

IRTF

InterReligious Task Force on Central America
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via fax: 011-502-2326-0237 Carlos Vielma Minister of the Interior, Guatemala	via fax: 011-5-2-2239-0090 Lic. Oscar Berger Perdomo President of Guatemala
via fax: 011-502-2251-2218 Juan Luis Florido Attorney General of Guatemala	

March 14, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the recent evictions and ongoing acts of intimidation on the San José Moca and Cabañas fincas (farms) in the municipalities of Tinta and Senahú, in Alta Verapaz Department. On the morning of February 1, 600 heavily armed police officers arrived with 100 soldiers. Families on the Cabañas finca cooperated with the eviction; families on the Moca finca resisted. The police, carrying arms, rods, and tear gas, responded with threats and physical violence. They burned families' homes, food, and clothing. On February 2, the families re-occupied Moca finca because they had now here else to go.

On February 4, the landowners' private security agents attacked four campesinos while they were getting water. **Manuel Federico Cu Bol, Gerardo Bol, Domingo Caal Cac, and Matías Toz Che** were hospitalized with serious injuries; **Rosaria Chub** was also harassed, followed, and beaten. The Guatemala Human Rights Commission (CDHG) reported that Manuel Federico Cu Bol was transferred to Cobán for surgery to remove a bullet from his stomach.

We wrote to you in June 2004 to protest these forced evictions, which were re-instated after President Perdomo took office.

These violent tactics of terror, intimidation, eviction and detention of local leaders by the state public security forces and large landholders, combined with efforts to discredit campesino leaders, reflect an attempt to destroy the campesino organizing base in a manner reminiscent of the scorched earth policy of the 1980s.

We strongly urge that you

- uphold the rule of law and provide an immediate solution to the agrarian conflict in Verapaz and Alta Verapaz Departments;
- carry out your duties as defined in the constitution and stop exclusively serving the landowners while persecuting the civilian population.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

Copies: Ambassador José Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax
Frank LaRue, Presidential Commission on Human Rights (COPREDEH) ~ via fax
Ambassador James Derham ~ via fax
Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk ~ via fax
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email
U.S. Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

GHRC_ Guatemala

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