

via fax: 503.2243.7857/9930/9947 Mauricio Funes President of El Salvador	via fax: 503.2523.7170/503.2243.9930/2243.7857 Romeo Benjamin Barahona Attorney General of El Salvador
via fax: 011 503 2527 1145 Carlos Antonio Ascencio Giron Head of the National Police of El Salvador	

May 11, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about a new series of threats against **Pablo Ayala, Manuel Navarrete, and Marixela Ramos** and other **staff of Radio Victoria in Cabañas Department**.

On April 30 someone slipped a note under the Radio's front entrance threatening Pablo Ayala and Manuel Navarrete if they did not leave the Radio by May 4. At about 8pm on May 2, threatening text messages were sent to the mobile phones of Pablo Ayala and Marixela Ramos. The message to Pablo Ayala, which was signed "death squad" said that if he was still at Radio Victoria past May he would "regret it." The message to news producer Marixela Ramos also threatened her three-year-old daughter if the Radio staff did not change the "tone" of their reporting. The authors of the text messages have identified themselves as an extermination group, reminiscent of the death squads that were active during the civil war.

Since 2009 we have sent seven letters to officials in El Salvador concerning threats and assassinations against Radio Victoria staff, in part for their reporting on the Cabañas environmental movement that has been opposing the Pacific Rim open pit gold mine; some of those environmental leaders have been assassinated. Although each threat against Radio Victoria staff has been reported to the police and other agencies, there has been no police investigation nor has the Attorney General provided sufficient protection for the radio's staff.

On May 4 Radio Victoria and ADES (Social and Economic Development Association of Santa Marta) held a press conference in front of the Attorney General's Office denouncing the lack of investigation into the present and previous threats. Following the press conference, Pablo Ayala and Marixela Ramos again received threats via text message: "Today you should have left like we ordered you.."

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights deemed the threats to Radio Victoria staff to be so great that it issued Precautionary Measures that require authorities in El Salvador to ensure their safety.

Again, we **strongly urge** you to

- conduct a thorough investigation of all threats against Radio Victoria journalists, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice; and
- fully comply with the Precautionary Measures ordered by the IACHR, including specialized police protection for all Radio Victoria employees, in accordance with their wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Radio Victoria ~ via email
Francisco Altshul Fuentes, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of El Salvador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-234-383
Mari Carmen Aponte, US Ambassador to El Salvador ~ via fax: 503-2-278-6016/4444
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
Maria Silvia Guillén, El Salvador member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
Melanie Bonner, El Salvador Desk, US State Dept. ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
Oscar Humberto Luna, Ombudsman for Defense of Human Rights ~ via fax: 503-2222-0655
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email
SisterCities_5/6/11El Salvador

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