

Via Fax: 011 502 2411 9124 Licda. Maria Encarnación Mejía García de Contreras Acting Attorney General and Head of Public Prosecutor's Office, Guatemala	Via Fax: 011 502 2413 8658 Lic. Carlos Menocal Interior Minister of Guatemala
--	--

July 13, 2010

Dear Madam and Sir:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of **Marvin del Cid Acevedo**, a journalist at the national Guatemalan newspaper El Periódico, who has received several death threats after investigating corruption in public bodies. On June 24, he was phoned by a neighbor who told him that two women had just left his house. When he hurried back, he found his house had been broken into. The door was open; his wardrobe and archive of documents had been searched, his personal laptops and some money had been stolen and the words "you are going to die" had been written with a black marker pen across the bathroom wall.

On June 7, the day after his newspaper published some of his investigative reporting, he received two phone calls in which a male voice said "who is paying you...?" On June 8 he received another call which went silent. On June 29 there was another silent call that lasted 30 seconds (although he could hear faint voices in the background).

In recent months Marvin del Cid has been working on various investigations that have denounced corruption in three separate public bodies. He has also been a witness in a judicial case against a high-ranking member of the security forces in a case relating to a death.

In light of these facts, we **strongly urge** you to:

- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the break-in of Marvin del Cid Acevedo's house, the theft of personal items and the threats and acts of intimidation relevant to his work as an investigative journalist;
- take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection to him, in accordance with his wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: El Periódico ~ via fax: 011-502-2427-2361
 Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: (202) 745-1908
 Stephen McFarland, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2332-4993
 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
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA 146/2010-GUATEMALA

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