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| via email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx Estimada Sra Procuradora Arely Gómez González Attorney General of Mexico | via email: claudia.pavlovich@sonora.gob.mx Estimada Sra Gobernadora Claudia Pavlovich Arellano Governor of Sonora State, Mexico |
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October 1, 2016

Dear Attorney General Gómez González and Governor Pavlovich Arellano:

We are extremely concerned about the break-in of the soup kitchen for Mexican and Central American migrants, run by the **Kino Border Initiative** (KBI) in the Mexican city of Nogales, on the US border.

Assailants broke into the kitchen on the night of September 14, vandalized it, damaged furniture and destroyed food provisions and medicines. On September 15 at noon, moments after filing a complaint with local police, a staff member found that her laptop, hard drive and mobile phone had just been stolen from her car. There have been previous death threats to staff members and incidents of stolen electronics. On August 27, another staff member received a death threat by phone from an unidentified male. Staff members have reported all attacks to the authorities, but to date they have not received any effective protection.

The KBI, led by Jesuit priest Sean Carroll, was established in 2008. They have facilities, staff and volunteers in the “twin cities” of Nogales, on the US and Mexican side of the border. Their ministry includes

- providing food, shelter and medicines to migrants and deportees, including accompanied and unaccompanied women and children;
- advocating on behalf of individuals and families who require assistance to reunite with their families or seek legal status in the US;
- collecting data from the migrants and publishing reports about abuses and family separation in order to provide information to government agencies and the public;
- being a resource for scholars and students who are carrying out research into migration issues and policy solutions.

Many of the migrants are Central Americans fleeing violence from their own countries. Passing through Mexico, they continue to suffer more violence: abductions, extortion, disappearances, sexual violence and other abuses from organized criminal groups who are often in collusion with state agents. KBI staff and volunteers support migrants who have been victims of serious crimes such as kidnappings. So far this year they have accompanied 10 migrants to file complaints for six kidnappings in the Nogales area. They have documented several other cases, but the victims have been too frightened to file complaints.

We believe the recent attacks on KBI could be a reprisal for their complaints of kidnappings against migrants in the area. Because the lives of staff, volunteers, and the migrants who use the Kino soup kitchen could be at risk, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out a full, impartial and independent investigation into the attacks against the Kino human rights defenders and migrants;
- implement immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety and integrity of all staff, volunteers and migrants at the Kino Border Initiative soup kitchen and shelter, in accordance with their wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and Christine Stonebraker-Martínez
Co-Coordinators

copies: Carlos Manuel Sada Solana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 833 4320
 Roberta Jackson, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
 Vaida Vidugiris, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 Enrique Gil Botero, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 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: