigate fully the apparent links between armed gangs and municipal and state authorities

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

copies: MAIZ: Movimiento Agrario Indígena Zapatista ~ via email
 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 and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, 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: