

To: **Presidente de la Republica**
Jimmy Morales Cabrera
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Honorable President Morales Cabrera:

We, the undersigned, write to express our serious concern over the murder of Tomás Francisco Ochoa Salazar, disputes secretary for the Bremen Union (SITRABREMEN), and the overall harassment of and violence against human rights defenders in Guatemala. Together we represent human rights and labor organizations in the United States and Europe, and we stand in solidarity with the leaders and members of SITRABREMEN, and all Guatemalan workers trying to exercise their rights.

On Friday, September 1, 2017, at around 2:25 p.m., two armed men on a motorcycle fired at Tomás Francisco Ochoa Salazar and Andy Noel Godínez, another SITRABREMEN member, as they were leaving the meat-processing plant, Carnes Procesadas, S.A., where they worked. Tomas was killed and Andy survived, suffering from non-life-threatening injuries. The brazenness of this attack is emblematic of the impunity with which trade unionists and other human rights defenders are threatened, silenced and murdered in Guatemala.

As civil society organizations, we express our support and solidarity with the organizing efforts of disenfranchised workers in Guatemala. SITRABREMEN is a young union. It filed for official recognition in July 2016, but only received notice of its acceptance by the Labor Ministry this February (six months beyond the deadline established within the labor code). SITRABREMEN reports ongoing and widespread retaliation, suspensions and harassment of union leaders and members, related to their organizing effort and subsequent attempt to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

The shooting of these SITRABREMEN members constitutes the fourth and fifth worker rights activists shot since the announcement of the CAFTA arbitration decision, less than three months ago. Tomás is the second labor leader assassinated since that decision was announced. His death makes him the 87th unionist murdered in Guatemala since 2004.

We call on your leadership, as President, to uphold Guatemala's obligations under ILO Conventions and urge the employer, Carnes Procesadas, S.A. (Embutidos Bremen), to end its anti-union campaign and engage in good-faith collective bargaining.

It is imperative that the Ministerio Público conduct an immediate investigation to apprehend the material and intellectual authors of the crime, and implement *Instructivo 01-2015* to ensure a credible investigation; and that the Ministerio de Gobernación (PNC) provide security for members of the SITRABREMEN union, especially members of the executive and consultative committees, the union's advisers and to Tomás' wife and children, as specified in the *Protocolo de Medidas de Seguridad para Sindicalistas*.

We call for the swift and thorough investigation of this case and the robust prosecution of all perpetrators of this crime, and hope that, by ending impunity, the Guatemalan government can begin to deter future violence against unionists and other human rights defenders for their exercise and defense of basic rights.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Global Justice
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American Jewish World Service
Center for International Policy
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)
Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)
Food & Water Watch
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Institute for Policy Studies, Global Economy Project
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Labor Rights Forum
InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia
Jobs with Justice
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Latin America Working Group Education Fund (LAWGEF)
National Council of Churches USA
Nicaragua Center for Community Action (NICCA)
Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns
OUR Walmart
Portland Central America Solidarity Committee (PCASC)
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Public Citizen, Global Trade Watch

Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU)
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Solidarity Center
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)
The Farmworker Association of Florida
The International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights
UNITE HERE
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United Steelworkers
WOLA: Washington Office on Latin America
Aktive Forbrugere (Denmark)
GMB Trade Union (UK)

CC: Ministra de Trabajo

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