

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Lic. Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña Minister of the Interior	via FAX: 011 52 951 511 5519 Lic. Evencio Nicolas Martínez Ramírez Attorney General of Oaxaca
via fax: 011 52 951 502 0530 Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortíz Governor of the State of Oaxaca	

August 14, 2007

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of **Silvia Gabriela Hernández Salinas**, a 24 year-old university student and member of Oaxacan Voices Building Autonomy and Liberty (VOCAL), a group independent of political parties, which works to organize and connect communities, groups, collectives, individuals and organizations as a real alternative for opposing the current government system. She is also a member of Otra Campaña.

She was arrested on July 16 while documenting the Guelaguetza Popular, a local cultural celebration. Although the intention was to remain peaceful, police and members of the military were waiting for the celebratory march when they arrived in the Cerro del Fortin amphitheater. When they began the celebration in the intersection after the officials refused to dialogue or to let them pass, they were rained with teargas, rocks and gunfire. Once the crowd was dispersed, the police began pursuing and arresting members of the crowd throughout many streets in the central city and neighborhoods Xochimilco and Estrella. There was one death, a number of injuries (including reporters from national news sources) and at least 30 detained, many of whom are considered disappeared because they are not included on any official list or in any jail. Silvia Gabriela Hernández Salinas was arrested far from the site of the initial police aggression.

Twenty-three of the prisoners from the Guelaguetza Popular have been released for lack of evidence, but Silvia is not among them. She is one of ten prisoners being charged with property damage, arson, and aggravated assault and being held at Tanivet prison in Tlacolula de Matamoros. We believe that these ten are being held because they are members of the teachers' movement, the APPO (People's Popular Assembly) and that they are being held to prevent further protests.

It is important to mention that Silvia is the second VOCAL member to be detained. In our letter of April 25, we expressed our concern for VOCAL member David Venegas Reyes who was arrested April 13 and is currently being held in the Central Jail of Santa Maria Ixcotel. We have written you seven letters since September 2006 (Sep 13, Oct 26, Nov 21, Dec 26, Jan 26, Apr 25, Jul 11), asking that you quell the police violence against supporters of the (APPO) and teachers' union (SNTE) that began in May 2006.

In light of the facts recounted above, we strongly urge you to

- arrange for the immediate and unconditional freedom of Silvia Gabriela Hernandez Salinas, as well as all of the political prisoners from the movement;
- guarantee the security and physical well being of Silvia Gabriela Hernandez Salinas, in accordance with all of the guarantees and rights provided by law;
- apply this same standard of treatment to all of the detained and disappeared of the movement to date.

For Peace with Justice,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Ambassador Carlos Alberto De Icaza Gonzalez ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández, President of the Nacional Comision on Human Rights ~ via fax 011 52 55 5681 7199
Ambassador Antonio O. Garza, Jr ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5207-0091
William Duncan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de derechos humanos, Local human rights organisation ~ via fax: 52.55.539 91336
Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich ~ via email
U.S. Representatives Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

LA solidarity/Mexico

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