



Concerns about the ongoing persecution and threats against Mexican lawyer Juan Carlos Flores Solís

Lawyers for Lawyers and Observatoire International des Avocats en Danger (OIAD) are concerned about the harassment faced by Mr. Juan Carlos Flores Solís. Mr. Flores Solís is the primary defense lawyer in the cases brought against the energy and hydroextractivist megaproject “Proyecto Integral Morelos” (PIM), which affects over 80 communities in three different states within Mexico.

This megaproject raises severe environmental concerns, as it is set to create industrial plants that will drain and contaminate water reserves, encroach on indigenous lands and bring about general pollution in the Morelos, Tlaxcala and Puebla regions, which will affect the health and well-being of the population. As communities have mobilized to protest this megaproject, the work carried out by Mr. Flores Solís has become essential to ensure the protection of human rights, indigenous rights, environmental rights and the general upholding of the rule of law, a cornerstone of any modern democracy.

As it relates to his work as a lawyer in indigenous and environmental rights cases, Mr. Flores Solís has, over the course of several years, experienced several instances of persecution and threats against his person. These include constant countersuits filed by opposing counsel on procedural matters, as well as meritless criminal complaints against him personally. Moreover, both Mr. Flores Solís’s person and property have been the target of criminal attacks. This past October, Mr. Flores Solís was the victim of an assassination attempt, perpetrated through the tampering of the screws on his vehicle. Meanwhile, his house was raided on three separate occasions within the span of 10 days this past April.

Mr. Flores Solís is currently the beneficiary of the Mexican Protection Mechanism. As a result, several cameras were installed around Mr. Flores Solís’s property upon his request. However, footage of April’s raiding incidents, as well as other suspicious incidents around Mr. Flores Solís’s property was seized by government employees when they came to repair cameras that had been damaged during one of the raids. Mr. Flores Solís attempted to retrieve the footage but was informed by authorities that it had been deleted and could thus not be returned. Other government officials have confirmed this is not standard procedure.

We believe the threat faced by Mr. Flores Solís is significant and requires intervention by local and regional authorities. The threats and attempts made against his person speak to a culture where the legal profession cannot be safely practiced. As article 16 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers states, governments must ensure that lawyers “*are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance or improper interference*” and “*where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.*”

We call on the Mexican authorities to:

- Ensure that the Protection Mechanism works effectively in offering measures to Mr. Flores Solís to improve security around his person and enable him to work without fear for his life.

- Ensure that the Judicial parties hearing complaints made against Mr. Flores Solis in relation to his work as legal counsel take this role into account and consider the vested interest of those accusing him in doing so.
- Ensure the participation of Mr. Flores Solis in the expert proceedings regarding the PIM. This right is ensured by the federal civil code and should be recognized by the judge handling the case. Lawyers for Lawyers expressly requests the Federal Judicial Council to enact impartial justice and to guarantee the unhindered continuation of the work done by Mr. Flores Solís in his capacity as a lawyer in the cases brought against the PIM.
- Ensure that all lawyers in Mexico are able to represent their clients without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference and without threats of prosecution or administrative sanctions for any actions they take in accordance with internationally recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.