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PRESS RELEASE

MEXICO: On the anniversary of the publication of the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, International Organisations call on Mexico to effectively implement the National Protection Mechanism

Geneva-Paris-Brussels-Dublin, June 26, 2013. *The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), in the framework of their joint programme, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Front Line Defenders urge for the effective implementation of the National Protection Mechanism established by the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, which entered into force exactly one year ago.*

On June 25, 2012, the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists entered into force after being unanimously approved by the Mexican Congress. This Law provides, among other measures, for the establishment of a National Protection Mechanism.

At the time, the undersigned organisations welcomed the Law as setting up an institutional framework for the adoption of effective protection measures to guarantee the right to life, personal integrity, freedom and security of human rights defenders and journalists who are facing great risk as a result of their activities in defence of human rights and the exercise of freedom of expression and journalism, as well as that of their relatives.

The Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was a fundamental step towards the effective protection of human rights defenders and the strengthening, in turn, of human rights protection and the rule of law in Mexico. However, one year after the Law entered into force, the respective regulations and operative protocols have not been fully implemented despite the fact that they were adopted during the very first months of existence of the National Protection Mechanism and they reflect international best practices.

Therefore, in order to effectively guarantee the protection granted by this Law, the undersigned organisations call on the Federal Government of Mexico to take all the necessary measures to guarantee the full implementation of the National Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, including:

- To provide the National Protection Mechanism with sufficient qualified staff so it can be efficient and operational.
- To set up the Fund Operations Committee that will oversee the financial operation of the National Protection Mechanism (*Comité de Operación de Fondos*).
- To immediately release the funds aimed to the National Protection Mechanism.
- To immediately establish the Unit of Prevention, Analysis and Monitoring (*Unidad de Prevención, Análisis y Seguimiento*) and appoint its Chair in accordance with the requirements set up by the Governing Board (*Junta de Gobierno*).
- To convene a high-level meeting between the Interior Ministry (*Segob*), representatives of Mexican civil society and the Consultative Council (*Consejo Consultivo*) of the National Protection Mechanism.
- To widely disseminate the work of the National Protection Mechanism.
- To provide the necessary political support for the actions undertaken by the National Protection Mechanism.

The undersigned organisations stress that such measures must be handled at all times in a transparent manner and in consultation with Mexican organisations of civil society, which is a prerequisite for safeguarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Protection Mechanism.

The undersigned organisations reiterate that, together with the measures adopted to date in the framework of the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, other measures must be implemented to effectively combat impunity for human rights violations. In such cases, State and Federal authorities must ensure that those responsible are brought to justice, in accordance with national and international human rights law.

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