

via fax 011 502 2383 8390

Lic. Alvaro Colom

President of Guatemala

via fax 011 502 2411 9124

Lic. Jose Amilcar Velasquez Zarate

Attorney General and Head of the Public Prosecutor's Office

August 12, 2008

Dear Sirs:

Once again we, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are compelled to write regarding our grave concern for the safety of **members of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (FAFG)**. On July 27, 28, and 29, **José Suasnavar**, deputy director of FAFG, received four text messages containing threats of bodily harm and even death.

This is the third letter we have sent you this year (see Feb. 21, 2008 and June 1, 2008) about the continuing threats to members of the FAFG, including José Suasnavar. In addition we have been expressing our concerns for the safety of FAFG to Guatemalan officials since at least 2003 (letters May 26, 2003; February 21, 2005; January 23, 2006; April 11, 2006).

We believe the increased threat level this year is related to the genocide case currently proceeding in Spain against high-ranking members of the military junta of the 1980s and also to the 1,460 official complaints of human rights violations during the conflict years delivered to the Public Prosecutor's Office in July by Guatemala's National Compensation Program.

In 2002 and 2006, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights asked the government of Guatemala to provide protection for members of FAFG and their relatives and to carry out an investigation into the numerous threats against them. However, the protection appears to have been inadequate. No one has yet been brought to justice for any of the threats they received.

Once more we remind you of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. **We again urge that you**

- take immediate steps to provide effective protection for FAFG members
- order an immediate and thorough investigation into the threats against José Suasnavar July 27-29 and those made on February 2 and 19 and May 22, identify those responsible, and bring them to justice without further delay.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

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 Jose Guillermo Castillo, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
 James Derham, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2334-8477
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
 Lic. Roger Haroldo Rodas Melgar, Foreign Minister~ via fax: 011 502 2331 8410
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 210/08 Guatemala

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