

via fax: 011 502 2413 8658
Lic. Carlos Menocal
Minister of the Interior of Guatemala

via fax: 011 502 2411 9124
Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey
Attorney General of Guatemala

August 14, 2011

Dear Attorney General and Minister:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force on Central America, are gravely concerned for the safety of **Freddy Peccerelli, Jose Samuel Suasnavar, Leonel Estuardo Paiz and Omar Bertoni** of the **Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (FAFG)**, who have received death threats.

The threats occurred days after the end of a high profile trial in which three former soldiers and an officer from an elite army unit were sentenced to more than 6,000 years in prison for their role in the infamous Dos Erres massacre of 1982. The 'Kaibil' army unit entered the Dos Erres hamlet in the department of Peten on 5 December 1982 and tortured and killed some 250 men, women and children over three days before razing the village. Many of the women and girls were raped, and numerous villagers, including children, were thrown into the village well. Forensic experts at FAFG, at the request of the Public Prosecutor's office, presented forensic, archaeological and genetic tests on the case.

The director of FAFG, Freddy Peccerelli, received a hand written note in red ink on August 8, which said: "Sons of bitches. You will pay us slowly, for each of the 6050 years that our people are going to suffer because of you, now we won't simply watch you we will leave you battered like the rest." The note also mentioned Jose Samuel Suasnavar, Leonel Estuardo Paiz and Omar Bertoni, who are forensic experts at the FAFG and who gave evidence at the trial. The note also said: "When you least expect it you will die. Revolutionaries your DNA will be of no use. Your families will pay you will follow suit."

We have previously written several letters to Guatemalan officials demanding investigations into threats against Freddy Peccerelli and FAFG staff. For the past two years we were relieved that we hadn't received notice of any threats since January 2009. Now, once again, we are disturbed and concerned for their safety. We will continue to follow this situation closely.

In light of these recent threats, we strongly urge you to:

- institute an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Freddy Peccerelli, Jose Samuel Suasnavar, Leonel Estuardo Paiz, and Omar Bertoni, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide full and appropriate protection to these men, according to their wishes.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: FAFG: Fundacion de Antropologia Forense de Guatemala ~ via email
Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
Stephen McFarland, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ via fax: 011-502-2331-2348
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
Siobhan Sheils, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Desk Officer for Central America ~ via email
US Senators Brown and Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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