

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 Porrás Argueta Attorney General of Guatemala
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September 25, 2018

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

We are extremely saddened and outraged at the assassination of **Juana Ramírez Santiago**, age 57, a women's rights advocate and member of the Mayan Ixil community in Nebaj municipality, Quiché Department.

Juana Ramírez was a midwife and a founding member of the Network of Ixil Women, which provides psychological counseling, social help and birthing assistance to women in rural areas. She had received death threats for her work supporting women victims of violence and had filed a complaint with the Public Ministry (MP).


On September 21 Juana Ramírez was on her way to bring dinner to her husband, Pedro Chel Bernal, at the hardware store where he works as a watchman. It is reported that she was approached by at least two people, possibly teenagers. Neighbors heard four shots and then found her lying on the street. She was already dead when emergency personnel arrived.

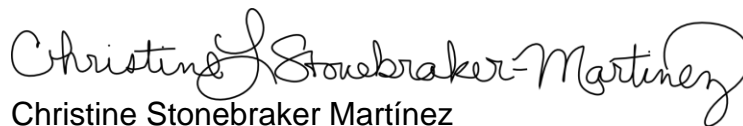
This murder follows that of Juana Raymundo, a 25-year old Ixil nurse and member of the Committee of Campesino Development (CODECA), who was killed in Nebaj on July 28 (cf our letter of August 2). Juana Ramirez Santiago is at least the ninth human rights defender assassinated in Guatemala in less than three months.

We **strongly urge** that you

- initiate a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the killing of Juana Ramirez, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- take all measures necessary to guarantee the safety of all at-risk members of the Network of Ixil Women.

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
 Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women, 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: