

via fax 011 52 (55) 52 77 23 76 <b>Estimado Sr. Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto</b> President of the Republic of Mexico	via email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx <b>Estimada Sra. Procuradora Arely Gómez González</b> Attorney General of Mexico
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May 24, 2017

Dear President Peña Nieto and Attorney General Gómez González:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of environmental and indigenous rights defenders **Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa** and **Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez** in the Juchitán District of the Tehuantepec Isthmus of Oaxaca; they are the subjects of surveillance, attacks, and death threats. Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa, of Juchitán de Zaragoza municipality, is a professor and member of APIIDTT (Tehuantepec Indigenous Peoples' Assembly in Defense of Land and Territory). Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez, of Santa María Xadani municipality, is a member of both the Civil Resistance against High-Electricity Prices and APIIDTT. Since 2007 she has been active in the movement to respect the decision of indigenous *Ikjoot* (Zapotec) and *Binnizá* (Huave) peoples to reject the establishment of wind farms on the Tehuantepec Isthmus.

Since early 2017, both persons have been subjected to several attacks and acts of intimidation, including:

February 10: Two armed men on a motorcycle robbed Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa and some colleagues in front of their office. One of the men pointed a gun at him and demanded that he keep quiet.

February 24: An armed man entered the office where Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa works and enquired several times of his colleagues about his whereabouts.

April 19: The radio station 92.7 from Juchitán de Zaragoza devoted several hours to broadcasting defamatory statements against the work of Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez and Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa.

April 26: Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa found a handwritten death threat on his car at his home, warning that he was being monitored.

April 29 - Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez reported that the the APIIDTT office was under surveillance by unidentified men. At least two people in civilian clothes had been seen around the office for several hours.

All of this is connected to the wind farms. Zapotec indigenous communities are organizing against mining and construction projects in the Igúu Hill region being carried out without prior consultation and consent. The Cerro Igúu mine, owned by the Mexican company Tradeco, supplies materials to the Danish company Vestas and the Spanish company Gamesa Eólica for the construction of a wind farm. The mining project is also related to the construction of the Ixtepec airport and the substation of the Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA).

Threats against Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa and Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez are not to be taken lightly. After receiving several death threats, fellow APIIDTT member José Alberto Toledo Villalobos was beaten to death on April 8.

Because we believe the lives of these environmental defenders are at risk, we **strongly urge** that you

- take immediate action to investigate and end the recent threats and attacks on Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa and Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez;
- take all necessary measures to implement the protection measures already granted by the government of Oaxaca to Rodrigo Flores Peñalosa and Lucila Bettina Cruz Velázquez;
- follow the Mexican Constitution and international law (ILO Convention 169) requiring prior consultation and free and informed consent from indigenous peoples before beginning work on their land.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

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 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:**

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