

via fax: 011 502 2251 9382

Edwin Johann Spirisen

Director General of the National Civil Police, Guatemala

via fax: 011 502 251 2218

Juan Luis Florido

Attorney General, Guatemala

July 1, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the latest in a series of acts of violence and intimidation against members of the Association for the Development of Quetzal City (ASIDECQ) in Guatemala Department. On May 24, **Oscar Humberto Duarte Paiz**, a member of the board of ASIDECQ, was kidnapped by six men carrying machine guns and wearing bullet-proof vests. He has not been seen since. Three other board members, **René Guzman Quiñonez**, **David Alarcon**, and **José Cuellar**, have also been victimized through intimidation. These egregious acts are most certainly a consequence of the fact that ASIDECQ members are defenders of human rights and have demanded justice for those who were "disappeared" during Guatemala's internal armed conflict.

In light of these facts, we strongly urge you to

- order a full and impartial investigation into the kidnapping and disappearance of Oscar Duarte and see that those responsible are brought to justice;
- take all necessary actions to find Oscar Duarte and ensure his safety; and
- conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the acts of intimidation against other members of ASIDECQ, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice

We are concerned that attacks against human rights defenders have increased over the past few years: 122 in 2004, 224 in 2005, and 65 during January-April 2006, according to the Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit. We remind you that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. We will make sure that our elected officials here in the United States are made aware of these and other human rights violations in Guatemala.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Human rights organization: Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos ~ via fax
Ambassador José Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax
Minister of the Interior Carlos Vielman ~ via fax
President of the Republic of Guatemala Oscar Berger Perdomo ~ via fax
Ambassador James Derham ~ via fax
Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax
US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email
US Reps Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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