

Lica. María Consuelo Porras Argueta

Attorney General of Guatemala

via email: fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com

September 24, 2021

Dear Attorney General Porras:

We are saddened and outraged to learn of the assassination of **Ramón López Jiménez**, a 44-year-old father of three small children and community leader in Corral Viejo, a rural community in the municipality of Santa María Xapalán, Jalapa Department. He was also the treasurer of the board of directors of CODECA (Committee for Campesino Development) in Jalapa Department.

On September 20, Ramón López Jiménez left home to work early in the morning. In the afternoon his family went out to look for him because he had not returned home. His dead body was discovered in a gutter near a creek near the Volcán de Paz in the village of La Paz, Santa María Xalapan. His body showed signs of wounds from a machete and gunshots.

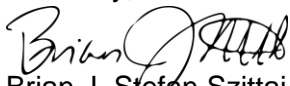
The assassination of Ramón López Jiménez occurred just five days after CODECA chapters throughout the country held public demonstrations against the government. On the occasion of the bicentennial of Central America's independence from Spain, CODECA said publicly that independence was a sham: the economic and political systems have not been modified and the conditions of poverty for most Guatemalans remain dire and without remedy in sight. Leaders of CODECA, whose members are mostly indigenous campesinos, said they have nothing to celebrate. They marched with banners, such as "200 years of theft, impoverishment, persecution, and assassination."

CODECA, founded in 1992, has 90,000 members across Guatemala. Ramón López Jiménez coordinated CODECA initiatives in Jalapa, including (1) promoting a people's multicultural constituent assembly, (2) fighting for land rights, (3) defending the rights of agricultural workers, and (4) pushing for the nationalization of privatized electricity.

Because at least 21 members of CODECA have been assassinated since 2018, and because there has been no justice in any of the cases, we strongly urge that you:

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Ramón López Jiménez, publish the results, capture both the material and intellectual actors, and bring them to justice
- implement the necessary measures to guarantee the physical safety and psychological integrity of all leaders of CODECA, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Hilda Pineda, Attorney in the Human Rights Section of the Public Ministry ~ via email
Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ email, US mail
Augusto Jordán Rodas Andrade, Prosecutor for Human Rights (PDH) ~ via email
IACHR: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
OACNUDH: Mika Kanervavuori, Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala (OACNUDH) ~ via email
US State Department: Guatemala Desk Officers in Washington, DC: Bria Mathews, Moises Mendoza ~ via email
US State Department: William Popp, US Ambassador to Guatemala, in care of human rights officer Sarahann Yeh ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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