

via fax: 011 502 2221 4423 <b>Lic. Alvaro Colom</b> President of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 2413 8658 <b>Francisco Jose Jimenez Irungaray</b> Minister of the Interior of Guatemala
via fax: 011 502 2411 9124 <b>Lic. Jose Amilcar Velasquez Zarate</b> Attorney General and Head of the Public Prosecutor's Office	

September 1, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned for the life of **Amilcar de Jesus Pop Ac**, President of the Mayan Lawyers' Association. As he drove through Guatemala City on the night of August 1, a white pick-up truck without license plates followed him and forced him to stop. Two masked men armed with pistols tried to force open Amilcar Pop's car, shouting "you don't learn. We're going to kill you..." Amilcar Pop managed to escape, but the pick-up followed him for over 30 minutes until he arrived at a hospital to be treated for the injuries he sustained in the attack. When he left the hospital early the next morning, the pick-up truck had gone.

Previously, Amilcar Pop has received threatening phone calls at his home. He gave the phone number of the caller to the authorities and made a formal complaint. The Public Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation, but there has been no progress to date.

Amilcar Pop believes the incident of August 1 is related to his work with indigenous peoples in the municipality of San Juan Sacatepequez close to Guatemala City. The Mayan Lawyers' Association has helped communities in San Juan Sacatepequez who are asserting their right to be consulted about the construction of a cement plant in the area. Threats against them have been on-going since November 2007. In June 2008, following a killing believed to be related to the dispute over the cement plant, the President of Guatemala ordered a State of Emergency to be declared in the area of San Juan Sacatepequez.

We again remind you of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Therefore we **strongly urge** that you

- ensure that immediate measures are taken to guarantee the safety of Amilcar Pop in strict accordance with his wishes;
- order an immediate and thorough investigation into the incident described above, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

copies: Mayan Lawyers' Association ~ via mail  
Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908  
Stephen McFarland, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2334-8477  
Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992  
Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597  
US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 223/08 Guatemala

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