

Héctor Astudillo Flores

Governor of the State of Guerrero
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December 1, 2019

Dear Governor Astudillo Flores:

We are shocked at the discovery of the body of indigenous community leader **Arnulfo Cerón Soriano** on November 20, under several tons of soil in a clandestine grave in the "El Aguaje" colony in Tlapa, Guerrero.

Arnulfo Cerón Soriano, an indigenous Nahua, was a member of the Popular Mountain Front and Movement for the Freedom of Political Prisoners of the State of Guerrero (MOLPEG) and he worked as a lawyer supporting the indigenous population in the area. Arnulfo was extremely active in the movement to demand justice for the 43 students disappeared in Ayoztinapa/Iguala in 2014 (cf our letters of 2014 and 2015). He was imprisoned for a year and a half after being detained and tortured by state investigative police in the past and this year Arnulfo and members of MOLPEG received threatening phone calls and messages relating to their human rights work.

We wrote to President López Obredor and Minister of the Interior Sánchez last month about the disappearance of Arnulfo Cerón Soriano (cf our letter Nov 11 2019). On October 11, Arnulfo missed a talk he was to scheduled to give at an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) recovery center in the Caltitlán neighborhood of Tlapa. At noon the next day, his vehicle, with the keys in the ignition, was found abandoned in the residential area of Magisterio in Tlapa. The search for Arnulfo Cerón Soriano was not undertaken immediately, as is required by the law on enforced disappearances in Mexico. It only took place following pressure from human rights organizations and the local population. Following the arrest of two suspects in Arnulfo's disappearance, family members received threatening messages, MOPLEG members noted strange persons outside their residences, and Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre observed unknown subjects watching outside their offices.

We are deeply concerned about impunity in Guerrero regarding the disappearances and killings of human rights defenders. We therefore **strongly urge** that you

- carry out a thorough investigation into the disappearance and assassination of Arnulfo Cerón, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee the safety of family members of Arnulfo Cerón, MOLPEG members, and staff of Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, in strict accordance with their wishes.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Sr. Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obredor, President of the Republic of Mexico ~ via US mail
Sra. Ministra Olga Sánchez Cordero, Minister of the Interior of Mexico ~ via US mail and email
Martha Bárcena Coqui, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via email
Christopher Landau, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via US mail
Political Officer, 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
Juan José Zepeda Bermúdez, President of CEDH in Mexico City (Centro de Estudios en Derechos Humanos) ~ via email
Peace Brigades International-Mexico ~ via email
SIPaz ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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