

President Alejandro Giamattei
 President of Guatemala
 c/o Secretary of Social Communication of the Presidency
 via email: scolocho@scspr.gob.gt

October 26, 2020

Dear President Giamattei:

We are strongly opposed to your unilateral decision on October 5 to close the offices of the **Secretary of Peace (SEPAZ)**, the **Secretary of Agrarian Affairs (SAA)**, and the **Presidential Commission for the Coordination of Executive Policy on Human Rights (COPREDEH)**. These institutions were created to comply with the Peace Accords of 1996 and Guatemala's international obligations to seek justice for all human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.

SEPAZ is responsible for promoting a culture of peace in line with the values, conduct and traditions of Guatemala and to discourage recourse to violence. The National Reparations Program (PNR), which functions under SEPAZ, will be totally paralyzed with its closing. SAA is in charge of ensuring compliance with the agrarian and rural development aspects of the Peace Accords. COPREDEH formulates and promotes human rights policy, including coordination of police protection for human rights and labor activists. COPREDEH, which generally operates without political or party interference, also monitors the State's compliance with its international obligations. It

Your government has replaced SEPAZ, SAA, and COPREDEH with the Commission for Peace and Human Rights (COPADEH). This action is unconstitutional because your office does not have the authority to break the commitments assumed by the State in the Peace Accords. The Government Agreement 100-2020 of July 30 does not specifically assume the functions of the SEPAZ, the SAA and the COPREDEH, nor does it have a budget allocation in the General State Budget for 2021. This is evidence of abandonment of the Peace Accords, the negating of State responsibility for grave violations of human rights in the past, and the ignoring of the rights to reparations for victims of state violence.

We continue our years of solidarity and advocacy for the human rights of the people of Guatemala. We join with the international community in **urgently demanding** that

- the Constitutional Court of Guatemala immediately suspend the closure of the SEPAZ, the SAA and the COPREDEH
- the Central Government respect the commitments of the State of Guatemala to peace and human rights, and cease authoritative and anti-democratic actions
- the Guatemalan Congress fulfill their oversight function and not remain passive in the face of arbitrary decisions.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Sr. Guillermo Castillo Reyes, Vice President of the Republic of Guatemala ~ via email
 Lica. María Consuelo Porras Argueta, Attorney General of Guatemala ~ via email
 Constitutional Court of Guatemala ~ via email
 Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ via email, US mail
 IAHR: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 OAS: Luis Raúl Estevez, Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the Organization of American States in WDC ~ via email
 OACNUDH: Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala ~ via email
 US State Department: Bryan Koontz, Guatemala Desk ~ via email
 NISGUA ~ via email
 Guatemala Human Rights Commission-USA ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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