

via fax: 011 502 2239 0090 Otto Pérez Molina President of Guatemala	via fax: 011 502 2251 2218/2411 9124/2411/9326 Claudia Paz y Paz Attorney General of Guatemala
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November 26, 2012

Dear President Pérez and Attorney General Paz:

We are extremely concerned for human rights defender **Claudia Virginia Samayoa**, coordinator of Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit in Guatemala (UDEFEGUA). During the week of November 12, she and a member of the Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala received warnings of an imminent attack on their lives.

We believe the threats stem from a complaint that Claudia Samayoa filed on November 5 with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in which she denounced a statement, originating from the Foundation Against Terrorism, that circulated at a press conference on October 15. The statement names her as someone with anti-business and terrorist sympathies expressed by financing “destabilizing organizations” and partaking in a conspiracy with two other civil society figures accused of being ex-guerrillas taking part in the torture and kidnapping of the director of the Foundation Against Terrorism in 1982. The statement links her to a number of recent violent clashes between the military and local populations in which members of the military were injured. It also implies that she and others were responsible for these events through “incitement.” It calls on state authorities and the armed forces to ensure that all those it deems complicit in “political trials” against the military be held responsible and forced to pay for having attempted to change history.

UDEFEGUA, which monitors, verifies, and accompanies human rights defenders at risk in Guatemala, has been threatened in the past. In February 2010, someone tampered with Claudia Samayoa's car in an attempt to cause an accident. As a result of the threats, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights considered it necessary to provide Claudia Samayoa and other members of UDEFEGUA with protection measures (cf our letter of Apr 4, 2010).

Because the recent threats are further attempts to delegitimize the work of Claudia Samayoa and of UDEFEGUA, we **strongly urge** that you

- conduct an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats and defamation against Claudia Samayoa, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Claudia Samayoa, all members of UDEFEGUA and their families;

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: UDEFEGUA ~ via email
Francisco Villagran de Leon, Guatemalan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
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Dinah Shelton, Rapporteur for Guatemala, 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 Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

11/21/Frontline_Guatemala

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