

Lic. José Alejandro Córdova Herrera (2022-2027)
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights
12 avenida 12-54, zona 1.
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

June 21, 2024

Dear Lic. Córdova:

We are writing to call for justice for the assassination of **José Domingo Montejo**, an attorney who defended the rights of Indigenous and campesino communities.

On June 5 José Domingo Montejo was in Escuintla helping to legalize a land title in the area for campesinos. In a sudden ambush, armed actors shot and killed José Domingo Montejo on a dirt highway in Palín, east of Escuintla City, Escuintla Department. Seriously injured in the attack were active members of CUC (Comité de Unidad Campesina, or Peasant Unity Committee): **Marcelo Yaxón Pablo** and **Gustavo Yaxón**. Because many of its campesino members are Indigenous, CUC is affiliated with CITI (Consejo Internacional de Tratados Indios, or International Indian Treaty Council).

José Domingo Montejo was an ethnic Jakalteq (Jacalteco), of the Maya Q'anjob'al people who live alongside the border of Chiapas (southern Mexico) and Huehuetenango (northwestern Guatemala). His assassination comes at a time of renewed attacks on Indigenous communities. On June 5, hundreds of members of the National Civil Police participated in the violent eviction of at least Mayan Q'eq'chi 35 families from the San José el Tesoro community of Finca Chichoy in Cobán, Alta Verapaz Department. On May 22, the National Civil Police carried out an eviction of Mayan Q'eq'chi families from the Buena Vista community in Tzinte, El Estor, Izabal Department. After their abrupt displacement, the families were forced to live on the side of the road in the community of Santa Rosita, El Estor.

We strongly urge that authorities:

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination of José Domingo Montejo and injuries to Marcelo Yaxón Pablo and Gustavo Yaxón, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- consult with community leaders of CUC to implement personal security measures, in strict accordance with their wishes
- instruct the National Civil Police to end the evictions of campesino families
- remind all government agencies of their obligation to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Guatemala voted to approve at the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martinez

copies: Hugo Beteta, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ email, US mail
IACHR: Andrea Pochak (Rapporteur for Guatemala) and Arif Bulkan (Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), 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 (UN) ~ via email
US State Department: Guatemala Desk Officers in Washington, DC ~ vial email
US State Department: William Popp, US Ambassador to Guatemala, in care of Angela Melton ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Vance ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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

