



April 19 , 2012

Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Republic  
Senate of the Mexican Republic  
Ministry of Interior of Mexico

### **International Human Rights Organisations welcome a historic opportunity to create a national protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists**

Dear Senators and Deputies,  
Dear Minister of the Interior,

We, the undersigned organisations, call on Mexican Senators and Deputies to fully support the Bill of Law to establish a National Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in Mexico. We also call on the Executive to complete the process of agreeing operational guidelines and developing the protocols to implement this mechanism.

Human rights defenders (HRDs) and journalists in Mexico are still subject to intimidation, legal harassment, arbitrary detention, death threats, acts of physical aggression, forced disappearances and killings as a result of their activities in defence of human rights and the exercise of freedom of expression and journalism.

Several international organisations and bodies have expressed concern for the lack of protection for human rights defenders and those who exercise freedom of expression in Mexico, such as the recommendations issued on the occasion of the 2009 Universal Periodic Review of Mexico, and the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN and OAS Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression, and the UN Human Rights Commission, who noted that in the past decade Mexico has become one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists to exercise their profession.

The existing security measures are inadequate and ineffective and contribute to the severity and frequency of the abuses suffered resulting in high levels of impunity. Those affected have reported deficiencies in the implementation of protective measures, a lack of coordination between the Mexican state agencies involved in their protection, and insufficient monitoring of prescribed measures.

In response to the serious risk HRDs face, several non-governmental human rights organisations developed a proposal for a National Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists at risk.

We welcome the approval of the Bill for a Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists by the Legislative Research Commission and the Commission of the Interior in the Senate after the official presentation of the Bill in the Senate on 15 March 2012.

We urge the Senate to approve the draft law without amendments so that the Chamber of Deputies can also examine and approve it during this parliamentary session. The approval of the bill is a fundamental step towards the establishment of the Mechanism as an instrument for the effective protection of human rights defenders and journalists. The full support of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies would secure a breakthrough in the national legal framework to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, beyond the results of the presidential elections later this year.

The organisations signing this letter also recognise the importance of the parallel and complementary process led by the Ministry of the Interior and civil society representatives to agree operational guidelines for a governmental protection mechanism. We call on the Federal Government to develop the necessary protocols to make this mechanism effective as quickly as possible, in a transparent manner, and in consultation with Mexican civil society organisations.

The Bill provides the legal basis to ensure that the governmental protection mechanism has a lasting impact. We therefore fully support the current legislative process and urge the Mexican Government to ensure the full development and implementation of an adequate and effective mechanism to protect human rights defenders and journalists.

Yours sincerely,

**Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT France)**  
**Amnesty International**  
**German Coordination for Human Rights in Mexico**  
**Front Line Defenders**  
**IEPALA, Institute of Political Studies for Latin America and Africa**  
**Misereor, the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation**  
**Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)**  
**Peace Brigades International (PBI)**  
**Protection International**