

via fax: 011 52 55 53 46 09 08 Lic. Octavio Alberto Orellana Wiarco Special Federal Prosecutor on Crimes Against Journalists	via fax: 011 52 951 511 5519 Lic. Evencio Nicolas Martinez Ramirez Attorney General of Oaxaca, Mexico
via fax: 011 52 951 502 0530 Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz Governor of Oaxaca, Mexico	

October 25, 2007

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of all workers at El Imparcial del Istmo, a regional newspaper based in Salina Cruz, in eastern Oaxaca state, since three press workers there have been murdered and three journalists have received death threats,

Shortly after 1 pm on October 8, El Imparcial del Istmo van driver **Mateo Cortes Martínez** and delivery and sales workers **Flor Vásquez López** and **Agustin López Nolasco**, had just collected a batch of newspapers from the city of Tehuantepec and were traveling in a van identifiable by the newspaper's logo when they were intercepted by a group of men armed with high caliber guns in a SUV vehicle with tinted windows. The three press workers were shot repeatedly at close range. We believe this attack is in retaliation for the newspaper's coverage of executions and abductions carried out by the Mexican drug trafficking gang, Los Zetas. The newspaper started publishing news on criminal activities attributed to drug-related organized crime six months ago.

During the past month, death threats have intensified. Shortly after the murders, newspaper director **Gonzalo Domínguez Monroy** received an anonymous telephone death threat in which a male voice told him "we warn you, you're next." His colleagues, reporters **Felipe Ramos Cruz** and **Carlos Domínguez Monroy**, received similar calls.

The Office of Special Prosecutor on Crimes against Journalists, established in February 2006, to improve investigation of such crimes, does not have jurisdiction to investigate directly in the majority of cases. The result is that there is almost total impunity for crimes against media workers. Journalists are working in an increasingly dangerous climate with ever greater pressure not to report on potentially dangerous issues.

Based on the facts presented above, we strongly urge that you

- ensure that Gonzalo Dominguez Monroy, Felipe Ramos Cruz and Carlos Dominguez Monroy receive protection measures to guarantee their safety, in accordance with their wishes;
- conduct a full, prompt and impartial investigation by the federal authorities into the killing of Mateo Cortes Martinez, Flor Vasquez Lopez and Agustin Lopez Nolasco and death threats against Gonzalo Dominguez Monroy, Felipe Ramos Cruz and Carlos Dominguez Monroy.
- Extend the powers of the Special Prosecutor on Crimes against Journalists so that they can investigate these crimes directly.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies: Dr. Jose Luis Soberanes Fernandez, President of National Human Rights Commission ~ via US mail
Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Embassy of Mexico ~ via fax: 1 202 728 1698
Antonio O. Garza, Jr., U.S. Ambassador to Mexico ~ fax: 011 52 55 5511 9980
Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Fax: (202)458-3992 or 202.458.6215
William Duncan, Desk Officer for Mexico ~ fax: 202.647.9894
U.S. Senators Brown and U.S. Representatives Voinovich Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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