

via fax 011 52 (55) 52 77 23 76 Sr. Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto President of the Republic of Mexico	via email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx Sr. Alberto Elías Beltrán Interim Attorney General of Mexico
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January 23, 2018

Dear President Peña Nieto and Interim Attorney General Beltrán:

We are deeply disturbed by the crackdown on indigenous communities in the Acapulco district of Guerrero by state and federal police following a violent incident precipitated by unknown armed men on January 7. The incident left 11 dead and at least 32 detained, including 30 members of CRAC-PC (Community Police of the Regional Coordination of Community Authorities) and environmental defenders **Marco Antonio Suástegi Muñoz** and his brother **Vicente Suástegi Muñoz**, spokespersons for CECOP (Council of Communal Lands and Communities Opposing the La Parota Dam). This is a clear attack against communities organizing to defend indigenous and environmental rights.

The incident began on January 7 when the residents of the village of La Concepción were celebrating a local festival. Unknown armed men entered the village and attacked the community police (CRAC-PC), killing two of their members. Six of the attackers were also killed.

La Concepción is one of 47 villages in the indigenous communal landholdings of Cacahuatpec. CRAC-PC and CECOP have been spearheading resistance since 2006 to a proposed hydroelectric power plant to be set up on the Papagayo River. The communities are also advocating for reforms to the Political Constitution of Guerrero on Matters of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Rights, specifically, reforms to Law 701 of Recognition, Rights and Culture of Indigenous Communities. They are also outspoken in their opposition to the Law of Interior Security (*Ley de Seguridad Interior*) and the installation of Special Economic Zones (*Zonas Económicas Especiales*).

Following the January 7 attack, a large number of state and federal police, as well as members of the army, mobilized in and around La Concepción. State armed forces spread throughout the surrounding villages and illegally raided the houses of CECOP members without search warrants. Later, state armed forces launched a second round of violent attacks against residents of La Concepción, killing another three members of CRAC-PC. That's when police arrested 30 members of CRAC-PC and the two CECOP spokespersons named above.


Because of our serious concern about the continuing violence and threats towards members of CRAC-PC and CECOP, we **strongly urge** you to:

- provide an impartial investigation into the attacks on CRAC-PC and CECOP, the killing of the CRAC-PC members, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide individual and collective protection measures which guarantee the life and physical integrity of leaders and human rights defenders of CRAC-PC and CECOP, in consultation with them and in accordance with their wishes;
- immediately release from detention CECOP spokespersons Marco Antonio Suástegi Muñoz and Vicente Suástegi Muñoz and the 30 members of CRAC-PC.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Gerónimo Gutiérrez, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via email
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 Elizabeth MacDonald and Linda Neilan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, 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: