

12 February 2020

## **Guatemala: Attempted break-in at home of human rights lawyer Esteban Celada**

In the morning of 5 February 2020, unidentified individuals attempted to break into the house of human rights lawyer **Esteban Celada**. Prior to the incident, unknown persons asked his neighbours about his whereabouts.

[Esteban Emanuel Celada Flores](#) is a human rights lawyer and member of the Group of Litigators against Torture in Latin America (Grupo de Litigantes contra la Tortura en América Latina), 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). He has also provided legal representation in many sensitive cases across the country, concerning crimes against humanity, organised crime, sexual violence and femicide.

In the morning of 5 February 2020, unidentified individuals attempted to enter the house of human rights lawyer Esteban Celada by breaking the main door. Prior to the incident, unknown persons asked his neighbours about his whereabouts. The next day, Esteban Celada filed a complaint at the office of the Prosecutor for Human Rights (Fiscalía de Derechos Humanos). The complaint concerns the attempted break-in as well as the numerous security incidents he had experienced throughout 2019. To date, no action has been taken by the authorities.

Esteban Celada has been repeatedly targeted in the past. Between 8 May 2019 and 5 February 2020, he faced at least 27 security incidents, including persistent surveillance. On 8 February 2018, his brother David Raymundo Celada Flores was shot dead with a machine gun by unidentified persons, as he was leaving the house of Esteban Celada. Two witnesses were also killed during the incident. On the night of 21 December 2019, unknown individuals broke into his house while he was away. The perpetrators did not steal anything but searched through his belongings, in particular documents related to his legal work.

The human rights lawyer has a pending request for precautionary measures before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights which, according to information he received, has not been processed due to the failure of the Ministry of Interior to submit a risk analysis.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the attempted break-in at the house of Esteban Celada as well as the large number of security incidents he has faced in the past. It believes that Esteban Celada is being targeted solely as a result of his peaceful activities in the defence of human rights.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Guatemala to:**

1. Carry out immediate, thorough and impartial investigations into the attempted break-in at the house of Esteban Celada, the past security incidents against him, as well as the killing of his brother, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;

2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Esteban Celada, in consultation with him. This includes carrying out a risk analysis and providing the required protection measures;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Guatemala are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

**Front Line Defenders Board of Directors**

Denis O'Brien, Mary Lawlor, Jim Conway, Maria Mulcahy, Kieran Mulvey, Mary Jane Real (Philippines), David Sykes, Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe), Verónica Vidal (Uruguay)

**Front Line Defenders International Advisory Council**

James L. Cavallaro, Maryam Elahi, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani

Front Line, The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders trading as Front Line Defenders, is registered in Ireland as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Registered Office: Second Floor, Grattan House, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 FA39, Ireland.

Company No. 593190; Registered Charity No. 20204494; CHY 22404