

URGENT ACTION

GUATEMALAN TRADE UNIONIST SHOT FIVE TIMES

A Guatemalan trade unionist, Mateo López, was shot on 28 October in Catarina, San Marcos province, north-western Guatemala. He has now left the hospital, but remains at risk of further attacks. It is believed that he was targeted due to his trade union activities.

Mateo López is Secretary General of the local branch of the Health Trade Union (Sindicato de Salud) and a member of the coalition, National Front for the Struggle (Frente Nacional de Lucha - FNL). Since January 2010, he has been very active in denouncing corruption in the health service.

On 28 October, at 2am, Mateo Lopez left his house to take a bus to Guatemala City, the capital of the country, in order to attend a general assembly of the Health Trade Union. In the agenda of the meeting, there was a talk on a corruption case which he campaigned against.

While walking towards a bus stop, a red motorbike with two men on it approached him. The man riding passenger shot him five times. Mateo Lopez received a shot in the stomach, two shots grazed him over the right shoulder, and the final two shots grazed him in the knees. Mateo López fell to the ground. The men were about to shoot him once more, but people in neighbouring houses started to turn on their lights and make noise. The attackers escaped.

The Health Trade Union campaigns for access to public health services, while the FNL campaigns on broader themes like access to better standards of public services at affordable costs. The FNL has promoted campaigns against the high costs of electricity. In the last year, eight trade unionists belonging to the FNL have been killed. Those killings have not yet resulted in any convictions.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the incident against Mateo Lopez, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- Urging that the authorities take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection to Mateo Lopez and his family, in accordance with their wishes.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 DECEMBER 2010 TO:

Acting Attorney General

Licda. María Encarnación Mejía García
de Contreras
Fiscal General de la República Interina
15ª Avenida 15-16, Zona 1, Barrio
Gerona
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 2411 9124

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

Ministry of Interior

Lic. Carlos Menocal
Ministro de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1,
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 2413 8658

**Salutation: Dear Minister /
Estimado Sr. Ministro**

And copies to:

UDEFEGUA – Unidad de protección a
defensores y defensoras de derechos
humanos
1 Calle 7-45 zona 1, Oficina 2-b,
Guatemala City
Guatemala
E-mail: udefegua@yahoo.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 20 October 2010, Mateo Lopez participated in a public event to commemorate the killing of the FNL activist Víctor Gálvez, who was killed in Malacatán, a town in the same region. Mateo López gave a speech about social issues in the San Marcos area and the need to tackle them by social activism.

Víctor Gálvez was shot 10 times on 24 October 2009 as he left the office of the consumer rights organization Resistance Front for the Defence of Natural Resources and People's Rights, (Frente de Resistencia en Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Derechos de los Pueblos, FRENA). He had just spoken at a public meeting about FRENA's campaigning to highlight the alleged poor quality and high charges by the regional electricity company. Víctor Gálvez had also received death threats, and had been verbally threatened and physically attacked in relation to his work.

Amnesty International issued an urgent action about the killing of three FRENA activist in February 2010 (UA 41/10).

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