

Thelma Aldana
Attorney General of Guatemala

October 22, 2015

Re: Shooting attack in Mataquescuintla, Jalapa against opponents of Tahoe Resources' Escobal mine

Dear Thelma Aldana,

The below-signed organizations express their alarm following a shooting attack this past weekend against six people in Mataquescuintla, Jalapa, Guatemala, where communities have organized in peaceful resistance to Tahoe Resources' Escobal mine project for years. Three were injured in the attack, including Alex Reynoso, who was previously shot and injured in another attack in 2014 that cost the life of his daughter, Topacio. We are profoundly concerned for the safety of Mr. Reynoso, his family, and others who peacefully oppose mining in Mataquescuintla, Guatemala and surrounding areas. We condemn this violence, demand a full and impartial investigation into what took place and repeat our earlier demands for a full and impartial investigation into all prior incidents of violence in connection with Tahoe Resources' Escobal project in southeastern Guatemala.

On Saturday, October 17, Alex Reynoso – environment defender and part of the Mataquescuintla mining resistance movement in southeastern Guatemala – was shot along with two other men. Alex Reynoso remains in stable condition, recuperating from a bullet wound in his lower back. The other two men were treated and released with minor injuries. Unknown assailants shot the men shortly after they had left a meeting with the mayor of Mataquescuintla, Hugo Loy, on Saturday evening, while they were driving home. They were a few kilometers outside of town when the attack occurred.

This latest incident follows a pattern of attacks against land and environment defenders opposing mining operations across the country, particularly those who oppose Tahoe Resources' Escobal mine in the region of Santa Rosa and Jalapa in southeastern Guatemala. Alex Reynoso faced a similar armed attack in April 2014 that left him seriously injured; his 16-year-old daughter, Topacio Reynoso, who was with him at the time, was shot and killed. Among other violent incidents in connection with this project, seven men were wounded when private security guards opened fire on a peaceful protest in front of the mine site in late April 2013; they are now suing Tahoe Resources for negligence and battery in a British Columbia court over this case. Former head of security for Tahoe Resources, Alberto Rotondo, is under arrest awaiting trial for allegedly ordering the attack. He faces charges for bodily harm and obstruction of justice.

The Reynoso family has been at the forefront of the region-wide resistance to Tahoe Resources' Escobal project since 2010. Topacio Reynoso was a leader of the Mataquescuintla youth movement against mining. Her father, Alex Reynoso, is a community leader who has been recognized for his role in the organization of a community consultation in the municipality.

In November 2012, the municipality of Mataquescuintla held the first municipal referendum in the department of Jalapa, joining three other municipalities in Santa Rosa that have said 'no' to mining in their territory. During this referendum, more than 98% of participants voted against

the presence of transnational mining activities on their lands, and municipal authorities have respected the results ever since. In December 2013, the Constitutional Court found in favour of the vote in Mataquescuintla, acknowledging the responsibility of municipal authorities to convene such votes and to make decisions according to their results. This affirmed the referendum as the “adequate means by which peoples may exercise their right to give their opinion and be consulted on topics of interest.” To date, there have been 14 community referenda in municipalities, towns and villages surrounding the Escobal project in which tens of thousands of people have voted no to Tahoe Resources’ activities in the area.

During the last month and a half, several notable advances have taken place with regards to the movement opposing mining in the area, which may have motivated this violent attack. During the first round of national elections on September 6, the mayor of Mataquescuintla, Hugo Loy, won his second term in office running on an anti-mining platform. On October 9, the community referendum on mining in Mataquescuintla was brought back into the spotlight when the *Diario Centro America* officially published the 2012 results, and a *Prensa Libre* article indicated that municipal authorities would pass unprecedented legislation in the country to limit the presence of mining operations in their territory.

We are very concerned with the pattern of violence and persecution of environment defenders and community leaders who oppose Tahoe Resources’ mine project. It is vitally important that the killing of Topacio Reynoso and the repeat attacks against Alex Reynoso and others in Mataquescuintla not remain in impunity. We call for a full and impartial investigation by the Special Prosecutor’s Office on Human Rights and the Attorney General’s Office in order to ensure justice and to prevent further violence in the region. We also demand that the Ministry of the Interior provide protective measures for Alex Reynoso, according to what he and his family request.

Finally, we reiterate our deep commitment to work in solidarity with communities affected by Tahoe Resources’ Escobal project, who are defending their land, their lives and their environment. We join them in demanding respect for the results of the community referendum in Mataquescuintla, as well as others in the surrounding area, through which they have resoundingly rejected mining in their territory. We also persist in demanding an end to impunity for US and Canadian mining companies operating around the world, calling upon US and Canadian authorities to ensure that Tahoe Resources and others can be held to account at home for the many harms happening around the world in connection with their projects.

BC CASA/Cafe Justicia, Vancouver, Canada

Be the Change, US

Cafe Rebelde Collective, Vancouver, Canada

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Center for Alternative Mining Development Policy, La Crosse, WI, US

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Washington, D.C., US

Central American Solidarity Committee, Kingston, Canada

Collectif Guatemala, France

Comité pour les droit humains en Amérique latine (CDHAL), Québec

Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), US

Groundwater Awareness League, US

Guatemala/Canada Solidarity Network of Kingston, Canada
Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC), US
Guatemala Solidarity Project
In Solidarity with all Land Defenders
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
KAIROS Halifax, Canada
Latin America Solidarity Network-Milwaukee (LASC), US
Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network, Canada
Maui Peace Action
Midwest Coalition Against Lethal Mining, Milwaukee, WI
Mining the Connections Working Group, United Church of Canada
Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN), Toronto, Canada
Mining Justice Action Committee, Victoria, Canada
Mining Justice Alliance (MJA) in Vancouver, Canada
MiningWatch Canada
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
Oxfam Guatemala
Portland Central America Solidarity Committee, US
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), US
Projet Accompagnement Québec Guatemala, Québec
Redwood Justice Fund, US
Reno Justice Coalition, US
RightOnCanada.ca
Rights Action, Canada/US
Rising Tide, Seattle, US
Rising Tide, Vancouver - Coast Salish Territories
Rochester Committee on Latin America, US
Social Justice Connection, Montreal, Québec
Solidarity with Ayotzinapa, Vancouver, Canada
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, US
StoptheInsitute, Vancouver, Canada
Streams of Justice, Vancouver, Canada
SweFOR - Movimiento Sueco por la Reconociliación / Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
United Steelworkers (USW), Canada
Victoria Philippine Solidarity Group, Victoria, Canada
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, Madison, WI, US
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Madison, WI, US

CC:

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Eunice del Milagro Mendizábal
Head of Ministry of the Interior

Juan Pablo Ligorria Arroyo
Minister of Energy and Mines

Ambassador Deborah Chatsis
Canadian Embassy in Guatemala

Ambassador Todd D. Robinson
US Embassy in Guatemala

Ambassador Georg Andrén
Swedish Embassy in Guatemala