

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

July 3, 2019

Dear Minister of the Interior and Attorney General:

We are extremely concerned about the continuing attacks against the **Nuevo Dia Ch'orti Indigenous Association (CCCND)** in Olopa municipality in Chiquimula Department. CCCND provides legal support and visibility to indigenous Chortí communities. They face repeated human rights violations and threats to their land, environmental, and cultural rights because of hydroelectric and mining projects in their territories (cf our letter of Dec 24 2018).

In October 2018, the CCCND began a series of protests against the Cantera los Manantiales, an antimony sulfide mine in Olopa, with links to the mining companies INCAMIN, S.A., Minera Andinc, Construcciones Totales, and Puerto Santo Tomás. In February 2019, the Ministry of Environment ruled that the mining project had not fulfilled the legal and environmental requirements to operate; they gave the project 15 days to cease work and remove their machinery from the site. Following this ruling, CCCND set up a peaceful protest near an entrance to the mine to pressure local authorities to implement the Ministry of Environment ruling. Since then they have experienced gunshots fired in the air, threatening phone messages, and daily surveillance. On May 2 a former member of CCCND was killed in connection with its work. Following this, smear campaigns and security incidents have increased.

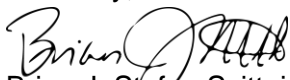
On June 20 and June 25, there were two attempted break-ins at CCCND's offices in which windows were broken and TV cameras were manipulated; several instruments were left in the office that may have been used in the attempted break-in.

On July 1 the owner of Cantera los Manantiales violently tried to break-up the peaceful presence that Ch'ortí communities have maintained since February. When members of the community challenged him, he and his son violently attacked them, and called their personal security staff, who, with others, repeatedly shot at the CCCND building. They attacked indigenous leader **Irma Mendez**, the widow of CCCND leader Elizandro Pérez who was assassinated in November 2018 (cf our letter Dec 24 2018), leaving her with facial bruises. Police arrived to gather evidence, but no one was arrested.

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack against Irma Mendez and attempted break-ins at the offices of CCCND, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the security and integrity of all members of CCCND and their families, as well as all indigenous Maya Ch'ortí people, in consultation with them
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the right of indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent regarding the implementation of projects that might affect them, as decreed in the International Labor Organization Convention 169.

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, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 05/31\_&\_07/04\_Guatemala

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