

2 December 2011

SENADO DE LA REPÚBLICA  
Av. Paseo de la Reforma 135,  
esq. Insurgentes Centro,  
Colonia Tabacalera,  
Delegación Cuauhtémoc,  
Ciudad de México C.P 06030

Dear Senators,

I am writing to you as President of PEN International, the global writers' association spanning more than 100 countries, to urge you to speedily ratify the constitutional amendment contained in the addition to Article 73, Clause 21 of the Federal Constitution of Mexico. If ratified, this change in law would empower federal authorities to prosecute crimes against journalists and freedom of expression.

Since 2006, 36 print journalists, writers and bloggers have been murdered in Mexico because of their work, and eight have gone missing. PEN International recently launched a successful global campaign which highlighted the dangers that Mexican journalists and writers face in exercising their right to free expression, and which called for an end to the climate of impunity that exists for those who murder and attack writers in Mexico.

The proposed change in law bears comparison to laws already enacted in some Latin American countries and in the United States of America. These countries authorize the federal civil prosecution of actions that are considered a violation of federal civil rights, even where state courts and juries have judged them not guilty of violating state criminal statutes.

While we welcome the recent passage of the above-mentioned amendment through Mexico's Chamber of Deputies on 8 November 2011, we call on the Senate to demonstrate its commitment to the protection of freedom of expression by ratifying the amendment before the current legislative session ends in December 2011.

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John Ralston Saul

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with registration number 1117088.  
International PEN's registered office  
is Brownlow House, 50/51 High  
Holborn, London, WC1V 6ER, UK.

I thank you in advance for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ralston Saul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John Ralston Saul  
International President

A large, faint, and illegible handwritten scribble in light gray or blue ink, covering the bottom half of the page. The scribble consists of many overlapping, overlapping loops and lines, making it impossible to read.