

via FAX: 011.52.55.5093 3414 Lic. Juan Camilo Mourino Terrazo Minister of the Interior of Mexico	via FAX: 011 52 951 511 5519 Lic. Evencio Nicolas Martinez Ramirez State Attorney General of Oaxaca
via FAX: 011 52 951 517 8120 Lic. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz Governor of the State of Oaxaca	via FAX: 011 52 55 5681 7199 Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernandez President of National Human Rights Commission

May 24, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of **Melchor Lopez**, director of radio station Radio Mixteca in Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca State. We are certain he is in grave danger because when he left work on April 17 he was followed by men in a white jeep. The following morning men driving a white jeep fired gun shots at his house. Since he set up the radio station in April 2007 he has received repeated death threats from people trying to secure control of the radio station for their political interests.

This is the latest incident of violence toward radio station personnel in the Mixtec area of Oaxaca, one of the poorest and most troubled in the country. On April 7, **Felicitas Martinez and Teresa Bautista**, two young indigenous Triqui women, were shot dead as they traveled to San Juan Copala, not far from Santiago Juxtlahuaca. They worked for an indigenous community radio station, "La voz que rompe el silencio" (The Voice that Breaks the Silence), in San Juan Copala. The four other people working at the radio station and others providing technical support to the community radio network in the region are also in danger because numerous death threats have been received at this station since it began broadcasting in January 2008.

These acts of violence are evidently a consequence of the fact that San Juan Copala voted to establish itself as an autonomous municipality in January 2007. This was done because many of the Triqui population blamed political bosses allied to the official municipal authorities for promoting division within the community and violence in the Triqui region. La Voz radio was established to support the new autonomous municipality, provide information to the local community and promote reconciliation between the divided groups.

The National Human Rights Commission has called on the Oaxaca state government to provide protection to the staff of La Voz and their families but they have not yet done so.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** you to:

- protect Melchor Lopez, director of Radio Mixteca, in accordance with his wishes;
- order a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the intimidation that Melchor Lopez suffered on April 17 and bring those responsible to justice;
- do everything necessary to protect those working with the indigenous community radio station, "La voz que rompe el silencio," and other community radio stations in the Mixteca region
- order a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the murder of Felicitas Martinez and Teresa Bautista, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice .

For Peace with Justice,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: ARTICLE 19 Mexico ~ via mail
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US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Latta, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email
UA113/08Mexico

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