

<p>via email: TAldana@mp.gob.gt Lic. Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández Attorney General of Guatemala</p>	<p>via email: LTeleguario@mintrabajo.gob.gt Lic. Aura Leticia Teleguario Minister of Labor of Guatemala</p>
<p>via email: SMVasquez@mingob.gob.gt and FRivas@mingob.gob.gt Sr. Francisco Manuel Rivas Lara Minister of Interior of Guatemala</p>	<p>via email: DRamirez@pdh.org.gt and ACHernandez@pdh.org.gt Sr. Augusto Jordan Rodas Andrade Federal Attorney for Human Rights</p>

September 24, 2017

Dear Officials:

We are outraged at the assassination of union leader **Tomás Francisco Ochoa Salazar**, disputes secretary for the Bremen Union (SITRABREMEN). Two armed gunmen on a motorcycle shot him as he was leaving work at a meat-processing plant in Guatemala City on September 1. **Andy Noel Godinez**, also a union member, suffered non-life-threatening injuries in the incident.

SITRABREMEN is a young union that filed for official recognition in July 2016 but did not receive notice of its acceptance by the Labor Ministry until February of this year. Since then, there has been a campaign of retaliation, suspensions and harassment of SITRABREMEN union leaders and members, related to their organizing effort and subsequent attempt to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

Guatemala is one of the most dangerous places in the world for worker rights activists. Although it is a member of the International Labor Organization which obligates it to uphold and respect freedom of association, union activists are often illegally fired, threatened, attacked and murdered, and the perpetrators of the crimes go unpunished. Too often, your government denies that the murders of union members and leaders are connected to their activism in labor rights.

In June, retired farmworker Eugenio López, age 72, was killed when gunmen fired on a peaceful gathering of mostly senior citizens who have been unable to receive health and pension benefits from the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (IGSS) because their employer, San Gregorio, had failed to pay into the system the Social Security money they had been deducting from employees' wages for years (cf our letter of July 4).

Because of the continuing union repression, we **strongly urge** that you

- conduct an immediate and thorough investigation to apprehend the material and intellectual authors of the murder of Tomás Francisco Ochoa Salazar, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide security measures for the members of the SITRABREMEN union, especially members of the executive and consultative committees, the union's advisors, and to Tomas' wife and children as specified in the *Protocol Measures of Security for Union Members*;
- uphold Guatemala's obligations under ILO Conventions 87 and 98; and urge the employer, Carnes Procesadas, S.A. (Embutidos Bremen), to end its anti-union campaign and engage in good-faith collective bargaining.

Sincerely,

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

copies: Gladys Marithza Ruiz de Veilman, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ via fax 202 745 1908
 Marielos Zambrano, Presidential Commission for Human Rights ~ via email
 Todd D. Robinson, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via human rights officer Rain Bian, via email
 US State Dept, Guatemala Desk: Sarah Rupert ~ via email
 US State Dept, Office of International Labor Affairs: Ian T Brown ~ via email
 US State Dept, Western Hemisphere Affairs: Thomas S Opstal ~ via email
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 Paulo Vannuchi, Commissioner for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Solidarity Center_9/7/2017_Guatemala

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