

via fax 011 502 2251 2218

**Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo**  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala

via fax 011 502 2362 0237

**Carlos Vielman**  
Minister of the Interior, Guatemala

October 16, 2005

We are deeply concerned for the safety of **Miguel Angel Lucas Gomez**, the General Secretary of the Guatemalan Union of Agricultural Workers (CTC) and a member of the government-appointed Minimum Wage Commission **and for the safety of others working with the CTC**. At 12.30 on September 27 three armed men and a woman came to the CTC office building and forced the receptionist at gunpoint to let them in the gate. Two of the men went to the CTC office and ordered Miguel Lucas, two CTC employees, an Italian journalist and two indigenous men (who could not understand Spanish) to take off their clothes. One gunman beat Miguel Lucas with a pistol. The group left with a camera, personal valuables, the Italian journalist's identification documents and the mobiles phones of Miguel Lucas and another CTC employee. At the same time, the other two gunmen had gone to office of the Guatemalan Market Traders' Association (ACEFEGUA), a CTC member organization, where they threatened the staff, stole their computer and personal valuables.

Both robberies were likely an attempt to intimidate Miguel Lucas, who has advocated for the rights of street vendors, has had strong disagreements with business representatives over the national minimum wage, and has publicized the lack of transparency in the procurement of medicines in the Social Security system (public health services for workers). As a consequence of his struggle for workers' rights, had to disconnect his phone after receiving several telephone threats during July and August.

On September 30 the General Central of Guatemalan Workers (CGTG) also reported that their office was being watched by men whose appearance suggests they are bodyguards or members of the military.

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

- Take immediate measures to protect **Miguel Angel Lucas Gomez and others working with the CTC**;
- Carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the robbery of the CTC and ACEFEGUA offices and into the death threats received by Miguel Lucas, make the results of the investigation public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Take immediate measures to end the intimidation of trade unionists so that they can carry out their lawful activities without fear.

As a consequence of your high position in Guatemala, you have the authority and the responsibility to put an end to incidents such as those detailed above.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

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Courtney Tumer, Guatemala Desk, US State Department ~ via fax: 1 202 647 2597  
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email  
U.S. Representatives Brown, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 264/05 Guatemala

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