

**President Enrique Peña Nieto**  
**The President of México**  
**Los Pinos**  
**Casa Miguel Alemán, PB, Col.**  
**San Miguel Chapultepec**  
**11850, Ciudad de México**  
**Distrito Federal**  
**México**

**Brussels, 8 May 2015**

**Re: Concerns regarding the harassment of Mr Rodrigo Higuera Zogaib, a lawyer**

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 also has observer and associate representatives from a further thirteen European countries' bars.

The CCBE places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. We are particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concern over reported acts of harassment against Mr Rodrigo Higuera Zogaib, a human rights lawyer working in Mexico City. The CCBE has been informed that on 20 March 2015, Mr Zogaib's office was broken into. The files of a sensitive case were thrown on the floor and a computer was taken by the perpetrators.

According to the reports we received, this is not the first time the lawyer and his colleagues have faced acts of intimidation and harassment. In the last two years, their office has been broken into another four times, with electronic equipment containing sensitive information having been stolen and telephone and internet line having been sabotaged. The personnel of Mr Zogaib's office have further reported unknown men watching and photographing them.

Mr Zogaib has reported these incidents to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos), as well as to the Federal Mechanism to Protect Human Rights Defenders. However, measures taken so far by the authorities have not been sufficient to effectively protect him and his colleagues.

The CCBE has grounds to fear that these acts against Mr Zogaib are closely connected to his activity in the defence of human rights.

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

Principle 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, principle 17 says that:

*Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.*

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to investigate these alleged acts of harassment in order to guarantee the security and physical and psychological integrity of Mr Zogaib. In addition, the CCBE asks you to take all necessary measures to guarantee that all lawyers in Mexico are able to perform their professional duties without fear of reprisal, hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

I look forward to hearing from you urgently.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. ŚLAZAK', enclosed within a large, thin, hand-drawn oval.

Maria ŚLAZAK  
President