

<p>Sr. Gobernador Rutilio Escandón Cadenas Governor of the State of Chiapas via email: secparticular@chiapas.gob.mx</p>	<p>Sra. Ministra Olga Sánchez Cordero Minister of the Interior of Mexico via email: secretario@segob.gob.mx</p>
<p>Sr. Juan José Zepeda Bermúdez President of the State Commission for Human Rights of Chiapas via email: presidencia@cedh-chiapas.org</p>	<p>Sr. Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez Undersecretary of Human Rights and Population Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) via email: ajencinas@segob.gob.mx</p>

July 6, 2021

Dear Sirs and Madame:

We are saddened and outraged at the assassination of Indigenous Tzeltal human rights defender **Simón Pedro Pérez López**, age 35, in the *Los Bosques de Chiapas* region of Chiapas State. At around 10:00am on July 5 he was shopping with his youngest son at the outdoor market in the center of Simojovel municipality when an attacker riding on a motorcycle shot him in the head.

For many years, Simón Pedro Pérez López served his community in the *Altos de Chiapas* region as a defender of human rights for the Maya Indigenous *Tzeltal* and *Tzotzil* peoples who reside there in the highlands. He often accompanied communities to denounce violence. Just nine days before his assassination, he accompanied residents to the *Secretaría del Gobierno* of Pantelhó municipality, requesting intervention to hold back armed groups who have been coming to the highlands for the past several years. Narco-traffickers have been extorting families and forcing some off their land.

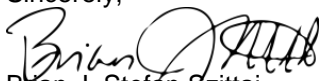
Simón Pérez resided with his wife and four children in a community called Israelita in Simojovel municipality. He was a catechist at Santa Catarina Catholic Church in Pantelhó municipality. He was active with the civil society organization *Las Abejas de Acteal*. Last year he served as president of the board of directors of *Las Abejas* (The Bees), a Christian, pacifist, anti-neoliberal grassroots organization. The organization continues to seek justice for the Acteal Massacre of December 22, 1997; on that day, armed members of the paramilitary group *Máscara Roja* (Red Mask) entered a Catholic prayer meeting and murdered 45 *Las Abejas* members: 21 Indigenous *Tzotzil* women, 15 children, and 9 elderly people.

The harassment, disappearance, and killings of environmental and human rights defenders throughout Mexico is quite concerning. According to *Red TDT* (All Rights for Everyone Network), 45 human rights defenders were killed in the first two years of the current government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

We **strongly urge** that you

- immediately, thoroughly and impartially investigate the assassination of Simón Pedro Pérez López, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- adopt measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the members of *Las Abejas de Acteal* (including members of the family of Simón Pedro Pérez López), in strict accordance with their wishes
- in consultation with members of *Las Abejas de Acteal*, take measures to dismantle criminal organizations that are operating in the *Los Altos de Chiapas* region

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine L. Stonebraker Martinez

copies: Ismael Brito Mazariegos, Secretary General of the Government in Chiapas ~ via email
 Maria del Rosario Piedra Ibarra, President of the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) ~ via email
 Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via email
 OAS: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Mexico ~ via email and US mail
 OAS: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ~ via email and US mail
 OAS: Jorge Lomónaco, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the Organization of American States ~ via email
 El Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas ~ via email
 John S Creamer, Chargé d'affaires ad interim, US Embassy in Mexico City ~ via email
 US State Department, Office of Mexican Affairs ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

06 JUL 2021_LasAbejasDeActeal_Mexico

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