



InterReligious Task Force on Central America

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December 13, 2005

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned for the safety and well-being of the members of the **Asociación de Mujeres Ixqik**. Based in Petén Department, the association assists rape victims in their efforts to obtain justice. Beginning on 31 October 2005, the organization's offices were raided three times. A few items were stolen. Also taken were files relating to the association's work of lobbying on women's issues and a list of all staff members' home addresses and telephone numbers. As a consequence, we believe these staff members are in serious danger.

In light of these facts, we strongly ask that you

- Urge the Public Prosecutor's Office to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the raids and bring those responsible to justice
- Ask the authorities to provide protection to the Asociación de Mujeres Ixqik immediately, including a police presence outside the office.

We are very aware of the fact that violence against women is widespread in Guatemala and that many investigations into such violence are flawed and inadequate. Those responsible are rarely brought to justice. This is unacceptable. Those who have the authority and the responsibility to put an end to incidents such as those detailed above must do so.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo ~ Fax: 1 202 745 1908
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Guatemala Human Rights Commission- USA ~ Fax: 202-526-4611
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email
U.S. Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA291/05 GUATEMALA

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