

24 April 2020

Guatemala: home of human rights lawyer Esteban Celada raided

On the morning of Wednesday 22 April 2020, the house of human rights lawyer **Esteban Celada** was raided and vandalized by unknown individuals whilst the defender was at work., This is the third raid on his home in less than 5 months.

[Esteban Emanuel Celada Flores](#) is a human rights lawyer and member of the *Grupo de Litigantes contra la Tortura en América Latina* (Group of Litigators against Torture in Latin America) an initiative led by lawyers from 10 Latin American countries, working to combat the systematic use of torture in the region. He has collaborated with a number of human rights organisations in Guatemala, including Mujeres Transformando el Mundo (MTM) and has also provided legal representation in many sensitive cases across the country, concerning crimes against humanity, organised crime, sexual violence and femicide.

On the morning of Wednesday 22 April 2020, the human rights lawyer Esteban Celada arrived home to find that unknown individuals had forced entry through the front door of his home and had raided and vandalized his apartment, painting hate signs on the walls and causing permanent damage to his private property. This is not the first time that Esteban Celada's home has been vandalised and the intimidating content as well as the continuous and systemic nature of the attacks have left a harmful psychological impact on the defender.

On 22 April 2020 after returning to his home and seeing that it had been raided, Esteban Celada filed a complaint with the Crime Unit against Human Rights Activists of the Public Ministry. There he was told that due to the COVID-19 the Unit was lacking the resources to immediately assess the crime scene and so he was advised to provide videos and photographs himself to ensure there was a record of the incident on his file.

The human rights lawyer has filed at least six complaints before the Public Ministry for multiple attacks received since 2016. Those complaints include a raid on his home on [21 December 2019](#) and a raid on his home on [5 February 2020](#). The defender has been met with intimidating attitudes from members of the Public Ministry while filing complaints. As it stands, no advances have been made on the investigations, nor have protection measures been implemented to safeguard the life and integrity of the defender.

Since February 2020, Esteban Celada has received at least 10 digital attacks, including surveillance, phishing, alerts on attempts to intrude his accounts, as well as threats and defamatory messages on social networks from unknown sources, and from alleged members and former members of the security forces and the army.

Front Line Defenders expresses serious concern about the ongoing harassment and intimidation of human rights lawyer Esteban Celada. It further condemns the various unjustified and intimidating searches and vandalization of Esteban Celada's properties, the constant surveillance and digital attacks, as well as the multiple aggressions and threats that he has faced since 2016. Front Line Defenders believes that Esteban Celada is being targeted solely as a result of his peaceful human rights work and should be able to carry out such work without fear of reprisal.