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Your Excellency,

I write to you on behalf of Lawyers for Lawyers, a Dutch organization that supports oppressed lawyers throughout the world. I convey my interest in the Proposed Bill for a Mechanism of Protection for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, which has been presented to the Senate of the Republic the 13th of March. The approval of the Proposed Bill would represent a concrete change for the security and integrity of human rights defenders.

I believe the Agreement signed by President Calderón in July 2011, to establish a mechanism of protection for human rights defenders - among whom are lawyers - and journalists is a positive step. I welcome as well your public statements in which you reiterate the commitment of the Mexican government to protect human rights and those that defend them.

It is my belief that the Proposed Bill can be of a positive influence to the work of Mexican lawyers in general and lawyers of Mexican human rights defenders in particular.

As you are aware, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations and the National Commission of Human Rights have documented that human rights defenders and journalists are subjected to assassinations, disappearances, harassment, surveillance, threats, attacks and criminalization. Due to this situation, the National and State Human Rights Commissions of Mexico and the Inter-American Human Rights Bodies (Court and Commission) have declared many of these persons beneficiaries of protection measures. However, a large number of them have been victims of further aggressions. Repeatedly, inadequate implementation of the protection measures, a lack of consultancy with the beneficiaries in order to meet their needs and sociocultural realities, and a lack of coordination between different governmental entities of the Mexican State for the implementation of the protection measures have been reported. This lack of suitability and effectiveness of the mechanism of protection contributes to the fact that human rights defenders continue to face serious and frequent abuses and those responsible are not held to account.



In the light of this serious situation, in 2010, a wide range of non governmental human rights and journalist organisations have come together to form the Group of Civil Society Organisations (CSO), and have developed a proposal for the mechanism that has resulted in a dialogue with the Ministry of the Interior. In a parallel process, the members of the CSO Group have promoted a draft bill before the Senate to govern the mechanism of protection. The CSO Group welcomes the agreement on the legal framework for the Protection Mechanism for Human Right Defenders and the inclusion of civil society minimums in it between the relevant Federal Ministries. I urge you however, to develop energetically the documents needed to overcome the current deficiencies in the implementation of protection measures and to incorporate feedback of the civil society on these documents. Among these documents are 'The Response Manual' (Manual de Reacción, to be developed by the Special State Attorney Office for Victims of Crimes (Províctima) and the "Protocol for the attention to Victims' (Protocolo de Atención a Víctimas) to be developed by the Human Rights Unit of your Ministry.


I also request that the resources necessary for a succesful implementation of the Protection Mechanism for Human Right Defenders are provided and that the Executive and Legislative work together to promote and ensure that the Mexican State Level Governments subscribe the mechanism.

I belief that it is of the utmost importance that during the process of implementing the Protection Mechanism for Human Right Defenders, continuing dialogue and consultation takes place with the CSO Group as the representative of the civil society. This is essential to ensure that the Mechanism is a practical response to the needs of Human Rights Defenders.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the President of **Lawyers for Lawyers**, Phon van den Biesen,

Lawyers for Lawyers


Ms Adrie van de Streek
Executive director