

<p>Via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora Minister of the Interior of Mexico</p>	<p>Via fax: 011 52 951 501 6900 ext. 20635 Lic. María de la Luz Candelaria Chiñas Attorney General of the State of Oaxaca, Mexico</p>
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September 15, 2010

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are outraged at the attack by armed men on **two Indigenous women** (names withheld for their protection) in the town of San Juan Copala in the indigenous Triqui region of Oaxaca. At 1pm on September 7, while they were walking back to their home in San Juan Copala after buying food in a neighboring town, one of the women was raped; the other was shot at while she was running away. Both women survived the attack and made their way back to San Juan Copala five kilometers away.

The town has been under siege for more than nine months and is surrounded by armed groups. Because there are no medical facilities in the town, medical attention was only available to the women on September 9 when an ambulance with two doctors and guarded by more than 40 police officers reached San Juan Copala. The women were taken to a hospital in a neighboring town. The authorities are not providing them and their families with adequate protection; we fear that all may be at risk of reprisals for reporting the attack.

These are further incidents of ongoing human rights violations against the people of San Juan Copala that have escalated since they and other nearby indigenous Triqui communities established an autonomous municipality in January 2007. Scores of people have been killed, several of them in the last few months (cf our letters of May12 and June 1, 2010). The state and federal authorities have rarely taken action to hold those responsible to account. The ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) has been accused of exacerbating conflict in the region via the creation of violent, armed political groups. Some of these armed groups are alleged to have links to local authorities, which on several occasions have failed to take action to prevent attacks, including cases of abduction and rape of women and girls.

Therefore we **strongly urge that you**

- provide the two indigenous women and their families with effective protection, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- conduct full, prompt and impartial investigations into the recent attack on the two women and into all previous attacks on residents of San Juan Copala, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee all human rights for the residents of San Juan Copala who have been under attack for years, and investigate alleged links between armed groups and local authorities.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos "Bartolomé Carrasco" ~ via email
Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
Carlos Pascual, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
Mary Stickles, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA/110/10Update_Mexico

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