

February 18, 2017

A request, preceded by an explanation

In June 2016 I was sued by the former governor of Coahuila and former president of the PRI, Humberto Moreira. He is demanding 10 million pesos (around 500,000 dollars). When the news emerged I received a wave of solidarity and offers of help. In the United States, the Justice in Mexico Program created a fund that collected 1,450 dollars. I did not pursue any other fundraising campaign because I found a law firm who made me a very fair offer.

Beristáin y Asociados proposed to represent me Pro Bono. This means that they are not charging me a fee, but if we win they will ask Humberto Moreira to pay them 8 percent of the 10 million pesos demanded (this is legally possible). Of this amount, they would donate 150,000 pesos to El Colegio de México to conduct research on peace and violence.

This arrangement implies that I cover all other costs. In the last few months this has become increasingly difficult, because the judge has acted in favor of Moreira and because there have been appeals and actions of different kinds. To date, I have spent almost 325,000 pesos (around 15,000 dollars). This amount is going to rise, because the lawsuit is expected to last a further couple of years. This expenditure has already exceeded my capacity for payment.

Meanwhile, the use of lawsuits for defamation are becoming more widespread as a powerful instrument to attack freedom of expression. Throughout the country, such cases are proliferating.

As a result, I am now requesting donations to cover some of my costs and to raise awareness of the attack on freedom of expression. I will do this in coordination with Article 19, the organization to defend journalists that represents me.

There are two ways of receiving financial support.

With the assistance of David Shirk and Micaela Smith of the Justice in Mexico Program of the University of San Diego (www.justiceinmexico.org) a fund has been created for donations in dollars. Such donations are tax deductible.

<https://www.gofundme.com/SergioAguayo>

In Mexico, I have not yet found an organization to receive donations. You can make deposits to my personal bank account:

Sergio Aguayo Quezada.

BBVA. 482302837

CLABE: 012180004823028377

For all those who support me I will deliver a report every six months—both narrative and financial—on the development of the lawsuit and on donations received and expenditures. I am enclosing the first expense report.