

via email: aberger@mingob.gob.gt Sr. Enrique Antonio Degenhart Asturias Minister of the Interior of Guatemala	via email: fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com Lic. María Consuelo Porrás Argueta Attorney General of Guatemala
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October 22, 2018

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

We are deeply concerned about armed attacks by the Policia Nacional Civil (PNC) against members of the **Peaceful Resistance Movement of the Ixquisis Microregion**, San Mateo Ixtatán municipality, Huehuetenango Department. The Peaceful Resistance is an organization of indigenous communities formed in response to human rights violations by the hydroelectric company Energía y Renovación, S.A. (formerly known as PDH). The company's mining and hydroelectric projects are endangering the indigenous communities' access to land, water and freedom of movement.

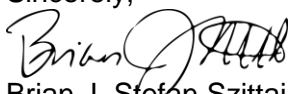
On October 9 approximately 300 heavily armed anti-riot agents of the Policia Nacional Civil (PNC) attacked a peaceful demonstration of the group with gun shots and tear gas. At least six people were injured. On October 12 another attack occurred in the nearby community of El Pojom. **Alfonso Miguel Juan**, age 30, a member of the Peaceful Resistance, was severely injured in the throat when a former police officer attacked him with a firearm.

We are deeply disturbed by the militarized repression being implemented against the Peaceful Resistance Movement of the Ixquisis Microregion. In 2014 Energía y Renovación, S.A reinstated a military garrison at their facilities which had been located there during the civil war. Since then, the garrison has functioned as a station for the military and the National Civil Police (PNC) who, along with private security companies, regularly attack the Peaceful Resistance and community members. In 2017 there were more than 75 reported attacks against members of the Peaceful Resistance. In 2018 they have been subject to threats, excessive use of force against protesters, smear campaigns, and criminalization attempts aimed at dividing the population and weakening social support for the demonstrations (cf our letter of July 23).

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the police violence, threats, acts of intimidation and smear campaigns against peaceful protesters in Ixquisis, San Mateo Ixtatán, Huehuetenango, and members of the Peaceful Resistance of Ixquisis Microregion, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the members of the Peaceful Resistance of Ixquisis Microregion, in consultation with them;
- 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, including their right to peaceful protest.

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-coordinators


 Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Manuel Espina, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ via website and email
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 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

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

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