

via FAX: 011.503.2271.2910 <b>Ing. Enrique Oñate</b> President and Executive Director Social Fund for Housing Federal Government El Salvador	via FAX: 011.503.2281.9526 <b>Diputada Irma Amaya</b> President of Commission for Justice and Human Rights National Legislative Assembly El Salvador
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June 3, 2008

Dear Sir and Madam:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, urge that the federal government's Social Fund for Housing (Fondo Social para la Vivienda) immediately sell to the Salvadoran Foundation for Development and Basic Housing (FUNDASAL) the six manzanas of land occupied by 98 families of Comunidad Msgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero in Tonacatepeque, a municipality in San Salvador Department. In 2006, Fondo Social recognized their legitimate settlement and offered them the option of purchasing the land. FUNDASAL offered to finance the purchase for the residents.

Community residents have made the land their own. Although met with riot police when they initially settled the land in March 2005, they have since been recognized as a legal association in Tonacatepeque and by the federal government. They have worked with the government to install water and electric lines. They were happy to learn of the offer of the Fondo Social to sell them the land (July 2006) and with FUNDASAL's offer to finance the land (November 2007).

Unfortunately, it now appears that the Social Fund for Housing intends to sell the land, instead, to the Salvadoran Institute for Agrarian Reform (ISTA). Although ISTA has reported that it would redistribute the land to poor families, the 80 families that have been living on the land for three years have not been invited to ISTA meetings with the mayor of Tonacatepeque. Moreover, the community has been repeatedly threatened with eviction.

We **strongly urge** that you carry out your mission to "finance agile and efficient housing solutions, providing favorable and sustainable credit conditions, satisfying the social necessity for workers and other population groups, to contribute to elevate their living conditions and reduce the habitational deficit" (<http://www.fsv.gob.sv>). Please sell the land to FUNDASAL, the oldest and most respected nongovernmental housing organization in El Salvador.

The community chose the name Oscar Arnulfo Romero because Archbishop Romero was their source of hope in their darkest hours. We hope that you will give them the hope of being able to remain on their land.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: CIS ~ via email  
 Ambassador Charles L. Glazer, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador ~ fax: 011-503-2501-2154  
 Ambassador René Antonio Leon Rodríguez, Salvadoran Embassy in Washington, DC ~ fax: (202) 232-3763  
 Paul Degler, El Salvador Desk at U.S. State Dept. ~ fax: 202-647-2597  
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: 1-202-458-3992  
 Florentín Meléndez, El Salvador member of Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: 1-202-458-3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Latta, LaTourette, Kaptur, Kucinich, Regula, Ryan, Sutton Tubbs Jones ~ via email  
 5/26/08 CIS\_El Salvador

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