



## Mission of international civil society observers to visit Mexico to provide visibility to the work of human rights defenders in the country 10- 14 November 2014

Mexico City, November 6, 2014

The Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH), Peace Brigades International – Mexico Project (PBI México) y Conexx – Europe, with the support of Amnesty International Mexico, Just Associates (JASS), and the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR); Front Line Defenders, Protection International (PI), the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (RFK Center), the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OMCT/ FIDH), and the German Coordinating Committee for Human Rights in Mexico<sup>1</sup> have invited a delegation of specialists in human rights to visit Mexico between the 10-14 November 2014<sup>2</sup> to examine the situation for human rights defenders in the country.

The Mission of International Observers will be constituted by five independent experts from the Americas and Europe:

- **Angelita Baeyens**, lawyer, Director of Programs – Partners for Human Rights of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, based in Washington DC, USA
- **Tarcila Rivera Zea**, journalist, President of Chirapaq (The Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Cultures of Peru), Coordinator of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas, member of the Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and Executive Committee member of AWID. For over 25 years Ms Rivera Zea has been a defender of the rights of indigenous peoples.
- **Elvira Domínguez Redondo**, lawyer holding a PhD in law, Professor of Law at the University of Middlesex (London, UK), Assistant Professor of the Irish Centre for Human Rights (Galway, Ireland) and member of the Advisory Council of the NGO Universal Rights Group based in Geneva (Switzerland)
- **Rosario Figari Layús**, sociologist from the University of Buenos Aires. Currently, she works as a Researcher in the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) at the University of Bielefeld, Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Al Mexico, Jass, Front Line Defenders, PI, the RFK Centre, OMCT /FIDH, ISHR and the German Coordinating Committee will receive no financial support for their role as organisers and/or in accompanying the Mission.

<sup>2</sup> The Mission will be carried out as part of the project “La protección a personas defensoras de derechos humanos a través de su capacitación y visibilidad” (Protecting human rights defenders through capacity building and increasing visibility of the situation of defenders).



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- **Eleanor Openshaw**, Regional Advocacy Coordinator for ISHR in New York.

The Mission of International Observers has the following objectives.

- Publicly acknowledge the importance of the role of human rights defenders in Mexico, as well as gain an understanding of and raise awareness about the risks and obstacles human rights defenders face in Mexico, principally those that come from groups at particular risk (including community human rights defenders, women human rights defenders, and defenders of the rights of migrants)
- Analyze and raise awareness about the successes of and challenges faced by the protection mechanisms for human rights defenders in Mexico
- Analyze and raise awareness about the implementation of the European Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, in Mexico;
- Provide relevant authorities with recommendations on how to strengthen the measures taken to ensure a safe and enabling environment for the work of human rights defenders in Mexico.

During their visit, the members of the Mission, accompanied by members of the convening organisations will visit the States of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Baja California, and the Federal District. The Mission will meet with human rights defenders in the four States to gain an understanding of the situation faced by human rights defenders there, as well as with local and federal authorities to examine the steps being taken for the protection and promotion of the work of human rights defenders. The Mission will also meet with civil society organisations, and with members of missions of the European Union in the country.

On Friday, 14 November 2014, the Mission will present its conclusions and preliminary recommendations at a press conference which will be held in the Galeria Plaza Hotel ((Hamburgo 195, Colonia Juárez, México D.F.) at 12.30pm.

For further information, please contact:  
 Mariana Gurrola, Comunicación CMDPDH  
[comunicacion@cmdpdh.org](mailto:comunicacion@cmdpdh.org)  
 Tel: (55) 55642582, ext. 114



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