

Ministry of the Interior  
6a Ave 13-71 zone 1,  
Guatemala, Guatemala  
(502) 2413-8888

March 26, 2018

Dear Minister Enrique Degenhart

**Re: Investigation and security issues in the Reynoso Pacheco case from Mataquescuintla, Jalapa**

The below-signed organizations write to you out of great concern regarding the continued acts of intimidation against the Reynoso Pacheco family from the community of San Supo, in the department of Jalapa. Four years after the attack against Alex Reynoso and the murder of his daughter Topacio, and three years after the second attack against Alex Reynoso, no major advancements have been made in the case investigation and the family continues to live at high risk of attack. We urge the Ministry of the Interior to restore the security measures for the Reynoso Pacheco family that were taken away in August 2017.

Since 2010, the Reynoso Family has been at the forefront of the regional resistance against Tahoe Resources' mining project. Topacio Reynoso Pacheco was a young activist and leader of a youth mining resistance network from Mataquescuintla. Her father, Alex Reynoso, is a community leader who is recognized for his role in the organization of the community referendum in his municipality. Both were activists in *Organized Civil Society of Mataquescuintla*, an organization that opposes the Escobal mine located in San Rafael Las Flores, owned by Minera San Rafael—subsidiary of the transnational Canadian-US mining company, Tahoe Resources.

Unknown gunmen attacked Topacio on April 13, 2014 and she died from wounds the next day. Alex Reynoso was gravely injured in the same attack. Alex Reynoso was victim of a second armed attack in October 2015 in which he and two other men were injured. Unknown aggressors attacked the men shortly after they left a meeting with the mayor of Mataquescuintla, Hugo Loy, a firm opponent of Tahoe's mining operations. The attacks against the Reynoso family are tragic examples of a violent pattern against those who are organizing to defend land, water and the environment in the region surrounding the Escobal mine.

In 2016, after the second attack against him, Alex Reynoso was granted personal security measures by the Guatemalan state. The granting of these measures was an important element

in assuring the safety of the family. However, without previous warning, the measures were taken away in August 2017. Since then, various suspicious incidents have been reported within their community. Most recently, on December 23, 2017, unknown persons were found hiding in the foliage within their property surrounding Mr. Reynoso's home, in the area where his children tend to their animals. Upon realization that Mr. Reynoso was present at his residence, the suspects fled. This latest incident of surveillance and intimidation of the Reynoso family shows that they still live at a high level of risk which merits the granting of new personal security measures.

We consider the Ministry of the Interior an important state figure in assuring the security of human rights defenders. We acknowledge the Ministry of the Interior's decision to grant the initial security measures that contributed to the security of the Reynoso Pacheco family in 2016. However, we are concerned that the family continues to live at risk of attack, which was made evident in the latest act of intimidation in December.

Given the above, we call on the Ministry of the Interior to:

- Restore personal security measures for Alex Reynoso and his family, taking into account their high risk of attack.
- Provide the necessary measures to guarantee the security of all those who work in defense of land, territory, water and the environment in the department of Jalapa and in the entire country.

Thank you in advance for your attention in this matter. We are attentively awaiting your response.

Sincerely,

El Observador, Guatemala

Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (UDEFEHUGUA), Guatemala

Servicios Internacionales Cristianos de Solidaridad con América Latina "Oscar Romero" (SICSAL)

Protection International

Foro de ONGs Internacionales en Guatemala (FONGI) - 28 organizations from Europe, U.S. & Canada

Guatemala Solidarity Network, London, United Kingdom

Comisión de Derechos Humanos Hispano Guatemalteca (CDHHG), Madrid, Spain

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

Frontline Defenders

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Washington D.C.

Guatemalan Human Rights Commission (GHRC), Washington D.C.

Earthworks, Washington, D.C.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington (UUCA), Arlington, Virginia

Partners for Arlington and Guatemala (PAG), Arlington, Virginia

EarthNexus, Virginia

Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), Oakland, California

Sister Parish Committee, Danville Congregational Church, Danville, California

School of the Americas Watch, Los Angeles, California

Nicaragua Center for Community Action (NICCA), Berkeley, California

Alliance for Global Justice, Tucson, Arizona

Heart of the Sky Fair Trade, Spring Green, Wisconsin

Santa Elena Project of Accompaniment (SEPA), Oberlin, Ohio

Oberlin Students in Solidarity with Guatemala (OSSGUA), Oberlin, Ohio

InterReligious Task Force On Central America and Colombia, Cleveland, Ohio

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN), Chicago, Illinois

Copper Country Guatemala Accompaniment Project, Michigan

Dr. Diane Nelson, Cultural Anthropologist, Duke University, North Carolina

Guatemala Partnership Committee, Congregational Church of Needham, Massachusetts

EcoLogic Development Fund, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA), Rochester, New York

Skylight Pictures, New York

Metro New York Catholic Climate Movement, New York

People's Health Movement-USA

MiningWatch Ottawa, Ontario

Café Justicia Ottawa Education in Action, Ottawa, Ontario

Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network (BTS), Maritimes, Canada

Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network, Maritimes, Canada

Amicus Foundation, Toronto, Ontario

Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN), Toronto, Ontario

Stop The Institute, Vancouver, British Columbia

Mining Justice Alliance, Vancouver, Columbia Británica

Mining Justice Action Committee of Victoria, British Columbia

Defensa del Ixofillmogen, Coast Salish Territories, British Columbia

Socialist Action / Ligue pour l'Action socialiste, Canada

Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala, Quebec

Committee for human rights in Latin America-CDHAL. Montreal, Quebec