

President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa  
The President of Mexico  
Palacio Nacional  
Edificio 10, Planta Baja  
Col. Centro, Deleg. Cuauhtémoc  
C.P. 06067 Mexico, Distrito Federal  
Mexico

Brussels, 4 June 2012

**RE: Concerns regarding the situation of lawyer, Mr Vidulfo Rosales Sierra**

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its concerns over the situation of a lawyer, Mr Vidulfo Rosales Sierra, who has recently received an anonymous death threat. Mr Sierra, legal coordinator at the Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña - Tlachinollan), has represented various individuals in cases brought against human rights violations committed by members of the military, Guerrero State authorities and Mexican Federal police, including the killing of two students by security forces at a demonstration in January 2012.

The CCBE has been informed that on 4 May 2012 Mr Sierra received an anonymous death threat. It was typed and delivered to the office of the Network of Civil Human Rights Organisations of Guerrero (Red Guerrerense de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos), of which the Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre is a member. The threat made a reference to the human rights work that Mr Sierra has carried out.

The CCBE is deeply concerned about the intimidation of Mr Sierra and the fact that it is directly related to his peaceful and legitimate activities as a lawyer and human rights defender. In April 2009, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican State to guarantee the safety of Mr Sierra and his colleagues from the Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre. Despite improved commitments by the authorities and the newly approved protection mechanism for the protection of defenders and journalists, intimidation and threats continue.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

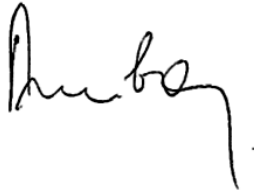
*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

In view of the above, the CCBE urges you to take effective steps to ensure that the death threat received by Mr Sierra is impartially investigated and that those responsible are brought to justice. The CCBE also urges you to take all necessary measures to guarantee the security of Mr Sierra and that all lawyers and human rights defenders in Mexico are able to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including harassment, intimidation and threats, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Prunbauer-Glaser', with a long, sweeping tail extending downwards and to the right.

Marcella PRUNBAUER-GLASER

CCBE President