

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 1, 2006

The Honorable Molly Warlow
Director, Office of International Affairs
Department of Justice
Criminal Division
950 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Director Warlow,

We are writing to urge your full support and cooperation with the ongoing case against former Guatemalan leaders being investigated through the legal system of the Kingdom of Spain.

On July 7, 2006, Judge Santiago Pedraz of the Spanish National Court issued an international arrest warrant for eight former Guatemalan officials: Efraín Rios Montt Oscar Humberto Mejía Victores, Ángel Aníbal Guevara Rodriguez, Donaldo Álvarez Ruiz, German Chupina Barahona, Pedro García Arredondo, Benedicto Lucas García, and Romeo Lucas García. The warrants were issued for very grave crimes, namely terrorism, genocide and systematic torture, committed against the Guatemalan people in the period of 1978-1984. The warrant included orders to freeze the financial assets of the accused, and was filed with Interpol for international dissemination.

The case has gone through a careful legal process, originally initiated in 1999 by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Rigoberta Menchu. Last June 24, Judge Pedraz led an Investigative Commission to Guatemala to obtain testimony from the accused and gather further evidence. However, his visit was sabotaged by several last-minute appeals filed on behalf of the accused. The Guatemalan Constitutional Court prevented the Commission from collecting testimony. Upon the Commission's return to Spain, Judge Pedraz issued the arrest warrants, citing the "obstructionist attitude of the defendants and because there is sufficient evidence that the crimes of genocide, terrorism, torture, murder and illegal detention were committed by the defendants."

During the period being investigated by the Spanish National Court, the accused officials were in command of security forces that conducted several hundred massacres and killed over 200,000 civilians. In light of the very serious nature of the crimes, we believe the United States should fully cooperate with the investigation and immediately comply with the arrest warrant. Given the likelihood that the accused may own financial assets in the United States, the Department of Justice should also actively investigate the potential whereabouts of any such assets and ensure their immediate seizure.

Finally, we request that the Department of Justice inform Congress of the Department's efforts to ensure compliance with the warrant throughout the United States, including communication to U.S. financial institutions to immediately report any assets suspected of belonging to the accused individuals.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Michael Toffonda Raul M. Hujalva

Dennis J. Coirice Barbara Lee

Daniel Lipinski

Jan Schakel

Tony Balderroni

Bob Ayres

Robert Wexler

Pete Stark

Joe Crowley

Stephen Lynch

James P. McGowan
John Bo

Lynn C. Woolsey

Pete Hoyer

Earl Blumenauer

Carolyn C. Kyj

Bobby D. West

Sam Farr

cc: Attorney General Alberto Gonzales