



Ms. Navanethem Pillay

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Dear High Commissioner ,

### **Protection for journalists and human rights defenders in Mexico**

We are writing to follow up on your concerns expressed regarding the human rights situation in Mexico and in particular your comments contained in your press release of July 2011.

We would like to take this opportunity to focus on the situation of human rights defenders and journalists. The inability of these professionals to effectively carry out their role without risking harassment, threats and even death, impacts on the extent that the rest of the Mexican population are able to enjoy the benefits of human rights standards enshrined in International and Inter-American conventions and the Mexican Constitution.

Although President Calderon signed an agreement pledging to establish a mechanism of protection for human rights defenders and journalists during your visit, we understand there has since been insufficient implementation of the protection mechanism and little coordination between the different governmental bodies responsible for administering the protection. The lack of adequacy and effectiveness in the protection mechanism currently contributes to the continuing severity, frequency and impunity for perpetrators of abuses suffered by the human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico.

In March 2012, members of the Group of Civil Society Organisations brought before the Mexican Senate a Draft Bill to regulate the functioning of the protection mechanism, agreed upon with representatives of majority political factions represented in the Senate. The Proposed

Bill for a Mechanism of Protection for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists will establish a regulatory framework in law to enable the Senate to effectively implement the protection measures, while also ensuring that the protection mechanism maintains its operational capacity against the political changes of each presidential term.

Having passed through the Senate, the Bill is now about to be presented to the Mexican Congress. The acceptance of the Bill in Congress would represent a concrete change for the security and integrity of human rights defenders throughout Mexico. However, the approval of the Bill before the end of this legislative period is crucial so that it does not become lost amidst the presidential elections in July 2012. To facilitate the passage of the Bill, we respectfully request that you pursue your July 2011 Mexico declarations by supporting this legislative process in an open letter or public statement.

We thank you in advance for actions regarding this important issue, and for helping to ensure the safety and protection of at risk human rights defenders and journalists across Mexico.

Yours faithfully,



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