

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

March 16, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We are writing to express our concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in Mexico. There is clear evidence that the violent repression of civil movements by local, state and federal police forces is aggravating civil unrest. Given the importance of U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations and mutual concerns on a wide range of issues including economic cooperation, homeland security and immigration, we request that you act quickly to urge the Mexican government to reverse this trend and ensure the protection of human rights for all Mexicans.

Events that took place in 2004 and in 2006 are of special concern, as is the continued repressive actions and militarization of Mexico's civil police under the new administration of President Felipe Calderon.

In May 2004, during the closing ceremony of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union in Guadalajara, police arrested over a hundred demonstrators after they confronted security forces. The Mexican National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) documented 73 cases of illegal detention, 55 cases of cruel and degrading treatment, 73 individuals held incommunicado and 19 cases of torture. Then Governor of Jalisco, Francisco Ramirez Acuña rejected the recommendations issued by the CNDH to investigate the police abuse and instead justified the police action, discrediting those involved in the protests. Mr. Ramirez Acuña is now the Secretary of the Interior under President Calderon's administration.

Between May 3-4, 2006 in response to protests by members of local peasant organizations, state and federal police arrested at least 207 people in the towns of Texcoco and San Salvador Atenco in the State of Mexico. According to the CNDH, a 14-year-old boy and a university student were killed, 239 people suffered cruel and degrading treatment, at least 26 women were raped or sexually assaulted, and dozens of homes were violently searched without warrants. Twenty-nine people remain in prison

from the Atenco police operation while not a single police official has been prosecuted for the human rights abuses committed. Eduardo Medina Mora, head of Public Security in the Fox Administration and currently the federal Attorney General in the Calderon Administration, rejected a series of recommendations presented by the CNDH, refusing to investigate the involvement of the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) in the human rights violations.

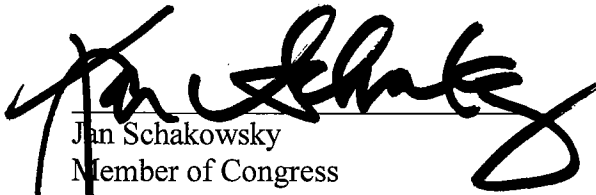
In Oaxaca, Governor Ulises Ruiz ordered local and state police to dislodge striking teachers from the center of Oaxaca City on June 14, 2006, resulting in at least 90 injured civilians. Between June and December 2006, Oaxaca state police, para-police groups and the PFP under the direction of the Fox Administration, are believed to have perpetrated 20 protester deaths and numerous arbitrary detentions, the use of torture, mistreatment and sexual abuse of dozens of detainees. Civilian-clad municipal police officers and other state officials were also implicated in the murder of US independent journalist Brad Will on October 27, 2006. The situation was so concerning that in August, October, and November 2006, the U.S. Embassy and your own Department of State recommended that U.S. citizens avoid traveling to Oaxaca.

There deteriorating human rights situation just over our southern border is of great concern to the United States Congress. Therefore, we the undersigned urge the Department of State to:

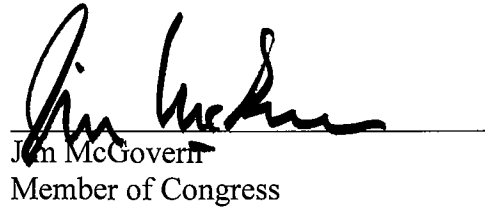
- Call on President Felipe Calderon to present his administration's human rights agenda, and call on the Mexican police and military to end the use of torture;
- Demand that President Calderon fully investigate the murders, beatings, torture, rape and sexual abuse carried out by police and para-police groups in Guadalajara, San Salvador Atenco, and Oaxaca, and to fully implement the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission and international human rights bodies such as those included in the reports of the UN Committee Against Torture and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in all three cases;
- Call on Attorney General Eduardo Medina to ensure a prompt and impartial investigation into the killing of Brad Will and in identifying and prosecuting those responsible for his death, and to establish an independent investigator empowered to prosecute officers accused of torture, sexual abuse, beatings, and murder; and
- Call on the federal government of Mexico to take the necessary steps to re-establish order and full respect for human rights in Oaxaca and to guarantee the physical integrity and right of due process for all of the individuals who continue to be detained.

Thank for your attention to this serious matter. We look forward to hearing from you by April 1, 2007.

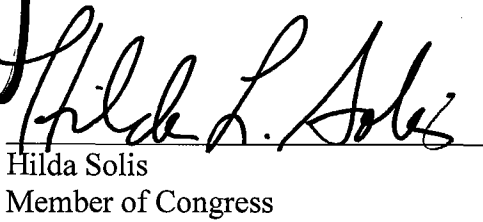
Sincerely,



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern
Member of Congress



Hilda Solis
Member of Congress



Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress