

via fax: 011 502 2411 8168 or 2411 9210 <b>Lic. Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández</b> Attorney General of Guatemala	via email: lbonilla@guatemala-embassy.org <b>Minister Libna Bonilla</b> Minister Counselor Embassy of Guatemala in Washington, DC
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November 25, 2016

Dear Attorney General Aldana and Minister Bonilla:

We are very troubled to learn of the assassination of environmental defender **Jeremy Abraham Barrios Lima**, assistant to the executive director of the Guatemalan Center for Legal, Environmental and Social Action (CALAS), and a former student leader.

He was in charge of managing sensitive information related to the high profile cases CALAS is litigating. In the afternoon of November 12, unknown assailants shot him in the head twice in Guatemala City, Zone 1, near a well-known restaurant. The perpetrators did not steal his two cellphones, his identity card, or a savings card. According to CALAS, Jeremy Abraham Barrios Lima did not receive any threats in the days prior to the murder. The Unit of Crimes Against Life in the Office of the General Prosecutor is in charge of the investigation. CALAS has requested that the investigation be moved to the Unit of Attacks Against Human Rights Activists.

(CALAS) is a non-governmental organization working to defend and promote the rights of indigenous peoples, including the right to a healthy environment. They provide legal representation and advice to several communities who are working against the exploration of projects that violate human rights and exploit natural resources. In 2011 Yuri Melini, director of CALAS, and Rafael Maldonado, legal counsel for CALAS, received death threats for campaigning against construction of a gas plant in a nature reserve in Izabal Department and for denouncing government mismanagement of nature reserves (cf our letter of Sept 1 2011).

According to the Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (UDEFEQUA), human rights defenders working on issues of the environment are the main group of activists attacked in Guatemala. We **strongly urge** that you

- initiate a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the murder of Jeremy Abraham Barrios Lima, identify both the material and intellectual perpetrators, and bring those responsible to justice;
- investigate the possibility that the assassination is a retaliation for the human rights work of the young leader and his activities with CALAS;
- work for the adoption of a Public Policy to Protect Defenders, in accordance with the minimum criteria set out by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of *Human Rights Defender v. Guatemala* (written judgment August 28, 2014)

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinators

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Gladys Marithza 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  
 Jose de Jesus Orozco Hernandez, Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458 3650  
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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

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