via fax 011 52 (55) 52 77 23 76	via email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx
Estimado Sr. Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obredor	**Sr. Fiscal Alejandro Gertz Manero**
President of the Republic of Mexico	Attorney General of Mexico

November 24, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed by the killing of **Noel Castillo Aguilar**, age 44, a member of the Committee for Defense of Indigenous Rights (CODEDI), in the community of Barra de la Cruz in the municipality of Santiago Astata, Oaxaca Department.

On October 25 unknown men attacked Noel Castillo Aguilar with fire arms and hit him in the head when he was going home in a taxi. He died around 1p.m. that day. Noel Castilla Aguilar is the fifth CODEDI member murdered this year. **Alejandro Antonio Díaz Cruz, Ignacio Basilio Ventura Martínez** and **Ángel Martínez** were killed in February; **Abraham Hernández González** was killed in July. On October 29 members of CODEDI held a demonstration to demand justice for the five murders. A military convoy of marines also showed up at the demonstration, apparently with the sole purpose of intimidating CODEDI members.

Attacks against members of CODEDI have been ongoing. The houses of three women human rights defenders were raided and robbed between February and October this year. Three CODEDI members were arbitrary detained between June and August. Despite formal complaints to local authorities and constant public denunciations, investigations have not progressed. Moreover, authorities have not complied with precautionary measures issued by the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH).

CODEDI focuses on defending and transforming living conditions in 48 indigenous communities in the Sierra Sur, Istmo, Valles Centrales, and Costa regions of Oaxaca. They are actively involved in environmental defense. They have opposed concessions to nine mining companies and five hydroelectric dam projects. They have resisted local hotel attempts to privatize water sources to fill their pools because of impacts on water in adjoining neighborhoods. In the past year CODEDI has opposed the often-armed incursion by local lumberjacks associated with organized crime who are devastating the Sierra Sur's forest by exporting a precious timber from the granadillo tree to China and Japan for luxury car parts.

Land preservation is key to CODEDI. Since 1997 their work has included reclaiming 300 hectares of land to build a training center for carpentry, garment design and manufacturing, agroecology, vehicle mechanics, natural medicine, animal breeding, blacksmithing, brick making, bakery, bee-keeping, music, and theater. There are also four levels of autonomous education from kindergarten to high-school.

We are deeply concerned about the killing, criminalization and violence against human rights defenders in Oaxaca, particularly regarding members of CODEDI. We **strongly urge** that you
- strongly condemn the killing of Noel Castillo Aguilar, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Noel Castillo Aguilar's family and of members of CODEDI, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai   Christine Stonebraker Martínez
Co-Coordinators

copies: Gerónimo Gutiérrez Fernandez, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via email
Roberta Jacobson, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax and US mail
Linda Neilan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Oct 31 2018_Frontline_Mexico

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