

3 July 2017

### **Guatemala: Attacks, acts of intimidation and attempted break-in against CCDA**

On 29 June 2017, eight unidentified men wearing balaclavas attempted to break into the office of the **Comité Campesino del Altiplano – CCDA (Campesino Committee of the Highlands)** in Cobán, Alta Verapaz. On 26 June 2017, shots were fired during a CCDA meeting held in Nuevo Centro.

CCDA is a *campesino* organization that works to promote access to land as well as the labour rights of Mayan campesinos. They provide support related to land and credit, including scholarships as well as various trainings on *campesino* rights. At the national level, the CCDA forms part of the **National Coordination of Campesino Organizations (CNOC)**, which helps *campesinos* to organize themselves in order to uphold their fundamental human rights.

On 29 June 2017, around 1:30 am, eight unidentified men wearing balaclavas attempted to force the door and gate of the CCDA office. The assailants threatened members of the organization who were present, including **Lesbia Artola** and **Analy Noriega**, stating “*this is happening because you are defending communities that like problems*”. The unidentified individuals intimidated members of CCDA, as well as families from a neighbouring community that the organization was hosting, for roughly half an hour before fleeing in a vehicle.

This is not the first time that members of the CCDA have been targeted due to their human rights activities. On 26 June 2017, around 11:30 am, several shots were fired by unknown assailants during a meeting between [Lesbia Artola](#), Analy Noriega and other human rights defenders from twenty local communities. Fortunately, no one was injured. The meeting was in solidarity with the Choctún Community, in Nuevo Centro, who are facing a land dispute that threatens to displace their entire community. On the same day, two unidentified men entered the CCDA office and proceeded to intimidate its members, stating that the disputed land in Choctún Community, in Nuevo Centro will be transferred to Chilté Cooperative, the other party in the dispute.

Front Line Defenders has previously reported on violations against indigenous and land rights defenders in Guatemala, such as [Eugenio López y López](#), [Aura Lolita Chávez](#), [Carlos Maaz Coc](#), [Abelino Chub Caal](#), and [Angélica Choc](#).

Front Line Defenders condemns the attacks and acts of intimidation carried out against members of the CCDA and other human rights defenders in Guatemala, which it believes to directly related to their work in defence of human rights.

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

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks and acts of intimidation against Lesbia Artola and Analy Noriega, as well as other members of the CCDA, 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 Lesbia Artola and Analy Noriega and all other CCDA members;
  
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.