

via fax: 011 502 2221 4423 or 011 502 2239 0090

**Estimado Sr. Presidente**  
**Gen. Otto Fernando Pérez Molina**  
President of Guatemala

via fax: 011 502 2411 8168/9210

**Estimada Sra. Fiscal**  
**Lic. Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández**  
Attorney General of Guatemala

May 2, 2015

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are horrified and saddened at the assassination of environmental rights defender **Telésforo Odilio Pivaral González**, age 33, in the village of Las Nueces, San Rafael Las Flores municipality, in the Department of Santa Rosa. On April 5 at approximately 10:00am, he was waiting on a rural road for public transport to take him from his home in El Volcancito to Las Nueces when he was fired on by unknown assailants. He died immediately from bullet wounds to his skull, face and neck

Telésforo Odilio Pivaral González, a farmer, husband and the father of six children, ages 1 to 11, was an active member of the Committee in Defense of Life and Peace in San Rafael Las Flores, Santa Rosa (CDVPSRLF-SR). Through his work with this organization he helped coordinate local resistance to the “El Escobal” mining project within the San Rafael Las Flores region. The project, primarily concerned with silver extraction, is owned and operated by the Canadian mining company, Tahoe Resource Inc., and their Guatemalan partner, Minera San Rafael, S.A. It has been opposed by local communities since development began in 2011 because of concern about environmental damage, including pollution of water used for their crops. International human rights obligations require Guatemala to consult populations that could be affected by a mining project and require the consent of affected indigenous peoples. Communities near the Tahoe project, including indigenous Xinka peoples, have not been consulted (cf our letter of Feb 14 2013).

Because of our concern about the ongoing violence and persecution against human rights defenders and community leaders opposing mining projects throughout Guatemala and the Tahoe mine in particular, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Telésforo Odilio Pivaral González, publishing the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

cc: José Julio Alejandro Ligorria Carballido, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908  
Todd Robinson, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011 502 2326 4000  
James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3992  
Caitlyn Kennel, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via email: ~ [KennelCK@state.gov](mailto:KennelCK@state.gov)  
Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 4/8/2015\_Guatemala

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