

Mr. Enrique Irazoque Palazuelos
Unidad para la Defensa de los Derechos
Humanos (UDDH)
Ministerio del Interior (SEGOB)
Dinamarca 84, Piso 7
Col. Juárez, Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P. 06600
MEXICO

Dear Director,

As a member/supporter of ACAT-Switzerland (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture), I am writing to you to express my deepest **concern for the safety of Father Marcelo Pérez**.

Father Marcelo Pérez is a priest of the Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. He is committed to helping victims of human rights violations, respecting the rights of indigenous peoples, and fighting organized crime.

On June 21, 2022, an arrest warrant was issued against Father Marcelo Pérez. He is falsely accused by the judiciary of being involved in the disappearance of 21 people around the municipality of Pantelhó, although there is no evidence to support this claim. Even though the arrest warrant has not yet been executed, his situation remains particularly worrisome.

His involvement in the conflict in the municipality of Pantelhó was simply that of a mediator committed to ending a cycle of violence between military and paramilitary groups, members of the organized crime and groups of certain local communities. Non-violent commitment to reconciliation and overcoming violence must not be criminalized.

Because of his work as a human rights defender, Father Pérez was already criminalized in 2014. He has also been the victim of threats, intimidation, harassment and physical attacks, reason why the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued precautionary measures in 2016, which are still in effect.

Therefore, I ask you to use your influence to ensure that:

- the arrest warrant issued against Father Marcelo Pérez is withdrawn;
- the arbitrary prosecution of Father Marcelo Pérez is stopped;
- protective measures are taken to ensure his safety and physical integrity.

I thank you very much for your attention to my request.

Yours respectfully,