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| via fax 011 502 2214423<br><b>Sr. Jimmy Morales Cabrera</b><br>President of Guatemala | via fax 502 2381734<br><b>Sr. Jorge Eduardo De León Duque</b><br>Human Rights Ombudsman |
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July 13, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about the recent invasion of office of the human rights defense organization **Impunity Watch** in Guatemala. Shortly after 5:00PM on June 21, three masked men forced their way into the office of the international organization. The assailants forced a secretary who was on her way out to open the door. They covered her eyes, taped her mouth shut and ransacked the office. The men screamed at her, "Where are the files?" and asked about "the files of the fat lawyer" before fleeing when the doorbell rang. The secretary was unharmed. It is unknown if any files were taken.

This attack came two days before a scheduled hearing on the case of Marco Antonio Molina Theissen, an adolescent who disappeared in 1981 during the country's civil war, after armed men seized him from his home. In January, four former military members were arrested and charged in the case. Alejandro Rodríguez, a researcher at Impunity Watch, is representing Marcos Molina Theissen's family. They have been the subject of online harassment in relationship to the case. The files related to Molina Theissen's case were not stored in the office.

Impunity Watch has worked for many years in Guatemala on issues related to human rights violations committed during the country's long armed internal conflict. Although trials like that of Molina Thiessen's case and others involving former military officers have been signs of hope that the country is taking steps toward achieving justice, there has also been a climate of threats and harassment toward those involved. The trials have polarized much of Guatemalan society and have led to public protests by supporters of the military.

Attorney General Thelma Aldana Hernández, who has overseen most of these prominent cases and is aggressively prosecuting high level corruption in the country, has also come under intense public scrutiny. She posted a message on Facebook on June 20 stating that she is fearful for the first time in her tenure.

Because of our concern related to the incident of the Molina Theissen case and the further safety of Impunity Watch workers, we **strongly urge** that you

- implement full and appropriate protection to the staff of Impunity Watch, in accordance with their wishes;
- carry out an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the raiding of Impunity Watch's office and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that all parties involved with cases of human rights violations committed during the armed conflict can carry out their work without fear of reprisal.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Impunity Watch ~ via email iw-guatemala@impunitywatch.org  
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 Enrique Gil Botero, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3992  
 Jose de Jesus Orozco Hernandez, Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3650  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA\_148/16\_Guatemala

**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**