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| <p>Via fax: 011 502 2411 9124/9326 Lic. José Amilcar Velásquez Zarate Attorney General and Head of Public Prosecutor's Office of Guatemala</p> | <p>Via fax: 011 502 2413 8658 Lic. Raul Antonio Velásquez Ramos Minister of the Interior of Guatemala</p> |
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March 5, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We continue to be extremely concerned for the safety of members of the Resistance Front for the Defense of Natural Resources and People's Rights (FRENA) in San Marcos Department. On February 17, one of their leaders, **Octavio Roblero**, was killed as he left the FRENA office in the municipality of Malacatan near the Mexican border. He had received telephone death threats prior to this attack, which he believed to be connected to his activities with FRENA. He had also been pressing for progress in the official investigation into the death of his brother-in-law, Victor Gálvez, another leading FRENA member, who was killed in October 2009. A third FRENA leader, Evelinda Ramírez, was killed on January 13. (See our letter of Feb. 25, 2010.)

Other leading members of FRENA have received death threats. Since 2008, FRENA has been defending consumers' rights against alleged misconduct by an electricity company, including charging for services not provided, overcharging for services, and frequent power cuts in the region. FRENA believes the electricity company is acting in bad faith. FRENA has been involved in high level discussions with the company and the government's regulatory body and is calling for a public investigation and sanctions against the company. They are also campaigning to end the contract with the existing electricity company and to create a new local company which would be more accessible and give communities more control.

FRENA has identified 289 activists who may be at risk because of their work coordinating the organization's activities. None of these persons has been given protection by the authorities.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- call for an independent, thorough, and impartial investigation into the assassinations of Octavio Roblero, Evelinda Ramirez Reyes, and Victor Galvez, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide all necessary protection to the leading members of FRENA, in accordance with their wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202-745-1908
Stephen McFarland, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2334-8477
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202-458-3650
Brett Hamsak, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
Christopher Webster, Director, Office of Central American Affairs, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
US Senators Brown & Voinovich
US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA41/10/Guatemala

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