

Lica. María Consuelo Porras Argueta
Attorney General of Guatemala
15 avenida 15-16 zona 1, Barrio Gerona
Ciudad Guatemala, Guatemala
via email: fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com

December 31, 2020

Dear Attorney General Porras:

We are extremely disturbed about a threatening letter mailed to journalists **Marvin del Cid** and **Sonny Figueroa** in Guatemala City.

On December 7, Marvin del Cid, founder of the local press freedom group Artículo 35 and a contributing reporter to the investigative news website *Vox Populi*, found a letter in his home mailbox with a message threatening him and Sonny Figueroa, who is the director of *Vox Populi* and also works as a stringer for The Associated Press. The message warned the journalists to refrain from investigating and publishing their work "or else you'll see."

Both journalists specialize in reporting on alleged corruption. In recent months they have published a series of investigations into alleged influence-peddling among individuals connected to President Alejandro Giammattei. They have notified the Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Journalists about the letter, but to date, do not know if authorities are investigating it.

On September 11, police detained Sonny Figueroa near the Presidential Palace in Guatemala City and accused him of disturbing public order after he sought assistance following a robbery. A judge ordered him to be placed under an international travel ban and to report for monthly check-ins with the Public Ministry. On October 19, the Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Journalists announced the arrest of two police officers who are currently under investigation for alleged abuse of power connected to Figueroa's detention. Both journalists have reported other incidents of intimidation and obstruction this year, including police harassment in public spaces, an online smear campaign, and being singled out by President Giammattei for criticism at public events.

These are further examples of the intimidation and harassment against journalists whose investigative reporting is making a vital contribution to democracy in Guatemala. We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the threats against Marvin del Cid and Sonny Figueroa, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- ensure that all journalists and human rights defenders can pursue their work without fear of intimidation or harassment

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Licda. Hilda Pineda, Prosecutor of the Human Rights Section of the Public Ministry ~ via email
Lic. Augusto Jordán Rodas Andrade, Procurador de los Derechos Humanos de Guatemala ~ via email
Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ via email, US mail
OAS: Luis Raul Estevez, Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the Organization of American States in WDC ~ via email
IAHCR: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
IAHCR: Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
OACNUDH: Mika Kanervavuori, Representante de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala ~ via email
US State Department: Guatemala Desk ~ via email
US Embassy: William Popp, Ambassador of the US to Guatemala, c/o of Mary Nameth, human rights officer ~ via email
Natalie Southwick, Central and South America Program Coordinator, Committee to Protect Journalists ~ via email
NISGUA ~ via email
Guatemala Human Rights Commission-USA ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
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: