

via fax: 502 2251 2218 Licenciado Óscar Berger Perdomo President of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 251 2218 Juan Luis Florido Attorney General of Guatemala
via fax: 011 502 2362 0237 Carlos Vielman Minister of the Interior, Guatemala	

July 26, 2006

We are extremely concerned over the death of **Miguel Chen**, and a number of others injured during an armed conflict between groups of campesinos on Saturday July 8 on the San José la Moca coffee finca (an estate also known as Moca) located between La Tinta and Senahú in Alta Verapaz Department.

There has been some confusion about the source of the confrontation and the number of people killed or injured. According to the National Coordinating Committee of Campesino Organizations (CNOO), 600 armed members of the finca's private security forces clashed with 100 peasant families. At least one person was killed, according to the National Civilian Police, and at least 38 wounded.

In light of these facts, we strongly urge you to:

- immediately form an investigative team to identify those responsible for the death of Miguel Chen;
- compensate the families at the Moca and Cabañas fincas, who have become victims of violent evictions in recent months, resulting in a loss of their belongings and the death of one campesino;
- work on a solution to the agrarian problems that afflict the inhabitants of the Moca finca so that the confrontations and violent evictions do not continue;
- ensure that, if an eviction is to proceed, international standards are adhered to—in particular, that no excessive force is used and that law enforcement officials protect evictees from acts of violence from third parties.

We have written several letters to Guatemalan officials over the past few years about the increase in violent evictions. In 2006 alone we have sent four letters, two concerning Moca coffee estate:

January 24: three campesinos were wounded when security guards shot at protesters at Nueva Linda finca in Camperico, Retalheu Department.

Mach 14: police burned families homes, food and clothing during a forced eviction of the Moca finca; five campesinos were hospitalized after being beaten by private security guards.

April 15: the army used tanks and helicopters to evict 310 campesinos from the community of La Bendición, Flores, Petén Department.

May 13: 200 police and 80 soldiers evicted 400 campesinos from Moca finca

We expect that your government will take prompt attention to assure that no more people are killed or injured in land evictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax
 Ambassador James Derham ~ via fax:
 Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax
 Guatemala Human Rights Commission USA ~ via fax
 US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Reps Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

GHRC 7/14/06 GUATEMALA

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