



December 4, 2009

C. Lic. Juan Sabines
Governor of the State of Chiapas
Mexico
E-mail: juansabines@chiapas.gob.mx; secparticular@chiapas.gob.mx

Dear Governor Sabines:

I am writing on behalf of the Maquila Solidarity Network, an international labour and women's rights organization based in Canada, to add our voice to the international call for you to:

- take urgent action to investigate and punish the murderers and intellectual authors of the assassination in Chicomuselo, Chiapas of social activist and community anti-mining leader Mariano Abarca Roblero; and
- institute protective measures to guarantee the safety of Orlando Velazquez who was seriously wounded at the time of the murder, his family members and all members of REMA (Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining) who have opposed the operations of Canadian mining company Blackfire Exploration in their municipality.

As you know, the murder of Mariano Abarca Roblero took place the night of November 27th when he was gunned down by someone on a motorcycle. Just days before, Abarca had submitted an administrative complaint against CIRO ROBLERO PEREZ and LUIS ANTONIO FLORES VILLATORO (the latter, Public Relations Manager of Blackfire Exploration).

In his complaint, presented to Mr. Nestor Ortis Velazquez, municipal agent for Nueva Morelia, Chicomuselo, Chiapas, Abarca documented the fact that Mr. CIRO ROBLERO had blatantly told him that they had previously gone after him (Abarca) "to blow [him] to bits", so that he would cease opposition to the Chicomuselo mine and that he (Abarca) and others were already on lists compiled by the mine owners and manager.

Moreover, on a separate official submission, Abarca indicated that "the mining company had threatened several people, that they had attempted to run them over with vehicles, and furthermore, had talked of wanting to kill them."

As is publicly known nationally and internationally, Mariano Abarca was illegally and violently kidnapped on August 17th by the police to be taken for arraignment.

The international demand for his freedom forced the Chiapas state government to release him but not before the government had tried to negotiate with him: he would be let go in exchange for a promise to abandon the struggle of resistance against the mine or he would cancel the Second REMA Chiapas Meeting in Chicomuselo scheduled for the end that month. Mariano Abarca responded unequivocally that he preferred to stay in prison rather than negotiate such conditions.

Given the above, we call for the government of Chiapas and the Mexican authorities to:

- Take urgent measures to investigate the murder of Mariano Abarca Roblero, and provide protection to his family;
- Protect the physical, psychological, and legal safety of Orlando Velazquez and his family;
- Protect the physical, psychological, and legal safety of REMA members who have struggled against the abuses of Blackfire Exploration;
- Suspend Blackfire Exploration's mining permits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynda Yanz', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lynda Yanz, Executive Director

CC:

Guillermo Rishchynski, Canadian Ambassador to Mexico, mxico@international.gc.ca

Paul Connors, Trade Commissioner, Embassy of Canada in Mexico,

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Peter Kent, Minister of Foreign Affairs, kentp@parl.gc.ca

Peter Julian, MP Burnaby-New Westminster, juliap@parl.gc.ca

Bob Rae, MP Toronto Centre and Liberal Party Foreign Affairs Critic, raeb@parl.gc.ca

Brent Willis, President, Blackfire Exploration Ltd., b.willis@ddf.ca

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