

## JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT

24 October 2019

### **One year after the killing of Julián Carrillo, the EU must act for HRDs in Mexico**

One year after the killing of Mexican human rights defender (HRD) Julián Carrillo, our organisations call for the European Union (EU) and its member states to step up efforts toward justice for his killing and to reinforce their support to HRDs throughout the country.

On 24 October 2018, indigenous environmental, land and territory defender, Julián Carrillo, was killed by unidentified armed men. Julián was a leader of Coloradas de la Virgen, a remote community belonging to the Rarámuri indigenous people in the Sierra Tarahumara in Chihuahua (northern Mexico).

The murder of Julián was a predictable tragedy, as he had long reported attacks and death threats for his public denunciation of illegal logging and mining as well as the violence of armed criminal groups in his community. Five of his family members, including his son, have also been killed. Many other indigenous leaders of Coloradas de la Virgen have faced threats, attacks, unfair trials and killings. In 2014, this situation led to the inclusion of Julián Carrillo and other community leaders and members of his organization, Alianza Sierra Madre A.C. (ASMAC), in Mexico's National Protection Mechanism for human rights defenders.

Despite the arrest of two suspects in Julián Carrillo's murder, his family remains at risk and the protection measures provided to his community are still not adapted to their collective culture nor have they addressed the root causes of the violence they face.

Julián's killing is not an isolated case – the very same day, the journalist Gabriel Soriano Kuri was also killed in Guerrero state. While both murders were [denounced](#) by the EU, neither case has seen real progress toward justice one year on. So far in 2019, 23 murders of HRDs have been [reported](#), three of whom were under the National Protection Mechanism.

Justice for the killing of Julián and other HRDs will be an urgent litmus test for human rights in Mexico, as progress on cases like these will be key to wider efforts to protect HRDs and promote their important work.

On 26 October 2018, the EU and Mexico held their most recent human rights dialogue, concluding it with a [joint statement](#):

“The EU and Mexico strongly condemned all acts of aggression against human rights defenders and journalists. Both sides underlined their firm commitment

to address the threats they face and to ensure they can fulfil their work with full independence. In this context, the EU and Mexico agreed on the importance of ensuring that mechanisms to protect human rights defenders, journalists and other vulnerable persons are fully resourced, effective and reliable.”

In this spirit and in line with the EU Guidelines on HRDs, we urge the EU and its member states to call on the Mexican authorities to:

- Conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of Julián Carrillo’s killing, identifying and prosecuting those responsible for the murder, and likewise ensure justice for all other human rights defenders and journalists who have been killed or who face harassment and threats because of their work.
- Take all protection measures possible to guarantee the safety of Julián Carrillo’s family members and the Coloradas de la Virgen community in accordance with their wishes and consent, including steps to address impunity and other root causes that allow attacks against defenders to happen.
- Publicly recognise at the highest level, the legitimacy and importance of the work done by HRDs in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua and elsewhere in Mexico. Likewise, ensure explicit recognition of the importance of land, territory and environmental rights defenders, including in the protection of the environment.
- Ensure that the National Protection Mechanism and other comprehensive and collective protection measures deliver meaningful protection to Mexican HRDs at risk.
- Take steps to monitor and strengthen the National Protection Mechanism in line with recommendations in the [analysis](#) conducted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Design and implement a comprehensive public policy for the protection of HRDs to effectively prevent future attacks against defenders and to protect those at risk. This policy should be based on a collective approach to both risk analysis and the choice of protection measures to be implemented.
- Ensure the effective participation of indigenous peoples and affected communities in decisions about planning and implementing projects linked to the exploration and exploitation of natural resources.
- Take all necessary steps to ratify the Escazú Agreement through the competent national bodies.

The EU and its member states should also act to:

- Give timely and effective protection to HRDs at risk in Mexico, promote their work and follow up on the human rights concerns they raise.
- In collaboration with the Mexican authorities, provide adequate financial support and full political backing to the National Protection mechanism to ensure that it functions effectively to protect HRDs countrywide.

- Monitor the security situation of human rights defenders in Chihuahua, including follow up on the early warning system, visits to the field, meetings with HRDs and relevant authorities.
- Follow up on the case of Julián Carrillo, including through trial observation, provision of protection and regular visits to Julián's family, ASMAC and the Rarámuri community, in close consultation with them.
- Ensure accountability and sustained follow up on the [evaluation](#) of the early warning system in Chihuahua to promote and protect HRDs, including high-level political backing and participation of Mexican authorities with decision-making capacity.
- Raise individual cases of killings, threats and other attacks on HRDs and journalists in public statements at Brussels level to match concerns raised at local level; similarly ensure that these individual cases are raised in all EU and member state exchanges with Mexico up to highest level.
- Fully use the opportunity of the forthcoming human rights dialogue and discussions around the EU-Mexico Global Agreement to explicitly address killings and attacks on HRDs in Mexico, in particular those working on land rights and the environment.

**Amnesty International**

**EU-LAT Network**

**Front Line Defenders**

**German Network for Human Rights in Mexico**

**Greek Helsinki Monitor**

**International Service for Human Rights**

**Peace Brigades International Mexico**

**Protection International**

**World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)**