

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

January 25, 2017

Dear President Morales and Attorney General Aldana:

We are outraged at the killing of indigenous and land rights defender **Sebastian Alonso Juan**, age 73, of Yuchen in Huehuetenango Department. He died from gunshot wounds inflicted by armed men during a peaceful protest against a hydroelectric project. We call on your government to investigate whether this was a random killing or a targeted assassination.

On January 17, affected communities in Huehuetenango staged a peaceful protest in front of the company Producciones de Desarrollo Hidrico (PDH), to reject the hydroelectric projects Pojom I and Pojom II in the Ixquisis area of San Matea Ixtatan in Huehuetenango. At approximately 2:00pm, armed men began shooting into the crowd of demonstrators, wounding Sebastian Alonso Juan. He died from his injuries.

Prior to this demonstration, communities affected by projects Pojom I and Pojom II had repeatedly mobilized to denounce the diversion of three rivers (Yalwitz, Pojom and Río Negro) resulting from activities conducted by PDH. The Chuj and Q'anjob'al indigenous peoples had repeatedly asked the local, municipal and national authorities to respect their right to free, prior and informed consent for the hydroelectric projects, in line with international law (ILO Convention 169). Your government, however, authorized the projects after a series of irregularities, including the use of explosives without the authorization of the Ministry of Defense.

PDH awarded a contract to Spain's Hidralia Energia to design the trio of plants in 2011. The indigenous Council of the Wuxhtaj Peoples has demanded that contracts of the hydro-electric projects Pojom I and II be revoked. According to Guatemala's Popular and Social Assembly (ASP), an indigenous rights organization, the population of San Mateo Ixtatan has repeatedly expressed concern and disagreement to different municipal and state authorities over the development of the hydroelectric projects. They have never received a response.

This is one of several extractive and infrastructure projects throughout Guatemala that are being carried out against the will of the communities who are criminalized and repressed for their opposition. We fear that the continued confrontation between the local indigenous communities and the companies will lead to further violence and deaths. Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Sebastian Alonso Juan and the indiscriminate violence against protesters in Ixquisis, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restriction

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinators

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

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  
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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  
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 and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

2016/01/23\_Frontline\_Guatemala

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