

Via fax: 011-503-224307857 or 2243-9930 Sr. Mauricio Funes President of El Salvador	Via fax: 011-503-2281-5959 Sr. Humerto Centeno Minister of Interior and Governance, El Salvador
Via fax: 011-503-2221-2137 Sr. Carlos Ascencio Director of National Civilian Police, El Salvador	Via fax: 011-503-2535-7170 or 2243-9930 Sr. Astor Escalante Saravia Acting Attorney General, El Salvador

August 12, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our grave concern and indignation regarding the murder of community activist **Gustavo Marcelo Rivera** from San Isidro in the department of Cabañas. His body was found in a well in the village of Agua Zarca on June 30. He had disappeared on June 18 after leaving his house for San Salvador. DNA tests had to be done to confirm the identity of the body. Reports from the National Civilian Police state that gang members were responsible for the murder, but community members reported that the body exhibited signs of torture techniques generally tied to targeted political assassinations.

Gustavo Rivera, director of the Casa de Cultura in San Isidro, was active in social justice and environmental struggles. He had received many death threats in response to his public denunciations of San Isidro Mayor Ignacio Bautista of the ARENA party. He was outspoken against attempted fraud in the municipal and legislative elections of January 18 and was active in the national movement against mining projects that threaten El Salvador's principal watersheds.

Four gang members, considered key suspects in the crime, have been arrested. Because there is sufficient evidence that this crime had political motivations, we believe that it was premeditated and that the intellectual authors have not been apprehended. If this murder is left in a state of impunity, it will generate a climate of intimidation and uncertainty for social leaders and activists, undermining the advances in the democratic process in El Salvador.

Therefore, **we strongly urge that you**

- carry out an impartial, exhaustive and effective investigation of the murder of Gustavo Marcelo Rivera to bring to justice the intellectual and material authors;
- ensure that the family of Gustavo Marcelo Rivera is compensated for their loss.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

Copies: Robert Blau, Charge d'Affaires, US Embassy to El Salvador ~ fax: 011-503-2501-2154
 Francisco Altshull, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of El Salvador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-234-3834
 Hillary Thompson, 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: (202)458-3992
 Florentin Meléndez, El Salvador member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 Saul Vanegas, Chief Sargeant of Public Security in San Isidro, Cabañas Dept ~ fax: 011-503-2386-3095
 Office of the Attorney General, Department of Cabañas ~ 011-503-2382-0208
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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