

GUATEMALA ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER INTIMIDATED

On the night of 3 April, unidentified people situated in front of human rights defender Rafael Maldonado's house in Guatemala City, shot at a car nearby. Although he was unharmed, the defender believes the incident was intended to intimidate him and he is concerned for his safety.

On 3 April, around 9:20 pm, unidentified people stood in front of human rights defender Rafael Maldonado's house in Guatemala City. They fired several shots at a car located on the other side of a park that is in front of his home. Rafael Maldonado did not suffer any injuries. However, representatives from the Guatemalan Centre for Environmental, Social and Legal Action (Centro de Acción Legal, Ambiental y Social de Guatemala, CALAS) told Amnesty International that this incident has contributed to his increased emotional distress.

Rafael Maldonado is the Legal Director for CALAS, a Guatemalan non-governmental organization working to defend and promote the human rights to a healthy environment and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The organization provides legal representation and advice to several communities in Guatemala who are promoting human rights in the context of projects for the exploration and exploitation of natural resources. For years, Rafael Maldonado has faced threatening messages as a consequence of his job providing legal counsel to community defenders, and in litigating environmental cases in diverse tribunals. He is concerned for his safety following this latest act of intimidation against him.



Photo credit: frontlinedefenders.org

Please send an email, tweet or letter without delay. (Postage is \$2.50.)

- * Call on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the incident of intimidation against Rafael Maldonado, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.
- * Urge them to take immediate steps to provide full and appropriate protection to Rafael Maldonado, in consultation with the defender and in accordance with his wishes.
- * Call on them to publicly recognize the important and legitimate work of defenders working on land, territory and environmental issues.

Here is the contact information you need:

Attorney General:

Thelma Aldana

Fiscal General de la República

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Ciudad de Guatemala, 01001

Guatemala

Email: taldana@mp.gob.gt

Twitter: @MPguatemala

Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Estimada Señora Fiscal

Minister of Interior:

Francisco Manuel Rivas Lara

Ministerio de Gobernación

6 avenida 13-71, Zona 1

Guatemala, Guatemala

Email: smvasquez@mingob.gob.gt, vrosales@mingob.gob.gt or lucreciarosalesad@gmail.com

Twitter: @mingobguate

Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimado Señor Ministro

Please send a copy to

His Excellency Carlos Humberto Jiménez Licona

Ambassador for the Republic of Guatemala

130 Albert Street, Suite 1010

Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4

Fax: (613) 233-0135

Email: embassy1@embaguete-canada.com

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland

Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Postage: None required

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Additional information

Members of the Guatemalan Centre for Legal, Environmental and Social Action (Centro de Acción Legal, Ambiental y Social de Guatemala, CALAS) have reported acts of intimidation and harassment against them, including violent attacks, for many years (See the Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/3013/2015/en/>).

On 12 November 2016, human rights defender Jeremy Abraham Barrios Lima was assassinated (see the Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/5144/2016/en/>). He was the Assistant to the Executive Director of CALAS.

On 29 August 2011, the Director and Legal Adviser at CALAS, Yuri Melini and Rafael Maldonado respectively, received envelopes at 9:30 am. Each contained the same documents: a threat, papers from the Office of the Comptroller General (Contraloría General de Cuentas) and mug-shot photographs of 18 men that appear to have been taken from police files (see the Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr34/011/2011/en/>).

On 8 September 2008, CALAS director Yuri Melini was shot by masked men, apparently in connection with his work (see the Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documens/amr34/021/2008/en/>). Following the attack, Yuri Melini and CALAS were granted protection from the State.

According to the civil society organization UDEFEGUA, environmental human rights defenders are the main group of activists attacked in Guatemala. 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/>).