

VIA FACSIMILE: 011 502 7888 0225 Luis Alberto Munoz Gonzalez Governor of Escuintla, Guatemala	VIA FACSIMILE: 011 502 7882 5482 Lic. Freedyn Valdemar Fernandez Ortiz District Attorney, Escuintla, Guatemala
VIA FAX: 011 502 2221 4423 / 2239 0090 Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo President of the Republic, Guatemala	VIA FAX: 011 502 2362 0237 Carlos Vielman Minister of the Interior, Guatemala

January 21, 2005

Dear Sirs:

Florentin Gudiel, mayor of Cruce de la Esperanza, Department of Escuintla, was murdered on December 20, 2004. He had been campaigning against corruption and also for justice for his son, José Miguel Gudiel Alvarez, who “disappeared” in 1983. José Miguel’s name appeared in the “Death Squad Dossier” made public in May 1999. Since Florentin Gudiel’s assassination, members of his family have received numerous death threats: **Makrina Gudiel Alvarez, Agripina Alvarez, Carlos Ernesto Cruz Gudiel, Oscar Cruz Gudiel, and Jose Gabriel Cruz Gudiel**. They have been subjected to numerous acts of intimidation and death threats, some of which were perpetrated by members of the Guatemalan military and special forces.

Makrina Gudiel Alvarez, a member of the town council who has also been fighting corruption, has received several death threats over the past two years. On January 14 in the evening, a passing car sprayed gasoline on the car in which she and a colleague were traveling. She and her colleague swerved to prevent another car from setting fire to their vehicle. While they stopped and waited in a parking lot, the other vehicles parked in the shadows, flashed their lights and revved their engines. Makrina finally drove at high speed to safety.

In light of the facts presented, we strongly urge you to

- Provide Makrina Gudiel and her family with full protection
- Take immediate steps to ensure the protection of other family members of Florentin Gudiel and order an investigation into the threats and acts of intimidation they have suffered
- Conduct a prompt, impartial and full investigation into the murder of Florentin Gudiel, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice
- Conduct a full investigation into illegal armed groups operating in the area of Escuintla
- Take immediate measures to end the intimidation of public officials so that they can carry out their duties without fear of intimidation

Please use your authority to put an end to incidents such as those detailed above.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Attorney General Juan Luis Florido ~ via fax: 011 502 2251 2218
Comision Presidencial de Derechos Humanos (COPREDEH) ~ via fax: 011 502 2334 1615
Makrina Gudiel, Municipalidad de Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa ~ via fax: 011 502 7882 5443
Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo, Embassy of Guatemala ~ via fax: 1 202 745 1908
Ambassador John Hamilton ~ via fax: 011 502 334 8477
Robert Boynton, Guatemala Desk ~ via fax: 1 202 647 2597
Senator George Voinovich, US Senate ~ via email: Daniel_knezevic@voinovich.senate.gov
U.S. Representatives: Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones

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The following people hereby urge that you take action on this matter as indicated in this letter.