

via US mail Sr. Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obredor President of the Republic of Mexico	via US mail and email: secretario@segob.gob.mx Sra. Ministra Olga Sánchez Cordero Minister of the Interior of Mexico
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February 24, 2019

Dear President López Obredor and Minister Sánchez Cordero:

We are extremely concerned about the illegal detention, fabricated charges, and ill treatment of **Froylán González**, a member of the Committee for the Defense of Indigenous Peoples (CODEDI) in Santiago Xanica, Oaxaca State.

On February 11 officials of the State Electoral and Citizen Participation Institute (IEEPCO) detained Froylán González where he, together with residents of Santiago Xanica, had been holding a peaceful protest since February 6. They were demanding the recognition of their local indigenous leaders who were elected in an Extraordinary General Assembly on January 6. IEEPCO officials took him to the Auxiliary, Banking, Industrial and Commercial Police (PABIC), where he was physically assaulted and held incommunicado for two hours before being presented to the State Police. They charged him with damages and theft to public property and injury of an IEEPCO public servant. During González's 48-hour detention, he was taken to the hospital because of injuries sustained from police violence, but he did not receive prompt treatment or a diagnosis of his injuries. He was released from police custody on the evening of February 13.

CODEDI works to defend and transform living conditions in 48 indigenous communities in the Sierra Sur, Istmo, Valles Centrales, and Costa regions of Oaxaca. They are actively involved in environmental defense, such as opposition to illegal logging and extractive industries. They oppose the privatization of water sources (e.g., to fill the swimming pools of luxury hotels for the tourism industry). They also oppose government concessions made to nine mining companies and five hydroelectric dam projects.

This unjust criminalization of Froylán González is part of a systematic pattern by the state to undermine the rights of indigenous peoples. In recent months, CODEDI has been the subject of several attacks: five murders, three other arbitrary arrests, three raid incidents, theft, and ongoing threats (cf our letter Nov 24 2018). Although these incidents have been reported to the relevant authorities, there has been no significant progress in the investigations and no effective implementation of precautionary measures issued at the state level.

We **strongly urge** that you

- drop all criminal allegations against Froylán González
- conduct a full and impartial investigation into the allegations of inhumane and degrading treatment of González under state custody, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Froylán González and all members of CODEDI
- fully implement and respect the rights of indigenous communities to self-determination

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Arturo Peimbert Calvo, Ombudsman for Human Rights of the State of Oaxaca ~ via email
 Martha Bárcena Coqui, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via email
 John S. Creamer, Chargé d'Affairs, US Embassy in Mexico ~ via US mail
 Political Officer, 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
 Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders ~ via email
 S!Paz ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

Feb 15_Frontline_Mexico

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