

URGENT ACTION

ANTI-IMPUNITY ORGANIZATION'S OFFICES RAIDED

The offices of Impunity Watch in Guatemala were ransacked by unidentified armed men on 21 June. All persons working in the organization need immediate protection.

On 21 June shortly after 5 PM, three masked armed men forced their way into the offices of the international organization **Impunity Watch** in Guatemala. Accordingly to employees of the organization, the assailants approached a secretary on her way out and made her open the door. They then covered her eyes, taped her mouth shut and ransacked the office. The men screamed at her "*where are the files?*" and asked about "*the files of the fat lawyer*" before fleeing when the doorbell rang.

This attack on the **Impunity Watch** office came two days before a scheduled hearing on the case of Marco Antonio Molina Theissen, an adolescent who disappeared in 1981 during the country's civil war, after armed men seized him from his home. Alejandro Rodríguez, a researcher at **Impunity Watch**, is representing Marcos Molina Theissen's family.

Impunity Watch said that the secretary was unharmed and that they had not determined if any files had been taken but that the files related to the Molina Theissen's case were not stored in the office.

In January, four former military members were arrested and charged in the case. A hearing related to the accused's preventative detention had been scheduled for 23 June but was suspended the day of so that the case could be moved to a high risk tribunal. Members of the Molina Theissen family have been the subject of online harassment in relation to the case, Rodríguez said.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on authorities to implement full and appropriate protection to the staff of Impunity Watch, in accordance with their wishes
- Urging them to carry out an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the raiding of Impunity Watch's offices and bring those responsible to justice
- Reminding them to ensure that all parties involved with cases of human rights violations committed during the armed conflict can carry out their work without fear of reprisal

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 04 AUGUST 2016 TO:

**President of the Republic of
Guatemala**

James Morales Cabrera
Casa Presidencial
6 a. Avenida, 4-18 zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
Fax: +502 2214423
Twitter: @jimmymoralesgt

**Salutation: Dear President/ Estimado
Sr. Presidente**

Human Rights Ombudsman

Jorge Eduardo De León Duque
Procuraduría de derechos humanos
12 Avenida 12-54, zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala
Fax number: +502 2381734
Email: gmasariegos@pdh.org.gt
Twitter: @PDHgt

**Salutation: Dear Ombudsman/
Estimado Sr. Procurador**

And copies to:

Impunity Watch

iw-guatemala@impunitywatch.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ACISCLO VALLADARES MOLINA, Embassy of Guatemala, 13 Fawcett St SW10 9HN, 020 7351 3042, inglaterra@minex.gob.gt, info@guatemalanembassy.co.uk

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Impunity Watch has worked for years in Guatemala on issues related to human rights violations committed during the country's long armed internal conflict (1960-1996).

A UN-backed truth commission found that some 200,000 people were killed or disappeared during Guatemala's civil war). More than 80% were Indigenous Maya. The trial against former military ruler José Efraín Ríos Montt on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity has been repeatedly stalled and postponed.

In February, however, two former military members were convicted in a historic decision for their roles in sexual violence committed against and domestic slavery of eleven indigenous women at a military base during the internal conflict. In early June, the High-Risk Court A in Guatemala City found that eight former military members should face trial on charges related to cases of enforced disappearances and killings committed on a military base now known as Creompaz in the northern Alta Verapaz region. These new trials, in addition to the Molina Theissen case, present a hopeful sign that the country is taking new steps towards achieving justice. **Impunity Watch** has accompanied victims in some of these prominent cases.

The trials have polarized much of Guatemalan society and have led to public protests by supporters of the military. They have also created a climate of threats and harassment for those involved or who have been supportive of the cases, local human rights organizations say.

Attorney General Thelma Aldana, who has overseen most of these prominent cases and is aggressively prosecuting high level corruption in the country, has also come under intense public scrutiny. She posted a message on Facebook on 20 June stating that she is fearful for the first time in her tenure.