

via fax: 011 502 2251 2218
 Juan Luis Florido
 Attorney General, GUATEMALA

via fax: 011 502 2239 0090
 Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo
 President of the Republic of Guatemala

August 1, 2005

Dear Sirs,

We are disgusted and appalled by the unending campaign of death threats couched in obscene language against courageous workers exercising their right of free association.

And we are gravely concerned for the safety of the following eight members of the Workers' Union of the Crédito Hipotecario Nacional (STCHN, or National Mortgage Bank Workers' Union)

- **Luis Ernesto Morales Galvez,**
- **Edgar Vinicia Ordoñez García,**
- **Luis Fernando Sirin Aroche,**
- **Efrain López Uiche,**
- **Jose Douglas Asencio,**
- **Elio Santiago Monroy López,**
- **Danilo Enrique Chea Herrera**
- **Manuel Francisco Arias Virula**

On July 25, 2005 a funeral wreath and two death notices were placed on the offices of UNSITRAGUA (Labor Union of Guatemala Workers), to which STCHN is affiliated. One of the death notices listed the eight union leaders noted above. The threats were reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office, but effective protective measures have yet to be implemented.

Since 2002, when the privatization of Crédito Hipotecario Nacional was announced, 170 STCHN members were "downsized" and 240 members have left due to pressure from the company.

The non-governmental organization (NGO) Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit of the National Movement for Human Rights reports that in 2004 there were 122 attacks against human rights defenders, journalists, justice officials, trade unionists, religious officials and community leaders. So far in 2005, the attacks have increased to 130.

The situation warrants immediate attention by the authorities to:

- take measures to protect the 8 union leaders as well as other members of STCHN and UNSITRAGUA according to their own wishes;
- call for thorough investigation into the death threats, results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

For Peace with Justice,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Movimiento Nacional por los Derechos Humanos ~ fax: 011 502 2232 2651
 Ambassador José Guillermo Castillo ~ fax: 1 202 745 1908
 Ambassador John Hamilton ~ fax: 011 502 334 8477
 Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk Officer, US State Dept. ~ fax: 202 647 2597
 U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email
 U.S. Representatives Brown, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 198/05 GUATEMALA

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