

via fax: 011 502.238.17.34 Estimado Sr. Presidente Alejandro Baltazar 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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December 16, 2015

Dear President Maldonado and Attorney General Aldana:

We are very concerned about the threatening and abusive messages recently sent to **Rafael Maldonado**, Legal Director for the Guatemalan Centre for Environmental, Social and Legal Action (CALAS).

On November 30, Twitter user @Armarome78 posted messages to Rafael Maldonado that warned “Your time is up. I suggest you to run like a pig. . . Pre-warned warfare doesn’t kill people...Remember when I told you that your network of gangsters and corrupt people had little time left? You’re next. Hold on!”

On December 4, the Twitter account @sofiavargas78, which showed no previous activity, sent three messages to Rafael Maldonado accusing him of corruption and creating a “media show.” The account has since been suspended.

On November 30 Alberto Rotondo, Security Director of the San Rafael Las Flores Escobal mine, escaped his house arrest and his whereabouts are unknown. Alberto Rotondo was charged with ordering an attack by security guards on protestors outside the mine in 2013 that left seven wounded. CALAS has been involved in a civil suit against the mine for the attack, as well as past litigation regarding the mine’s operating license and alleged contamination. Rafael Maldonado has also represented CALAS in recent cases against the palm oil company REPSA, which is accused of having contaminated a river in Petén Department in June 2015. There have been previous threats to Rafael Maldonado and other members of CALAS (cf our letter of Sept 23).

The Escobal mine is a project of U.S.-Canadian company Tahoe Resources, and it has a bad human rights record. We have already written several letters to officials in Guatemala to protest the human rights abuses committed by employees of Tahoe or those associated with (or contracted by) Tahoe. There has been broad-based organized opposition by the local community since mining activity began. A plebiscite was held in affected communities in 2012; 98.3% of the people voted against mining.

The Unit for the Protection of Human Rights in Guatemala (UDEFEUGUA) recently requested protection measures for Rafael Maldonado from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. However, no measures have yet been granted. UDEFEUGUA documented 337 acts of aggression against human rights defenders in the first half of 2015. Almost 71% of those acts targeted indigenous leaders and defenders working on environmental and land rights issues. Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Rafael Maldonado and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide full and appropriate protection to Rafael Maldonado, in accordance with his wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

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 Todd Robinson, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011 502 2331 2348
 Thomas Lee, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via email LeeT2@state.gov
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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

