

PUBLIC

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07 March 2008

UA 64/08 Fear for safety

GUATEMALA **Guillermo Chen (m), Director of *Fundación Nueva Esperanza, Río Negro* (New Hope Foundation, Río Negro)
His wife and two children (boy and girl)**

Guillermo Chen's house was shot at six times on the evening of 5 March. He is director of the non-governmental organization *Fundación Nueva Esperanza, Río Negro* (New Hope Foundation, Río Negro), which campaigns for justice for crimes committed during Guatemala's internal armed conflict (1960-1996). Amnesty International believes that Guillermo Chen's life, and the lives of his wife and children, may be at risk.

On 5 March at about 9pm, two people cycled past Guillermo Chen's house in the city of Rabinal, in Baja Verapaz department, central Guatemala, and shot six times at its gate. Guillermo Chen and his family were inside. Nobody was wounded.

New Hope Foundation is campaigning for justice for crimes committed during the internal armed conflict. In February 2008, Guillermo Chen appeared at least 15 times at a local radio station calling for Indigenous people to attend public legal hearings about the Río Negro massacre of 13 March 1982, in which armed civilians killed 177 Indigenous women and girls.

Also in February, New Hope Foundation organized a delegation of survivors and witnesses of the Río Negro massacre to travel to Spain to give testimony in the case against Guatemala's former president José Efraín Ríos Montt and other former high-ranking officials, on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The defendants remain in Guatemala after Guatemala's Constitutional Court refused to extradite them. On 17 January, in response to some of the arguments used by the Court, New Hope Foundation and other organizations filed a complaint against it for discrimination against Indigenous people. The complaint was dismissed a few days later.

Apart from working on human rights violations committed during the internal armed conflict, New Hope Foundation supports the children and grandchildren of those killed with education programmes including in Indigenous languages and culture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Guillermo Chan, his wife and their two children;
- urging the authorities to take immediate measures to guarantee their safety in strict accordance with their wishes;
- calling for an immediate, thorough and swift investigation into this incident, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Carlos Vinicio Gómez Ruiz

Ministro de Gobernación

6ª Avenida 4-64, nivel 2, Zona 4

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 2413 8658

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Sr. Ministro

Attorney General and Head of the Public Prosecutor's Office

Lic. Juan Luis Florido

Fiscal General de la República y Jefe del Ministerio Público

8ª Avenida 10-67, Antiguo Edificio del Banco de los Trabajadores, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 2411 9124

+502 2411 9326

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Sr. Fiscal General

Presidential Secretary for Human Rights and Peace

Sr. Orlando Blanco

Secretario de la Presidencia para los Derechos Humanos y la Paz

7ª Avenida 3-54, Edificio SAE, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 2248 3020

+502 2248 3021

Salutation: Dear Secretary/Estimado Sr. Secretario

COPIES TO:

Fundación Nueva Esperanza, Río Negro

c/o Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum

Avenida Simeón Cañas 4-04, Zona 2

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 2221 3999

Email: info@frmt.org

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 April 2008.