

via fax: 011 502 2411 9124 <b>Lic. Juan Luis Florido</b> Attorney General of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 2413 8658 <b>Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte</b> Minister of Interior of Guatemala
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May 14, 2007

Dear Fiscal General Florido and Ministra Camacho:

We are extremely concerned about the lives of five staff member of the Guatemalan Institute for Comparative Studies in Criminal Sciences (ICCPG), a human rights organization that has been investigating killings and rapes committed by police. On April 25, ICCPG lawyer **Monica Teleguario Xitay** was returning from interviewing a victim of police violence when she was followed by men in a black jeep. After bumping her car, they trapped her by driving to the front of her vehicle and stopping while another car stopped close behind. Five men in ski masks, four armed and one holding a baseball bat, forced her out of her car. They said, "This is the last warning."

When leaving the ICCPG office on April 12, a man put a gun to the head of researcher **Edgar Herber Hernandez Figueroa** and forced him into a blue car with two more armed men inside who questioned him about the ICCPG. He said he did not work for the ICCPG, until the men threatened him and the organization. After an hour they took his wallet and let him go.

ICCPG researcher **Paula Barrios** returned from work on March 20 to find her home burglarized. Although nothing was missing, one of her children's teddy bears had its mouth covered with masking tape. Her home is two blocks from the police national headquarters.

On March 14, a car followed ICCPG researchers **David Davila and Oswaldo Samayoa** while they were carrying out errands in the center of Guatemala City in preparation for interviewing a victim of police violence. The following day after they left at 3.30 am to carry out the interview, they were stopped five times over the next two-and-a-half hours by uniformed police who checked their identification cards.

We fear that these events mean imminent danger for the ICCPG and the lives of its personnel. We therefore **strongly urge** that you

- order prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into the incidents described above and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of **Monica Teleguario Xitay, Edgar Herbert Hernandez Figueroa, Paula Barrios, David Davila and Oswaldo Samayoa**, according to their wishes;
- develop a national plan of action to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, so as to ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

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 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202-458-3992  
 Guatemala Human Rights Commission-USA ~ via fax: 202-526-4611  
 U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich and U.S. Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 105/07 Guatemala

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

