

via fax 011 502 2411 9124 <b>Licda. Maria Encarnación Mejía García de Contreras</b> Acting Attorney General of Guatemala	via fax 011 502 2413 8658 <b>Lic. Carlos Menocal</b> Minister of Interior of Guatemala
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November 22, 2010

Dear Madam and Sir:

We are gravely concerned for the safety of Guatemalan trade unionist, **Mateo López**, who was shot on October 28 in Catarina, San Marcos Department. At 2am that day, he left his house to take a bus to Guatemala City to attend a general assembly of the Health Trade Union. As he walked toward a bus stop, a red motorbike with two men approached him. The man riding as a passenger shot him five times. As Mateo López fell to the ground the men prepared to shoot him again, but people in neighboring houses started to turn on their lights and make noise. The attackers fled the scene and escaped. Although Mateo López has left the hospital, he remains at risk of further attacks.

Mateo López is Secretary General of the local branch of the Health Trade Union, which campaigns for access to public health services. He is also a member of the National Front for the Struggle (FNL), a coalition which campaigns on broader themes such as access to better standards of public services at affordable costs. We believe he was targeted for his trade union activities in denouncing corruption in the health service.

This attack is not an isolated incident. FNL activist Victor Gálvez was killed in Malacatán on October 20 and three members of Resistance Front for the Defense of Natural Resources and People's Rights (FRENA) were murdered in February of this year (cf our letter of Mar. 5, 2010). In the past year, eight trade unionists have been killed. Those killings have not yet resulted in any convictions.

**In view of the information cited above, we strongly urge that you:**

- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack on Mateo López, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection for Mateo López and his family, in accordance with their wishes.

You have the power and the consequent responsibility to provide protection for human rights activists in Guatemala. We strongly urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

cc: UDEFEGUA ~ via email  
Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908  
Stephen McFarland, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2331-8477  
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3650  
Brett Hamsik, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597  
U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich ~ via email  
U.S. Representatives Boccieri, Latta, Space, Sutton, Wilson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Fudge ~ via email

UA/233/10\_Guatemala

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