

Via fax: 011 502 2253 0801 Eduardo Stein Barillas Vice President, Republic of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 2251 2218 Juan Luis Florido Fiscal General / Attorney General, Guatemala
Via fax: 011 502 2334 1615 Frank LaRue, COPREDEH Presidential Commission for Human Rights, Guatemala	

April 21, 2005

We are greatly concerned for the safety of **Dominga Vásquez, Alfonso Guárquez and Carlos Humberto Guárquez**, whose lives have been threatened, apparently in an effort to stop their opposition to mining expansion near their homes.

On March 25 at 11:45 pm, villagers in Tablon, near the town of Solola in western Guatemala, alerted the police to a burning vehicle which had been doused in gasoline. The vehicle belonged to FUNDAMAYA and was used by one of its staff, Carlos Humberto Guarquez. FUNDAMAYA campaigns to raise awareness of the potential environmental damage caused by mining and the negative impact on indigenous communities living close to mines. Five written death threats directed at Carlos Humberto Guarquez were found around the burning vehicle. Carlos Humberto Guárquez, Dominga Vásquez and Alfonso Guárquez are among five indigenous people who have been accused of inciting a protest on January 11 against the transportation of equipment belonging to mining company Montana Exploradora (a subsidiary of the Canadian-US firm Glamis Gold), which owns two gold mining projects in Guatemala.

Dominga Vásquez received an anonymous threat by telephone on January 5 after speaking out against mining in the area. The threats have been reported to the national police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Presidential Commission of the Office of Human Rights (COPREDEH). Her husband, Alfonso Guárquez (brother of Carlos Humberto Guarquez), is a journalist for the national information service Cerigua and has reported on local opposition to mining.

We strongly urge you to:

- Take immediate measures, in accordance with their wishes, to guarantee the safety of **Dominga Vasquez, Alfonso Guarquez and Carlos Humberto Guarquez**;
- Commence an immediate and thorough investigation into the death threats, make the results public, and quickly bring those responsible to justice;
- Ensure that any criminal investigation against indigenous leaders involved in opposition to local mining comply with domestic and international standards regarding fair trials;
- Keep in mind your obligation to respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent of communities to be affected by development projects, as stated under the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169, ratified by Guatemala in 1996.

This is our third letter in recent weeks about human rights abuses surrounding Glamis/Montana Gold's operations in Guatemala. We wrote to World Bank President James Wolfensohn (February 24) to protest the January 11 killings of Raul Castro Bocel and Miguel Tzorin Tuy, two indigenous farmers shot by authorities during the mining protest; we wrote again (April 11) to protest the murder of Alvaro Benigno Sánchez by Montana Mining security guards.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these death threats.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Glamis Gold Mining Company - via fax: 1-775-827-5044
Montana Exploradora de Guatemala, S.A. - via fax: 011 502 2385 6651
Ambassador José Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax: 1 202 745 1908
Ambassador John Hamilton ~ via fax: 011 502 334 8477
Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk ~ via fax: 1 202 647 2597
U.S. Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email and fax
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via fax, email

UA80_05 Guatemala

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