



**GUATEMALA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION/USA**

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**INDIGENOUS WOMAN LEADER TORTURED AND ASSASSINATED IN GUATEMALA -  
LATEST IN ALARMING TREND OF TARGETED KILLINGS**

(Washington, DC) – On July 28<sup>th</sup>, the tortured body of 25-year old Maya Ixil indigenous community leader Juana Raimundo was discovered on the side of a highway. She had been kidnapped on the night before. Raimundo, a nurse, was a member of the coordinating committee of the local chapter of CODECA the Campesino Development Committee and had been elected to the Municipal Executive Committee of the MLP, a recently authorized political party.

This was the latest in a series of at least 15 targeted assassinations of leaders from indigenous and small farming communities, critics of the Guatemalan government.

“We are seeing the return of the type of targeted killings carried out by the Guatemalan military during the internal armed conflict.” said Annie Bird, Executive Director of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC-USA). “The 30 years since the peace process began has seen achievements in prosecuting criminal networks tied to death squads. Those advances are now under attack. No progress in the prosecution of any of this year’s killings.”

In a [letter to US Ambassador](#) to Guatemala Luis Arreaga, 29 members of the United States Congress recently voiced their concern, “These murders frequently go uninvestigated in today’s Guatemala, and inaction from authorities is just another example of their complicity in these events. Congress will not stand idly by as human rights violations go unpunished, and we trust that Attorney General Porras will deliver justice for the people of Guatemala.” They pledged to monitor Guatemalan Attorney General Consuelo Porras’ advances in investigating the killings.

“The assassinations are part of a strategy to terrorize people and weaken their organizations,” said Dr. Lisa Maya Knauer, Chair of the University of Massachusetts Sociology and Anthropology Department. In July Knauer joined a fact-finding mission to Guatemala. “The U.S. government needs to step up pressure on the Guatemalan government. Concerted efforts must be made to protect the rights of communities whose lives and livelihoods are under assault.”

Raimundo was the fifth leader of CODECA killed three months. “Despite the blows, we continue to defend our rights and we will continue to fight to transform Guatemala,” said fellow CODECA leader Leiria Vay.

Dear Friends,