

via fax: 011 502 2221 4423 or 011 502 2239 0090 Estimado Sr. Presidente Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre President of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 2411 8168/9210 Estimada Sra. Fiscal Lic. Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández Attorney General of Guatemala
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September 23, 2015

Dear President and Attorney General:

We are writing to express our deep concern for the safety and well-being of members of the human rights organization Center for Legal, Environmental and Social Action (CALAS). CALAS works to promote community participation and the collective rights of indigenous communities in relationship to environmental concerns. CALAS has been active in denouncing abuses committed by mining companies in Santa Rosa Department, particularly Tahoe Resources Inc. (a Canadian-US company) and its Guatemalan subsidiary Minera San Rafael S.A.

Since 2011, local communities have been opposed to the El Escobal silver mine in San Rafael Las Flores, owned and operated by Tahoe Resources Inc. and Minera San Rafael, S.A. They are concerned 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 living nearby, including indigenous Xinka peoples, have not been consulted (cf our letters of Feb 14, 2013 and May 2, 2015).

On the night of July 29, an unknown gunman on a motorcycle fired several shots outside the offices of CALAS. This incident occurred on the day before a scheduled hearing in which evidence would be brought against Alberto Rotondo, the security manager of the mine. Facing charges of assault and obstruction of justice, he is accused of ordering and then covering up an attack (on April 27, 2013), which injured seven members of the community of San Rafael Las Flores, Santa Rosa.

The attack on the CALAS offices is the latest of many attempts to intimidate members of the organization. In 2008, Dr. Yuri Giovanni Melini Salguero, Director of CALAS, was the target of an assassination attempt. He was the subject of death threats in April and July 2010 and in August 2011 (cf our letter of September 1, 2011). In April 2014 newspapers published defamatory articles about him.

Because of our concern for members of CALAS, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the firing of shots at the CALAS, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice, in accordance with international standards;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of all members of CALAS;
- 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

copies: 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
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur on the Rights of Afro-Descendants, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
 Caitlyn Kennel, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via email: ~ 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 8/8/2015_Guatemala

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

