



InterReligious Task Force on Central America
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via fax: 011 503 2 2443 7857/9930 Sr. Elías Antonio Saca , President of El Salvador	Via fax: 011 503 2222 0655 Oscar Humberto Luna , Ombudsman for the Defense of Human Rights
via fax: 011 503 2249 8613 Lic. Félix Garrid Safie , Attorney General of El Salvador	

January 30, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We are horrified to learn of the assassinations on January 9 of **Wilber Moises Funes**, mayor of Alegría municipality, Usulután Deartment, and of **Zulma Rivera**, a 22-year old municipal worker in charge of contracts and purchasing, who were shot and killed while riding in an official vehicle. They were traveling to a site to supervise the construction of a sports facility in the Las Casistas area of the municipality when unknown assailants intercepted them and opened fire. Rivera was killed immediately, while Funes died in transit to a hospital in Santiago de Maria.

Wilber Moises Funes, 33, one of the youngest mayors in the country, took office in May 2006 and was a member of the FMLN, El Salvador's main opposition party. He was dedicated to creating projects for the benefit of the poorest communities in his area while defending the interest of public services still owned by the municipality. Prior to his election in 2006, the preceding municipal administration of the ARENA party handed over the Laguna Alegría Natural Park to a community development association called ADESCAM. The privatization of this valuable resource was part of a broader ARENA strategy to leave newly-elected FMLN municipal governments without the resources to function.

Prior to his assassination, Funes had been threatened and harassed.

We **strongly urge** that you authorize an immediate, independent, and objective investigation into the assassinations of Wilber Moises Funes and Zulma Rivera, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Charles L. Glazer, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador ~ fax: 011-503-2501-2154
Rene Antonio León Rodríguez, El Salvador Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-234-3834
Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ fax: (202)458-3992
Florentín Meléndez, El Salvador member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ fax: (202)458-3992
Paul Degler, El Salvador Desk at U.S. State Dept. ~ fax: 202-647-2597
U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich and U.S. Representatives Latta, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

LAS 1/11 El Salvador

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