

# IRTF

## InterReligious Task Force on Central America

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**Lica. María Consuelo Porras Argueta**

Attorney General of Guatemala

via email: [fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com](mailto:fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com)

August 4, 2021

Dear Attorney General Porras:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force on Central America (IRTF), are deeply distressed over the multiple assassinations of human rights leaders of the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (CCDA). **Regilson Choc Cac**, a Q'eqchi Mayan sixteen-year-old land rights defender and member of CCDA, was shot to death on July 20 at 10:30pm in San Juan Tres Ríos, Cobán, Alta Verapaz. Regilson Choc Cac is the third CCDA leader murdered in this community. On June 8, 2016, Daniel Choc was murdered, and on May 13, 2018, Mateo Chaman was murdered. Neither case was successfully prosecuted.

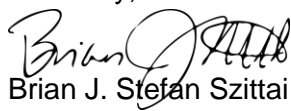
For more than ten years, the CCDA Committee in San Juan Tres Ríos has petitioned the government to grant them legal ownership of land which is being disputed with the owner of the Rancho Alegre estate. Regilson Choc Cac was a community leader who had participated in dialogues related to the land dispute. CCDA members are being unjustly criminalized for usurpation of land, while murders of their own CCDA members have not been resolved. According to the CCDA, 962 warrants for the arrests of campesino leaders have been issued, and two CCDA members (Q'eqchi Mayan campesinos Jorge Coc Coc and Marcelino Xol Cucul) have been unjustly sentenced to 35 years in prison.

Human rights defenders are facing continued assassination with impunity and gross criminalization. We, members of IRTF, are deeply distressed about the murders and criminalization of CCDA members. Moreover, we are concerned about the lack of state protection of these human rights defenders.

We, the undersigned, urge the Guatemalan authorities to:

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Regilson Choc Cac, publish the results, capture both the material and intellectual actors, and bring them to justice, in accordance with international standards
- reinstate an investigation into the murders of CCDA San Juan Tres Ríos members Daniel Choc and Mateo Chaman and bring the those responsible to justice
- implement the necessary measures to guarantee the physical safety and psychological integrity of all the members of CCDA, in strict accordance with their wishes
- guarantee that all human rights defenders, in particular Indigenous and environmental rights defenders, are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of restrictions or reprisals in Guatemala.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ email, US mail  
IACHR: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
OACNUDH: Mika Kanervavuori, Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
US State Department: Guatemala Desk in Washington, DC  
US State Department: William Popp, US Ambassador to Guatemala, in care of human rights officer Sarahann Yeh ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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