

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

August 1, 2018

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

We are saddened and outraged by the assassination of indigenous and environmental human rights defender **Ángel Estuardo Quevedo** in Santa Rosa de Lima, Santa Rosa Department, on July 12. He was a member of the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa. The group has been organizing community opposition to the Escobal silver mine, owned by Canada-based Tahoe Resources and operated in partnership with Guatemala-based Minera San Rafael, S.A.

Since Tahoe Resources began the mega-scale mining project in 2011, local communities have been united in strong opposition because of concerns over environmental damage, including the contamination of water used for their crops. They have made a strong case that the state of Guatemala did not uphold its international human rights obligation to consult (and obtain consent from) local indigenous communities that would be affected by the mine. Their opposition has been shown through 18 community and municipal referenda, multiple legal actions, sits-ins, encampments, and protests. As a result, opposition leaders have suffered multiple human rights abuses committed by employees and contractors of Tahoe, as well as Guatemalan security forces. We have written several letters to officials in Guatemala to protest these abuses. Some have included shootings and killings:

October 2015: Alex Reynoso, Marlon Loy Domínguez, and Estuardo Bran Clavel were shot

April 2015: Telésforo Odilio Pivaral González was assassinated

April 2014: Alex Reynoso was shot, his 16-year-old daughter Merylyn Topacio Reynoso Pacheco killed

As one of the opposition organizers, Ángel Estuardo Quevedo was receiving death threats. He had been spending considerable time in Guatemala City at the Peaceful Resistance Camp set up outside the Constitutional Court to inform the public about the violations of indigenous rights committed by Tahoe and Minera San Rafael. The group was awaiting a crucial Constitutional Court ruling about the future of the Escobal mine when he was killed.

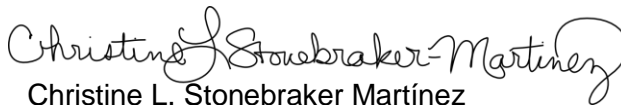
To end the repression against indigenous and environmental defenders, **we strongly urge that you**

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Ángel Estuardo Quevedo, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take appropriate measures, in accordance with the group's wishes, to guarantee the safety of members of the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa, and Jutiapa, who are facing increasing surveillance, intimidation and threats;
- make a public statement to condemn the murder of Ángel Estuardo Quevedo and insist that attacks, stigmatization, abuse, discrimination, or the killing of human rights defenders anywhere in Guatemala will not be tolerated

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinators



Christine L. 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 and 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: