

via Fax: 011 502 2383 8390 Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo President of the Republic of Guatemala	Via Fax: 011 502 2413 8658 Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte Minister of the Interior
Via Fax: 011 502 2411 9124/9326 Lic. Juan Luis Florido Attorney General and Head of the Public Prosecutor's Office	

December 14, 2007

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are extremely concerned about the death of **Felipe Alvarez**, a member of the Consejo Comunitario de Desarrollo (Community Council for Development, COCODES), a community development organization based in the community of Microparcelamiento El Naranjo, Esquintla Department. Early on the morning of December 8, he left his home to cycle to the farm where he worked. His body, shot once in the head and three times in the back, was found by police officers at 5:45am the same day on a roadside about 10 km south of his home on the way to the farm. He had claimed that he had been followed on several occasions.

COCODES are local community structures that support the work of the municipal authorities. They were created by law in 2002 under provisions laid down in the 1996 Peace Accords to strengthen community democracy and participation. In the past two years two other members of the organization have been killed and its members threatened, apparently because of the organization's attempts to improve public security in their community. We believe the two remaining members of the organization, **Juan Francisco Almira** and **Manuel Antonio Aguita**, are at grave risk.

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

We **strongly urge** that you:

- order immediate and effective measures to guarantee that Juan Francisco Almira and Manuel Antonio Aguita are safe from future threats, acts of intimidation and attacks.
- carry out a swift and impartial investigation into the killing of Felipe Alvarez and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely

Brian J. Stefan-Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: COCODES de Microparcelamiento El Naranjo ~ via fax: 011 502 2232 2651
 Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
 Ambassador James Derham ~ via fax: 011-502-2334-8477
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202-458-3992
 Courtney Turner, Guatemala Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Reps: Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 329/07 Guatemala

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