

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER OF XINCA PEOPLE UNDER THREAT

Quelvin Jimenez received death threats and continues to be targeted with smear campaigns, intimidations, and surveillance due to his activities defending the rights to land and territory of the Xinca People in the context of mining activities in the South of Guatemala. Latest threats include phone calls, the presence of an armed man near his home and an attempt of intimidation while he was going to his house on 6 May. We urge the public prosecutor's office to carry out investigation into all the attacks and provide protection for Quelvin Jimenez.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Consuelo Porras

Guatemala's General Attorney

Email: carrecis@mp.gob.gt (Mrs Porras' private secretary)

Twitter: @MPguatemala

Dear General Attorney,

I am writing to express my alarm and concern for the safety of lawyer of the Xinca People, Quelvin Jimenez, who was alerted on a plan to kill him in late April and that his house was under surveillance. On 6 May the same armed man seen near his house chased Quelvin on a motorcycle attempting to make his vehicle slow down. Quelvin has received death threats on the phone on several occasions. The investigations on previous attacks remain pending and the police has yet to enforce security measures ordered by the public prosecutor's office to protect him.

We urge you to conduct a prompt, independent, effective and impartial investigation into all the threats and attacks against Quelvin Jimenez, and to bring all those responsible to justice. We also ask that you guarantee the protection of Quelvin Jimenez by the police, according to his wishes and needs.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 2 May 2013, the government of Guatemala declared a state of emergency in and around San Rafael las Flores, a town some 90 kilometres from the capital, following a series of violent incidents around the mining operation of Minera San Rafael, a subsidiary of the Canada and US-based Tahoe Resources Inc. In January 2013, unknown armed men attacked the mine site resulting in the deaths of two security guards and another person, presumed to be part of the group attacking the site. For more information, see: Mining in Guatemala: Rights at risk (<http://www.amnesty.ca/sites/amnesty/files/mining-in-guatemala-rights-at-risk-eng.pdf>)

Members of the Centre for Environmental, Social and Legal Action (CALAS) who have previously defended the rights of communities affected by the San Rafael mining company have also reported reiterated acts of intimidation and harassment against them. For more information see Urgent Action: Smear Campaign against Human rights defenders (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/6680/2017/en/>)

According to our research, Human rights defenders in Guatemala carry out their activities in an extremely hostile environment, particularly those working on rights related to land, territory and the environment. They face continuous threats, intimidation and attacks. The Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (UDEFEQUA) reported 26 human rights defenders were killed in 2018. Defenders are also regularly targeted with smear campaigns aimed at stigmatizing and discrediting them by private actors and the Guatemalan authorities. The criminal justice system is regularly misused, defenders are falsely accused and prosecuted trying keep them silent and to break up movements and organizations. For more information, see the Amnesty International report “We are defending the land with our blood”: Defenders of the land, territory and environment in Honduras and Guatemala (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/4562/2016/en/>)

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 June 2019
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Quelvin Jiménez (he, his, him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a