

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER REPEATEDLY THREATENED

Rafael Maldonado of the Guatemalan Centre for Environmental, Social and Legal Action received a series of threats this week, the most recent in a pattern of threats and intimidation towards him. His organization has recently been involved in litigation regarding a number of mining operations and palm oil production in Guatemala.

Rafael Maldonado, Legal Director for the Guatemalan Centre for Environmental, Social and Legal Action (Centro de Acción Legal, Ambiental y Social de Guatemala, CALAS) received a series of threatening and abusive messages via Twitter this week. On 4 December, the Twitter account @sofiavargas78 sent three messages to Rafael Maldonado accusing him of corruption and creating a “media show”. The account showed no activity before then. On 30 November, Twitter user @Armarome78 posted messages to Rafael Maldonado that warned “Your time is up. I suggest you to run like a pig, son of a bitch. Pre-warned warfare doesn't kill people.” and “Remember when I told you that your network of gangsters and corrupt people had little time left? You're next. Hold on!”, according to the Unit for the Protection of Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders (La Unidad de Protección a Defensores y Defensoras de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala, UDEFEGUA). The account has since been suspended.

On 30 November it was also revealed that Alberto Rotondo, Security Director of the San Rafael Las Flores Escobal mine, had escaped his house arrest and his whereabouts were unknown. Alberto Rotondo was charged with ordering an attack by security guards on protestors outside the mine in 2013 that left seven wounded. CALAS has been involved in a civil suit against the mine for the attack as well as past litigation regarding the mine's operating license and alleged contamination. Rafael Maldonado has also represented CALAS in recent cases against the palm oil company REPSA, which is accused of having contaminated a river in Petén Department in June 2015.

In July, Rafael Maldonado told UDEFEGUA that he heard shots being fired outside of CALAS's office in Guatemala City. In May, he reported to local authorities that an unidentified woman threatened him, saying he would “pay for the work he is doing,” while at a Guatemala City bank. Rafael Maldonado and CALAS's director also received anonymous written threats at their office in 2013. UDEFEGUA recently requested protection measures for Rafael Maldonado from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, however no measures have yet been granted.

Please write immediately in English, Spanish, or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats made against Rafael Maldonado and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take immediate steps to provide full and appropriate protection to Rafael Maldonado, in accordance with his wishes;
- Reminding them that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their activities without any unfair restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 JANUARY 2016 TO:

Attorney General

Thelma Esperanza Aldana Hernández
Fiscal General de la República
Ministerio Público
Gerona, Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
Fax: +502 2411 9124

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General /
Estimada Sra. Fiscal General**

President Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre

Presidente de la República Casa
Presidencial 6ª Avenida 4-41, Zona 1,
Puerta del Centro, Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
Fax: +502 2221 4445

**Salutation: Dear President/ Estimado
Sr. Presidente**

And copies to:

CALAS

Av. Mariscal 13-59 zona 11
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Fax: +502 24744545
Email: informacion@calas.org.gt

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Guatemala human rights defenders, including journalists and trade unionists, continue to be threatened, harassed and attacked, by those seeking to dissuade them from their work. The Guatemalan human rights organization UDEFEGUA documented 337 acts of aggression against human rights defenders in the first half of 2015. Almost 71% of those acts targeted Indigenous leaders and defenders working on environmental and land rights issues.

Name: Rafael Maldonado

Gender m/f: m

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