12 July 2021

Dear President,

**Protect Indigenous Communities in Chiapas, Mexico at risk of violence**

Through this, I express my concern for the safety of the communities in Chiapas, particularly Pantheló, that, according to Civil Society organizations and media reports, is being subject to threats and intimidation from criminal organizations that put them at risk of a violent attack.

Pantheló is home for individuals like Simon Pedro (assassinated last July 8th in that same municipality) and organizations like Las Abejas de Acteal. Las Abejas were organized as a Civil Society in 1992, in response to the situation of injustice, violation of Human Rights, sustained in the Tzotzil indigenous culture and from the work of the Indigenous Pastoral of the Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas.

Las Abejas were victims of the Acteal Massacre by right-wing paramilitary group Máscara Roja, 22 December 1997 who murdered 45 Tzotzil indigenous women, children, and men. Las Abejas also founded the fair trade Maya Vinic Coffee Cooperative at a meeting 30 July 1999 in Acteal. Las Abejas have worked tirelessly for peace in their region and now face the risk of extreme violence from the hands of criminal organizations seeking to dominate the region.

Please act with urgency to protect the residents of Pantheló. Stopping the criminal forces invading this zone of Chiapas is in the interest of all Mexicans, as is establishing the trust and stable conditions necessary for long-lasting peace in Chiapas.

Please live up to the apology and agreement you signed with Las Abejas in 2020. The apology was part of a friendly settlement agreement in which the Government of Mexico pledged to offer reparations to families of the victims including scholarships, paving roads, improvements to medical facilities, the construction of water and electrical infrastructure, creating a documentary of the events surrounding the attack and financial compensation to victims’ family members.

However: “What we’ve had is a series of half measures,” said Ruben Moreno, director of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Center, which represents those not signing the “friendly solution.”

“What we want is a complete justice, a justice that avoids the repetition of acts like Acteal,” members of Las Abejas not signing the agreement said in a statement. “The justice we long for is to investigate all the authors of the Acteal massacre.”

Yours sincerely,

(your name)