

via fax: 011 502 2221 4423 or 2221 4445

Sr. Jimmy Morales
President of Guatemala

via fax: 011 502 2411 8168 or 2411 9210

Lic. Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández
Attorney General of Guatemala

July 15, 2016

Dear President Morales and Attorney General Aldana:

We are stunned at the murder of journalist **Álvaro Alfredo Aceituno López**, age 64, Radio Director of *Radio Ilusión*. On June 25, unidentified assailants shot him multiple times in the street in front of his radio station in Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango Department. He later died in the hospital.

The slogan of his radio show, *Acontecer Coatepecano*, was “If you do not say it, who will?” The broadcast promoted community rights and focused primarily on significant issues in the Coatepeque community such as health, education, public safety, and the role of public administration. He would take calls during which people would criticize local officials and municipal programs.

This is the second attack in the last three months against journalists in this region of Coatepeque. On April 17 William Omar Monterroso Cabrera, a local reporter, was the victim of an armed attack in which he suffered severe injuries to his left hand. According to Carlos Lauría, Senior Coordinator of the Americas for the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), “The murder of Álvaro Alfredo Aceituno López is likely to further chill the climate for freedom of the press in Guatemala, where lawlessness and impunity already perpetuate a cycle of violence and intimidation.”

In light of death threats against human rights defenders we **strongly urge** that you take the following action:

- thoroughly and impartially investigate the murder of Álvaro Alfredo Aceituno López, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- take decisive action to protect members of the press and support their freedom to work; and
- fulfill Guatemala’s obligations to protect human rights defenders, pursuant to the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and under the Constitution.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and Christine Stonebraker-Martínez
Co-Coordinators

copies: Gladys Maritza Ruiz de Vielman, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
Todd Robinson, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011 502 2331 2348
Thomas Lee, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via email LeeT2@state.gov
Enrique Gil Botero, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: 202 458 3992
Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458 3650
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

06/28/16_CPJ_Guatemala

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