

URGENT ACTION

TWO MORE LAND DEFENDERS KILLED

Human rights defenders Florencio Pérez Nájera and Alejandro Hernández García from the Campesino Development Committee (Comité de Desarrollo Campesino, CODECA) were violently murdered on 4 June. Authorities must end this wave of killings, which add up to 6 human rights defenders killed in Guatemala in less than a month.

On 3 June, **Florencio Pérez Nájera** (42) and **Alejandro Hernández García** (40) went to the community of Llano Largo, Department of Jutiapa (South) to participate in a CODECA meeting and did not return home. In the morning of 4 June, their families found their bodies near the entrance of their homestead (*caserío*), killed by apparent machete wounds. As leaders of CODECA they defended the land, territory and labour rights in their communities. These killings occurred a month after President Jimmy Morales' discredited and stigmatized CODECA's activities in a public speech on 2 May.

This is the sixth deadly attack against human rights defenders in Guatemala in less than a month, causing concern for the safety of all defenders across the country. All killings took place in a context of recurring violence against defenders working on rights related to land, territory and the environment, including the recent killings of Luis Arturo Marroquín (CODECA member) as well as Ramon Choc Sacrab, José Can Xol and Mateo Chamám Paaú from the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (Comité Campesino del Altiplano, CCDA).

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Demanding authorities to initiate a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation on the killings of Florencio Pérez, Alejandro Hernández from CODECA and other human rights defenders from CCDA. The investigation should include the theory of the attack being a possible retaliation for their legitimate activities as human rights defenders, as mentioned in the recently adopted General Instruction to investigate against human rights defenders from Guatemala's Attorney General;
- Urging them to take all appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of all CODECA and CCDA members at risk in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on them to condemn these wave of killings, to publicly recognize the important and legitimate work of all human rights defenders in Guatemala and refrain from using language that discredits, stigmatizes, abuses, disparages or discriminates them.

Contact these two officials by 18 July 2018:

Attorney General

María Consuelo Porras

Fiscal General de la República

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Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Email: <mailto:mariadelcarmengarciaescobar@gmail.com>

Ambassador Manuel Espina, Embassy of Guatemala

Twitter: [@MPGuatemala](https://twitter.com/MPGuatemala)

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

2220 R St. NW, Washington DC 20008

Phone: 202 745 4953 | Fax: 202 745 1908

Email: <mailto:info@guatemala-embassy.org>

Contact Form: <http://guatemalaembassyusa.org/la-embajada/contacta-con-nosotros/>

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 97.18*

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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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, attacks, smear campaigns and stigmatization.

In 2017, the Guatemalan NGO Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (UDEFEGUA) registered 496 attacks against human rights defenders. In May 2018, the Attorney General issued an internal General Instruction containing guidelines to effectively investigate attacks against human rights defenders.

The CCDA is a *campesino* organization founded in 1982 that works to promote access to land as well as the labour rights of Mayan campesinos. CCDA has reported already been targeted with attacks and intimidations. In June 2016, Indigenous leader Daniel Choc Pop was killed in San Juan Tres Ríos. Several attacks against their office and against leaders were registered in June 2017. In May 2018 José Can Xol and Mateo Chamám Paau, two CCDA local leaders, were murdered in the communities of Choctún Basilá and San Juan Tres Ríos. Both were involved in protecting and defending their communities in a long-standing land tenure conflict. They had participated in the negotiation and dialogue roundtable to find solutions, together with national authorities, to the multiple land tenure conflicts affecting communities in the region.

In May 2018, Luis Arturo Marroquin, member of the national coordination of CODECA was fatally shot in San Luis Jilotepeque, in the central eastern part of Guatemala. This incident took place a week after President Jimmy Morales discrediting and stigmatising CODECA's activities in a public speech on 2 May.

In 2014, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered Guatemala to adopt and implement a comprehensive public policy for the protection of human rights defenders in the judgement Human Rights Defender vs Guatemala. Despite some progress, the process to create the public policy hasn't concluded yet. Impunity remains the rule in most cases of threats and attacks against Guatemalan defenders.

The justice system is also regularly misused to criminalize human rights defenders, in an attempt to break up movements and organizations, wearing down the defenders and removing them from the public arena. 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/>) and Americas: State Protection Mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/6211/2017/en/>).

Name: Florencio Pérez Nájera, Alejandro Hernández García
Gender m/f: m (both)

Further information on UA: 97/18 Index: AMR 34/8539/2018 Guatemala Issue Date: 7 June 2018