



*Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
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His Excellency Ambassador Manuel Estuardo Roldán
Embassy of the Republic of Guatemala
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April 11, 2008

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

We write to request that your government take swift and appropriate action to guarantee the life and physical safety of the Bishop of San Marcos, Mons. Alvaro Ramazzini.

We have received reports that on Monday, March 31, in the city of San Marcos, a religious sister experienced an act of intimidation by several people in a vehicle who blocked her way and told her to deliver a death threat to Mons. Ramazzini. This is not the first threat that he has received, nor is he alone. In the past year, several of his co-workers have also received threats. As you may know, Mons. Ramazzini is well-known and admired by many Canadians. He last visited this city in 2005, meeting the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and local parishes.

It is noteworthy that senior church officials are not immune to attack in Guatemala. We are painfully aware that this month marks the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Bishop Juan Gerardi in Guatemala City, shortly after he presented a major human rights report.

Religious leaders must have the right to speak in defense of the human rights of their people. Intimidation or threats against them must be publicly denounced by the Guatemalan authorities, and protection offered to such leaders as the Bishop. As well, we would hope that the authorities have quickly investigated these occurrences in an attempt to end them.

We look forward to receiving your assurances that the Government of Guatemala has forcefully responded to provide the conditions necessary for Bishop Ramazzini to continue his leadership of his diocese and people.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Gunn
Coordinator

Cc Hon. Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade