

via FAX: 011 502 2411 8168
Sra. Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey
 Attorney General of Guatemala

via FAX: 011 502 2413 8658
Sr. Mauricio López Bonilla
 Minister of the Interior of Guatemala

April 4, 2013

Dear Madam and Sir:

We are outraged at the assassination of peasant rights leader **Carlos Hernandez** and threats to peasant organization members **Omar Jerónimo** and **Damaso Aldana**.

Carlos Hernandez was a leading member of Camotán Peasant Farmers Association, the New Day Peasant Farmer Coordinating Body, and the Coordinating Body of Popular, Indigenous, Church, Trade Union and Peasant Organizations of the East. He was also on the executive committee of the National Trade Union of Health Workers (SNTSG) and the National Front for the Struggle (FNL).

On February 21 Carlos Hernández received a death threat by phone, following a meeting where he had spoken out against deforestation in the area. At 8.30am on March 8 as he was driving his pick-up truck in the municipality of Camotán in Chiquimula Department, two men on a motorcycle cut him off. He was killed when one man fired eight shots from a 9mm handgun.

In 2010 Amnesty International wrote to the Attorney General's Office regarding the disproportionate charges filed against Carlos Hernández, who had been charged with activities against national security, illegal meetings, and demonstration, relating to a protest in Camotán. They expressed concern that criminal charges were being used to suppress the work of legitimate community leaders after Hernández was convicted and ordered to refrain from participating in public and political gatherings for 1 year.

Omar Jerónimo and Damaso Aldana, members of the New Day Peasant Farmer Coordinating Body, received information that threats were made against them at a meeting. They fear for their safety following the killing of Carlos Hernández.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the murder of Carlos Hernández, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide all necessary protection to the members of New Day Peasant Farmer Coordinating Body, in accordance with their wishes; and
- ensure that all human rights defenders are able to carry out legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

CC: UDEGEGUA ~ via email
 Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
 Stephen McFarland, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2331-2348
 Dinah Shelton, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 Siobhan Sheils, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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