



**InterReligious Task Force on Central America**  
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via fax: 011 502 221 4423 Lic. Oscar Berger Perdomo President of the Republic, Guatemala	Via fax: 011 502 2362-02 37 Carlos Vielman Minister of Governance/Interior, Guatemala
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December 6, 2004

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are extremely concerned for the safety of Nineth Montenegro, Chair of the Congressional Commission on Human Rights. Montenegro received a death threat, which appears to be linked to her work investigating corruption among high-ranking military officers. She has been investigating government spending from 2000 to 2004, and has discovered that over a billion quetzales (US\$133 million) has been embezzled from the budgets of the Ministry of Defense and two other military institutions.

On August 23, Montenegro filed a complaint with the Public Ministry, which prosecutes criminal cases, accusing senior military officers of embezzlement and corruption, including Colonel Raul Cerna, the former Financial Head of the Estado Mayor Presidencial (EMP). On November 22, a man approached a member of the human rights organization where Nineth Montenegro's husband works, and told him, "something big will happen to Nineth or her family before the end of the year." Colonel Raul Cerna had not been seen since April 2004 until his body was found recently; it is feared that he was killed to prevent him from implicating others.

**We strongly urge you to:**

- begin a prompt, impartial and exhaustive investigation into the death threat received by Nineth Montenegro on November 22, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the killing of Colonel Raul Cerna, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- please work to establish CICIACS (the Commission for the Investigation of Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Apparatus), in order to prosecute illegal groups operating in Guatemala.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies:

Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo/Mutual Support Group ~ via fax: 011 502 2220 0606  
 Francisco Rolando Morales Chavez, Presidente del Congreso, ~ via fax: 011 502 2220 4024  
 Ambassador José Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax: 1 202 745 1908  
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 Robert Boynton, Guatemala Desk ~ via fax: 1 202 647 2597  
 US Senators Voinovich and DeWine  
 US Representatives Kucinich, Kaptur, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones

UA 326/04 Guatemala

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