

Minister of the Interior Sr. Carlos Vinicio Gomez Ruiz Fax: 011 502 2413 8658	Attorney General and Head of Public Prosecutor's Office Lic. Juan Luis Florido Fax: 011 502 2411 9124/9326
--	---

March 22, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of human rights defender **Aida del Rosario López Cordero**, Coordinator of the Women's Defense Office at the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office in Quiché Department. She has been involved in attempts to bring two police officers to justice for the rape of an indigenous woman, Juana Méndez, while she was in police custody in 2005. Aida Lopez has been threatened and intimidated since the trial of one of the police officers began on February 18.

She received a threatening phone call on the evening of the second hearing of the trial of the police officer on February 25. On the night of March 2, "VC3 M18," the name of a street gang in Guatemala, was spray-painted on the walls of her house. They also broke the lights at the entrance to her house and the bulbs of the lampposts on the street outside. On March 6 at 4:24 pm, she received a call on her cell phone from a man who told her he was an inmate of a Guatemala City prison and then hung up. She has never had any contact with inmates of the prison, and her mobile number is known only by her relatives and close friends.

We remind you of the right of human rights defenders 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** you to:

- order a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats and intimidation of Aida de Rosario Lopez Cordero and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate and effective measures to guarantee her safety, in strict accordance with her own wishes.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Human Rights Organization ICCPG ~ via fax: 011.502.2230.1841/2232.5121
 Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo, Guatemala Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 745 1908
 Ambassador James Derham, US Ambassador to Guatemala ~ 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 and US Representatives Latta, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 73/08 Guatemala

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