

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 2, 2018

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

We are very saddened at the news of the assassination of **Juana Raymundo**, age 25, a nurse and member of the Campesino Development Committee (CODECA). She disappeared the night of July 27 from Nebaj in Quiché Department. On July 28 neighbors found her dead body, showing signs of torture, near a small river between the Nebaj and Acambalam communities.

Juana Raymundo joined CODECA's Youth group (Juventud de CODECA) five years ago, and was recently elected to the Executive Committee of the Movement for the Liberation of Peoples (MLP). She was involved in engaging and training other women to join the movement.

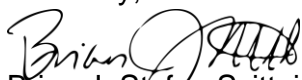
CODECA, a human rights organization based in Suchitepéquez Department, has worked on improving wage conditions for farmers, land reform, and nationalization of electric energy. Its members are continuously being targeted because of their work. In a recent meeting with Amnesty International, CODECA members shared their concerns about the number of territory, land, and environmental rights defenders who have been harassed or killed in Guatemala over the past three months, with little progress on investigations into the attacks.

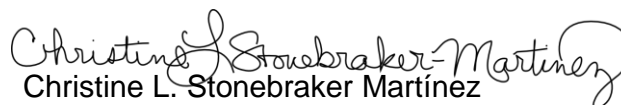
This recent upsurge in assassinations began after May 2, when, at a public rally, President Jimmy Morales referred to CODECA as a criminal organization. Within a week, the assassinations of CODECA members began. By June 4, seven indigenous leaders and human rights defenders had been killed in Guatemala, five of whom were members of CODECA. Members of the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (CCDA) have also been killed (cf our letters of May 23 and June 13). Juana Raymundo is at least the 8th human rights defender assassinated in Guatemala in less than three months.

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

- initiate a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the killing of Juana Raymundo, and other human rights defenders from CODECA and CCDA, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- take all measures necessary to guarantee the safety of all at-risk members of CODECA and CCDA, in accordance with their wishes;
- make a public statement to condemn these wave of killings, publicly recognize the important and legitimate work of all human rights defenders, and refrain from using language that discredits, stigmatizes, abuses, disparages or discriminates against them

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: