

via fax: 011 502 2221 4423 or 2221 4445 Sr. Jimmy Morales President of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 2411 8168 or 2411 9210 Lic. Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández Attorney General of Guatemala
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September 25, 2016

Dear President Morales and Attorney General Aldana:

We are writing to express serious concern for the safety and well-being of **Angélica Choc**, a Mayan Q'eqchi' human rights defender from the municipality of El Estor in Izabal Department.

In the early hours of September 17 shots were fired outside her home where she slept with her two children. Later that day the police identified a number of 12-caliber casings and 22-caliber shotgun bullet casings and documented four bullet impact holes in the outside wall of her house.

In 2009, Angelica's husband, Adolfo Ich Chamán, a respected Mayan Q'eqchi' community leader and former president of the Community of La Unión in El Estor, was killed for his leadership role in speaking out about the rights violations caused by Canadian mining in Guatemala. Adolfo was hacked with a machete and shot in the head, allegedly by the private security forces contracted by the mining company. In 2010, Angélica Choc, along with 12 other plaintiffs, personally sued Hudbay Minerals Inc, HMI Nickel Inc, and its subsidiary, Compañía Guatemalteca de Níquel S.A. in Canadian courts for the death of her husband. This ongoing case is an unprecedented effort to bring justice to their Maya-Q'eqchi' community. This community has strongly opposed the mining project, and as a result, has faced violent acts of repression committed by state forces and private security forces contracted by the company.

Since March 2015, Angélica Choc has also been the lead victim accuser in a high profile criminal trial against Mynor Padilla, a retired agent from the Guatemalan army and former security chief for Hudbay Minerals.

We condemn the acts of intimidation against Maya-Q'eqchi' community leader Angélica Choc and **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the acts of intimidation against Angélica Choc and her family, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures, in consultation with Angélica Choc, to guarantee her security and that of her family;
- guarantee that in all circumstances, all human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and Christine Stonebraker-Martínez
Co-Coordinators

copies: Gladys Maritza Ruiz de Vielman, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
 Todd Robinson, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011 502 2331 2348
 Thomas Lee, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via email LeeT2@state.gov
 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
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458 3650
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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