

via fax: 011 502 2239 0090

Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo
 President of the Republic of Guatemala

via fax: 011 502 2251 2218

Juan Luis Florido
 Attorney General and Chief of Public Ministry of Guatemala

January 25, 2007

Dear Licenciado Florido:

We urge you to move forward on the cases charging **Efraín Ríos Montt** and other former military officials with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The war survivors' organization Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR) presented their two cases in 2000 and 2001 against the military high commands of former dictators Romeo Lucas García (deceased May 2006) and Efraín Ríos Montt, respectively. Six years later, the cases remain at a standstill in the investigative phase due to the constant switching of prosecutors assigned to the matter. We ask you, as Attorney General, to ensure that these cases advance in the justice system.

The lack of progress in these cases has led victims to seek justice outside of Guatemala. In June 2006, Spanish judge Santiago Pedraz visited Guatemala in an attempt to investigate a case presented in the Spanish courts by Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum. Frustrated with the "obstructionist attitude" that he encountered in Guatemala, he issued international arrest warrants against eight former military officials, some of whom are included in the AJR's cases. Judge Pedraz concluded, "There is sufficient evidence that the crimes of genocide, terrorism, torture, murder and illegal detention were committed by the defendants."

We were glad to learn that in November 2006 a Guatemalan court ordered the arrest of six of the eight ex-military and ex-government officials charged with the 1980 burning of the Spanish embassy and the larger crime of genocide in Guatemala.

Now we ask you act boldly and push forward the genocide case against former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, as the AJR formally requested of your office (October 5, 2006). Please listen to the European Union Parliament's plea to "cooperate and do everything in [your] power to shed light on the human rights violations and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice" (October 26, 2006).

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan-Szittai
 Coordinator

Copies: Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
 Ambassador James Derham ~ via fax: 011-502-2334-8477
 Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992 or 202.458.6215
 U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich ~ via email
 U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich and U.S. Reps. Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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