

via email: aberger@mingob.gob.gt
Sr. Enrique Antonio Degenhart Asturias
Minister of the Interior of Guatemala

via email: fiscalgeneral@pm.lex.gob.gt
Lic. María Consuelo Porras Argueta
Attorney General of Guatemala

June 13, 2018

Dear Minister of the Interior Degenhart and Attorney General Porras Argueta:

We are outraged at the murders of indigenous leaders **Ramon Choc Sacrab, Florencio Pérez Nájera** and **Alejandro Hernández García**, which make a total of six human rights leaders who have been killed in less than a month.

On the evening of May 30, Ramon Choc Sacrab, an indigenous Q'echi' leader of Ixloq San Pedrito, Cobán Department, was brutally attacked by two unidentified men. He died on June 1. He was a regional leader of the Comité Campesino del Altiplano (CCD) who, on May 30, had participated in a march for justice for three human rights defenders who were murdered on May 9, May 10, and May 13 (cf our letter of May 23). The local police said the attack was not related to his work, but to a fight between intoxicated men. However, this version does not coincide with information from a witness and from local organizations. Amnesty International reached out to the Prosecutor's office, but was unable to get information.


On June 3, Florencio Pérez Nájera (42) and Alejandro Hernández García (40) did not return home from a meeting of the Campesino Development Committee (CODECA) in Llano Largo, Jutiapa Department. On the morning of June 4, their families found their bodies near the entrance of their homestead (*caserío*), killed by apparent machete wounds. As leaders of CODECA they defended the land, territory, and labor rights in their communities.

Jacobo Omar Jerónimo, the General Coordinator of "New Day" Ch'orti' Campesino Central Coordinator (CCCND), has reported several security incidents, including death threats and an illegal raid into CCCND's offices. A member of the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC) also reported receiving death threats related to her work over the last weeks.

We are greatly alarmed by these incidents of recurring violence against defenders working on rights related to land, territory, and the environment. We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the three murders described above, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures, in consultation with the defenders, to guarantee the safety of CCDA, CCCND, and CUC members at risk, in accordance with their wishes;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Guatemala are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinators


Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Manuel Espina, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ via website and email
Luis E. Arreaga, US Ambassador to Guatemala, in care of human rights officer Rain Bian ~ via email
Stefanie Fabrico, Guatemala Desk, US State Department ~ via email
Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman
US Representatives Beatty, 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: