

via email: frivas@mingob.gob.gt Sr. Francisco Rivas Lara Minister of the Interior of Guatemala	via email: secretario@segob.gob.mx Sr. Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Minister of the Interior of Mexico
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June 21, 2017

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about hundreds of **Guatemalan people from the community of Laguna Larga, El Petén Department, who are stranded at the Mexico-Guatemala border** in temporary shelters and tents, without adequate access to water, food, or medical supplies. Amnesty International confirms that they include 13 infants under the age of one, 119 children under twelve, 82 adolescents, 32 elderly people and 151 adults. Some are suffering from diarrhea and fever, and there is little access to humanitarian support.

The families were forced to abandon their land when more than 1,000 Guatemalan security forces carried out a massive eviction, following a court order from a judge in San Andrés, El Petén. On June 2 they arrived on the Mexican side of the border with Guatemala, near La Candelaria, Campeche State, and established an improvised camp after travelling by foot for at least a day across remote jungles.

The eviction order was issued in the context of a long-standing land tenure dispute in the Tigre National Park, which is affecting several communities. The Natural Parks of Tigre and Sierra del Lacandón were created between 1989 and 1990. The peasant farmers living in those areas are settlers who arrived there in the 1970s as part of a state-promoted relocation program or their descendants. They did not learn that they were living inside a national park until the end of the armed conflict in 1996. Since then, several farmers have been accused of usurpation or land invasions. Since 1985, oil extraction had begun at the Xan wells located in the Laguna del Tigre Park. The Perenco company acquired the wells in 2001, after the creation of the parks, and continues to exploit the oil wells.

Amnesty International received information of another imminent eviction planned in the nearby community of Sacrificio El Reloj which would affect approximately 200 people. A pending eviction in La Mestiza de la Laguna del Tigre would impact dozens of other families. Because of this urgent situation, we **strongly urge**

- the Mexican and Guatemalan authorities to significantly enhance attention to basic humanitarian needs such as medical supplies, food, water and shelter and ensure that special protection for children, adolescents and elderly people without shelter is the first priority
- the Guatemalan authorities to promptly reinstate dialogue with affected communities to address long-standing land issues in the region
- the Mexican authorities to guarantee the human rights of those people who cross the border into Mexican territory and prioritize humanitarian objectives above immigration enforcement measures at this time.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Gerónimo Gutierrez Fernández, Ambassador of Mexico to the US ~ via fax: 202 833 4320
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 US Senators Brown & Portman and 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: