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Brownlow House • 50/51 High Holborn • London WC1V 6ER • United Kingdom

e-mail: [info@internationalpen.org.uk](mailto:info@internationalpen.org.uk) website: [www.internationalpen.org.uk](http://www.internationalpen.org.uk)

telephone: +44 (0)20 7405 0338 fax: +44 (0)20 7405 0339

*The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International meeting at its 76<sup>th</sup> Congress in Tokyo, Japan, 25 September – 1 October, 2010,*

**Alarmed** by the continued murders, disappearances, threats, harassment and assault of journalists in Mexico. Since January 2004, a total of 35 writers - 34 print journalists and one author - have been murdered in the country, while nine other print journalists have disappeared or are missing. Few if any of these crimes have been properly investigated or punished. Since January 2010 alone, eight Mexican journalists have been murdered and three have gone missing, as follows:

## Killed:

- **Hugo Alfredo OLIVERA Cartas** (27), owner and editor of the daily newspaper *El Día de Michoacán* and reporter with the daily *La Voz de Michoacán*, was found in his car shot in the head in the countryside near Apatzingán, Michoacán State, on 6 July 2010 (see details of previous attack on Olivera below);
- Husband-and-wife journalists **Juan Francisco RODRÍGUEZ Ríos** (49) and **María Elvira HERNÁNDEZ Galena** (36) were shot dead in the internet café they owned near their home in Coyuca de Benítez, Guerrero state, on 28 June 2010. Rodríguez was the local correspondent for two daily newspapers, *El Sol de Acapulco* and *Diario Objetivo*, while Hernández edited the weekly paper *Semanario Nueva Línea*;
- **Enrique VILLICAÑA Palomares**, columnist for the daily newspaper *La Voz de Michoacán*, as well as a teacher, was kidnapped on 5 April 2010 and found dead, his throat slit, in Morelia, Michoacán state, five days later, on 10 April. He is said to have received threats which he had reported to the Michoacán state justice department in late March but the authorities failed to take any action;
- **Evaristo PACHECO Solís**, reporter for the weekly newspaper *Visión Informativa*, was found dead, in Guerrero state, on 12 March 2010;
- **Jorge RÁBAGO Valdez** (49), journalist for the daily newspaper *La Prensa* and two radio stations, died on 2 March 2010 in the border city of Reynosa, Tamaulipas State, according to some reports after being badly beaten by police;
- **Jorge Ochoa Martínez**, editor and publisher of local newspapers *El Oportuno* based in Chilpancingo, capital city of Guerrero State, and *El Sol de la Costa* based in Ayutla de los Libres on the Pacific Coast, was shot dead on 29 January 2010;
- **Valentín VALDÉS Espinosa** (29), reporter for the daily newspaper *El Zócalo de Saltillo*, was abducted in Saltillo, Coahuila State, on 7 January 2010. His body was found the next morning; he had reportedly been tortured and shot several times.

## Disappeared

- **Evaristo ORTEGA Zárate**, editor of the local newspaper *Espacio*, Veracruz state, has been missing since 20 April 2010. The last time he was heard from he said he had been arrested, however the police deny any knowledge of the case;

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- **Ramón ÁNGELES Zalpa** of *Cambio de Michoacán*, Michoacán state, disappeared on 6 April 2010, after receiving anonymous phone calls;
- **Miguel Ángel DOMÍNGUEZ Zamora** of *Mañana*, Tamaulipas state, has been missing since 1 March 2010.

**Deeply concerned** about the general impunity, passivity of the legal authorities vis-à-vis the growing rate of crimes against journalists and media workers and over lack of investigation of these crimes, in spite of repeated promises from federal, state and local authorities that the crimes will be investigated, the authors will be brought to trial and future crimes against journalists and the media will be prevented;

**Particularly worried** about the increasing number of assaults on journalists openly committed by federal forces since December 2006;

**Worried** that this situation will continue and even worsen if no efficient steps are taken by the Mexican authorities at all levels to investigate the crimes already committed and to prevent further violations of journalists' right to exercise their profession freely and without risking their lives and those of their families;

**Calls on** the Mexican government to take immediate measures to prevent further killings, abductions, disappearances and harassment of journalists and to protect journalists, writers and ensure their right to exercise their profession freely, as laid out in the Mexican Constitution and guaranteed under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as under Article 13 of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights (IACHR) which have both been signed and ratified by Mexico;

**Also urgently calls** on the Mexican authorities to prevent the impunity of crimes against journalists, a necessary step to prevent new murders intended to silence members of the media; and immediately adopt measures designed to protect the free and safe exercise of journalism, such as the strengthening of the Special Prosecutor's Office, the attention of the federal justice system to attacks against journalists, and the implementation of effective, prompt security measures to guarantee the life and physical integrity of journalists who have received threats.

**Further reminds** the Mexican government that it is the duty of the State to protect the right to life (Article 6.1 of the ICCPR) and to prevent and investigate murders and acts of aggression against journalists, punish their perpetrators and ensure that victims receive just compensation (Principle 9 of the IACHR Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression).