



October 6, 2006

Mr. Juan Luis Florido  
Attorney General  
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Dear Mr. Florido,

We write to express our grave concerns regarding reports of persistent acts of intimidation and threats against members of the National Council of Marginalized Peoples of Guatemala, CONAPAMG. We are especially concerned about threats against CONAPAMG's General Coordinator, Roly Escobar Ochoa and CONAPAMG's Financial Secretary, Adolfo Lobos. On August 18, 2006, Carmen Sagastume, CONAPAMG member and founder of the Carmen del Monte community, was shot 13 times and killed in front of her house. Before killing Ms Sagastume, the two men asked for her husband, Adolfo Lobos, Financial Secretary of CONAPAMG. On September 10, 2006, Mr. Escobar Ochoa, CONAPAMG's General Coordinator, was informed that armed individuals linked to those who killed Ms Sagastume were in the community of Carmen del Monte threatening to kill him. Mr. Escobar Ochoa and Adolfo Lobos have subsequently been the victim of repeated persecution and death threats and have now gone into hiding.

We express our concern for the safety of Mr Escobar Ochoa and Mr Adolfo Lobos. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) all individuals have the right to life (article 6); and the right to liberty and security of person (article 9). Where those rights are breached, as was the case with the killing of Ms Sagastume and the threats against Mr Escobar Ochoa and Adolfo Lobos, the victims have a right to an effective remedy (article 2(3)). Guatemala has acceded to the ICCPR and its obligations under articles 2(3), 6 and 9 include providing its citizens with adequate security and investigating violations of their rights. In accordance with its obligations under international law, we therefore request that you:

1. Perform a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the murder of Carmen Sagastume and the threats received by Mr Escobar Ochoa and Adolfo Lobos.
2. Publicize the results of the investigation and ensure that the perpetrators of the murder and threats are charged appropriately.
3. Provide members of CONAPAMG with the protection measures they desire in order to guarantee their safety.


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4. Keep us informed of the investigation into these incidents and of the steps taken to ensure the safety of Roly Escobar Ochoa, Adolfo Lobos and other members of CONAPAMG.

Sincerely,



Neil Hicks  
Director Human Rights Defenders Program  
Human Rights First

cc.

Carlos Vielmann, Ministry of the Interior  
Sergio Fernando Morales Alvarado, Human Rights Ombudsman  
James Derham, US Ambassador to Guatemala  
Jose Guillermo Castillo Villacort, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US