

Ministerio Público
Attorney General María Consuelo Porras Argueta
15 Avenida 15-16 Zona 1,
Edificio Gerona, 8 Nivel
Guatemala, CA

1 August, 2018

Dear Attorney General María Consuelo Porras Argueta:

We are writing to express our profound sadness and concern at the killing of human rights defender Ángel Estuardo Quevedo in the municipality of Santa Rosa de Lima on July 12, 2018. Estuardo resided in the municipality of Casillas and was a member of the Peaceful Resistance movement of Santa Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa. He played an important role in making visible broad community opposition to the Escobal silver mine, a Canadian mining investment project, owned by Tahoe Resources. Estuardo and his fellow human rights defenders have worked tirelessly and at great personal risk to raise awareness about the ways in which Tahoe and its subsidiary Minera San Rafael have violated their human rights.

Before his death, Estuardo spent considerable time in Guatemala City at the peaceful resistance camp set up outside the Constitutional Court to inform the public about the violations of Indigenous rights committed by Tahoe and Minera San Rafael. He was awaiting a crucial Constitutional Court ruling about the future of the Escobal mine when he was killed. Estuardo lived and died as a courageous human rights defender and was part of a community still facing terrible risks to stand up for their rights.

We lament the fact that the State of Guatemala did not protect Estuardo, who had received threats in the days leading up to his murder. He sadly joins a growing list of human rights defenders killed in Guatemala since the beginning of 2018 for standing up to protect land, water and the environment.

We call on you to thoroughly, impartially and promptly investigate his murder. As outlined in the newly adopted *General Instruction to investigate crimes against human rights defenders*, your investigation should include the theory that the attack was in retaliation for his legitimate human rights defence work.

In order to show that Guatemala is serious about ending the ongoing wave of killings of human rights defenders, we strongly urge you to:

- publicly condemn the murder of Ángel Estuardo Quevedo

- publicly insist that attacks, stigmatization, abuse, discrimination or the killing of human rights defenders anywhere in Guatemala will not be tolerated,
- Arrest and bring to justice those responsible for his killing.

We also urge you to take appropriate measures, in accordance with the group's wishes, to guarantee the safety of other members of the peaceful resistance movement of Santa Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa, who are facing increasing surveillance, intimidation and threats. Doing so will send a strong signal that the Guatemalan state recognizes the important and legitimate work of human rights defenders and could prevent further attacks.

As civil society organisations across Canada and the United States, we again raise our voices together to call on the Government of Guatemala to comply with its international obligations to protect human rights defenders and to take decisive action to prevent further violence against peaceful protesters.

Signed,

Americas Policy Group (APG) of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation

Amnesty International Canada - English Speaking Branch

Amnesty International Canada - Francophone Branch

Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network (ARSN)

BC CASA

Canadian Jesuits international

Casa Maria Catholic Worker

Catalyst Project

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America

CoDevelopment Canada

Committee for Human Rights in Latin America (CDHAL)

Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)

Cooperation Operation, Chicago

Copper Country Guatemala Accompaniment Project

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW – STTP)

Democratic Socialists of America, Salem Oregon

Denver Justice and Peace Committee

EarthNexus

Earthworks

Friends of Latin America

Guatemala Partnership Committee, Congregational Church of Needham

International League of Peoples' Struggle, Portland

Inter Pares
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission
Justice Travel
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Kickapoo/Guatemala Accompaniment Project (KGAP)
Lakes Area Group Organizing in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (LAGOS)
Latin America Task Force of Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
MiningWatch Canada
Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network (BTS)
Metro New York Catholic Climate Movement
Mining Injustice Solidarity Network
Mining Justice Alliance
Native American Films, Brooklyn
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
New Hampshire-Vermont Guatemala Accompaniment Project
Nicaragua Center for Community Action (NICCA)
Nobel Women's Initiative
Oberlin Students in Solidarity with Guatemala (OSSGUA)
Oregon PeaceWorks
Partners for Arlington and Guatemala (PAG)
Pax Christi, Clinton Iowa
Portland Central America Solidarity Committee (PCASC)
Queers for Climate Change
Rights Action
Rose Haven, Portland
Santa Elena Project of Accompaniment (SEPA)
School of Living
School of the Americas Watch, Los Angeles
Sister Parish, Inc.
Siti Maimunah, Mining Advocacy Network (JATAM), Indonesia
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)
Stuart Center for Mission, Educational Leadership & Technology
Task Force on the Americas
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Portland
Workers World Portland
Xun Biosphere Project

Cc:

Karolina Guay, Political Advisor of the Canadian Embassy in Guatemala

His Excellency Luis E. Arreaga, US Ambassador to Guatemala

His Excellency Carlos Humberto Jiménez Licona, Guatemalan Ambassador to Canada

Ministerio Público
Fiscal General María Consuelo Porrás Argueta
15 Avenida 15-16 Zona 1,
Edificio Gerona, 8 Nivel
Guatemala, CA

1 August, 2018

Estimada Fiscal General María Consuelo Porrás Argueta:

Escribimos para expresar nuestra profunda tristeza y preocupación por el asesinato del defensor de derechos humanos, Ángel Estuardo Quevedo, en la municipalidad de Santa Rosa de Lima, el 12 de julio del 2018. Estuardo fue residente de la municipalidad de Casillas y miembro de la Resistencia Pacífica de Santa Rosa, Jalapa y Jutiapa. Jugaba un papel importante en visibilizar la oposición amplia en contra de la mina de plata Escobal, de la empresa minera Canadiense Tahoe Resources. Estuardo y sus compañeros y compañeras defensores y defensoras de derechos humanos han trabajado incansablemente, arriesgando su seguridad personal para denunciar las violaciones de sus derechos humanos por parte de Tahoe y su subsidiaria Minera San Rafael.

Antes de su muerte, Estuardo participó mucho en la resistencia pacífica en frente de la Corte Constitucional en la Ciudad de Guatemala cuyo propósito es informar al público sobre violaciones de los derechos Indígenas por Tahoe y Minera San Rafael. Cuando fue asesinado, Estuardo estaba a la espera de una decisión importante de la Corte Constitucional sobre el futuro de la mina Escobal. Estuardo murió como vivió: un valiente defensor de derechos humanos y miembro de una comunidad que sigue enfrentando muchos riesgos por exigir el respeto de sus derechos.

Lamentamos que el Estado de Guatemala no protegió Estuardo, quien había recibido amenazas días antes de su muerte. Tristemente, él se suma a la creciente lista de defensores de derechos humanos quienes han sido asesinados en Guatemala por defender su tierra, agua y ambiente desde principios de 2018.

Exigimos una investigación pronta, plena, e imparcial sobre su asesinato. Como se ha descrito en la nueva Instrucción General para la investigación de crímenes contra defensores de derechos humanos, su investigación debe incluir la teoría de que el ataque fue una represalia por su trabajo legítimo en defensa de los derechos humanos.

Para mostrar que Guatemala toma en serio su responsabilidad de parar los asesinatos de los defensores de derechos humanos, exigimos que

- se condene públicamente el asesinato de Ángel Estuardo Quevedo;
- se declare públicamente que habrá cero tolerancia por los ataques, la estigmatización, los abusos, la discriminación, y los asesinatos de defensores de derechos humanos en toda Guatemala; y

- se garantice que los ataques sean investigados adecuadamente y los responsables sean encarcelados y llevados a la justicia.

También insistimos que se toma las medidas adecuadas, según los deseos del grupo local, para garantizar la seguridad de los miembros de la resistencia pacífica de Santa Rosa, Jalapa y Jutiapa, quienes están sufriendo cada día más vigilancia, intimidación y amenazas. Con esto, el Estado de Guatemala mandará un mensaje fuerte, reconociendo la importancia y la legitimidad del trabajo en defensa de los derechos humanos, y ayudará prevenir más ataques.

Las organizaciones de la sociedad civil internacional quienes firmamos esta carta levantamos nuestras voces otra vez para exigir que el Gobierno de Guatemala cumple con sus obligaciones internacionales para proteger las defensoras y los defensores de derechos humanos y que tome medidas contundentes para prevenir más violencia contra las resistencias pacíficas.

Atentamente,

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CC: Embajada de Canadá en Guatemala
Embajada de los Estados Unidos en Guatemala
Embajada de la República de Guatemala en Canadá