

via US mail and email Sr. Gobernador Alejandro Ismael Murat Hinojosa Governor of the State of Oaxaca	via US mail and email Sr. Arturo de Jesus Peimbert Calvo Attorney General/Chief Prosecutor of Oaxaca
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July 3, 2021

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply distressed over the high rate of assassinations of journalists in Mexico. **Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera** is a recent victim in Oaxaca.

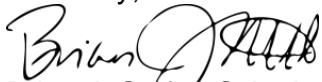
At about 8:00a.m. on June 17, two unidentified people driving a car near the town of Morro Mazatán, Oaxaca, crashed into Gustavo Sánchez while he was traveling on a motorcycle with his 15-year-old son. Gustavo Sánchez and his son fell from the motorcycle. The attackers then exited their car and shot and killed Gustavo Sánchez, riddling him with bullets. The municipal police in Tehuantepec reported that at least 15 9-millimeter bullet casings were found at the scene of the crime. The journalist received at least one gunshot to the head.


Gustavo Sánchez reported on crime and politics in the Tehuantepec Isthmus region for *Panorama Pacífico* (a Facebook media outlet based in Hualtulco, Oaxaca) and on his personal Facebook page *Noticias Minuto a Minuto*, where he had about 600 followers. In recent months he was covering flooding, protests, local killings, and corruption allegations against local officials. On July 13, 2020, he survived an attempt on his life when unidentified gunmen shot him near Morro Mazatán. After recovering from the assassination attempt, he was enrolled in the federal protection program (*Mecanismo de Protección de la Secretaría de Gobernación*). Nonetheless, the journalist was brutally killed one year later, in front of his son, who sustained mild injuries in the attack.

The climate for journalists in Oaxaca is extremely dangerous. There is documentation of six journalists killed in Mexico in 2020; five of those were in Oaxaca. We therefore strongly urge that you:

- carry out a thorough, exhaustive and impartial investigation into the assassination of Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- review protection programs for reporters and human rights defenders, and take all necessary protection measures to guarantee the safety of journalists in Oaxaca, in strict accordance with their wishes
- conduct an internal investigation into why Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera had not yet received the protection assigned to him by the *Mecanismo de Protección de la Secretaría de Gobernación*
- guarantee that all human rights defenders in Mexico, and in particular journalists who defend freedom of expression, can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free from all restrictions.

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators


 Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Ombudsman for Human Rights of the State of Oaxaca / Defensoría de los Derechos Humanos del Pueblo de Oaxaca ~ via email
 Olga Sánchez Cordero, Minister of the Interior of Mexico ~ via email
 Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Ambassador of Mexico to the US ~ via email
 Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via US mail and email
 Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via US mail and email
 John S. Creamer, Chargé d'affaires ad interim, US Embassy in Mexico City ~ via US mail and email
 Political Officer, Office of Mexican Affairs, US State Dept ~ via email
 Natalie Southwick, Central and South America Program Coordinator, Committee to Protect Journalists ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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