

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 Porras Argueta
Attorney General of Guatemala

December 24, 2018

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

We are extremely concerned about the increasing harassment of members of the indigenous association **Central Campesina Ch'ortí Nuevo Día (CCCND)** involved in environmental defense, including surveillance of CCCND Coordinator **Norma Sánchez**, threats to member **Ubaldo García**, and the murder of member **Elizandro Pérez**.

CCCND works alongside indigenous Maya Ch'orti' communities in Chiquimula Department, providing legal support and visibility to the communities of Jocotán, Olopa and Camotán, which are facing threats to their land, environmental, and cultural rights because of hydroelectric and mining projects in their territories.

In October 2018, the CCCND began a protest against the Cantera los Manantiales, an antimony sulfide mine in Olopa linked to the mining companies Encamin, Minera Andinc, Construcciones Totales, and Puerto Santo Tomás. The mining began without respect for the indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent. Mining continues, despite a municipal agreement that prohibits mining activities in the area where Ch'orti groups live. CCCND has unsuccessfully demanded that authorities close the mine.

There were multiple incidents of harassment of CCCND members in November.

Nov 1: Phones and money were taken from the home of CCCND Coordinator **Norma Sanchez** and CCCND member **Ubaldo García** while they were asleep.

Nov 5: After returning from a meeting with the Ministry of Energy and Environment, Norma Sánchez noticed a person circling her house. A motorcycle kept driving around the house that same night.

Nov 10: An unidentified car followed a CCCND march to the mining site.


Nov 18: During an assembly in which CCCND asked the municipality to assist with talks with the mining companies, a witness overheard company informants sharing over the phone the locations of CCCND members. That same day a man connected to the Encamin mining company was seen offering 25,000 Quetzales to anyone who agreed to kill CCCND member **Ubaldo García**.

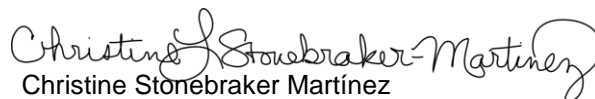
Nov 21: CCCND member **Elizandro Pérez** was found dead in his bedroom shortly after witness saw armed persons encircling his home. He had received phone calls and messages threatening his life.

We believe that that all these actions are linked to CCCND's legitimate work defending land and human rights work. We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out immediate, thorough and impartial investigations into the harassment, threats and attacks against CCCND members, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that the investigations into the death of Elizandro Pérez are thorough and impartial, that the results are published, and that those responsible are brought to justice;
- guarantee in all circumstances that environmental and human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate 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
Steven Kenoyer, 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, Ryan ~ via email

04 Dec 2018_Frontline_Guatemala

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