

**JOINT STATEMENT ON THE DECISION OF THE GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT
NOT TO RENEW THE MANDATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
AGAINST IMPUNITY IN GUATEMALA (CICIG) AND BARRING THE ENTRY OF
ITS CHIEF COMMISSIONER INTO THE COUNTRY**

5 September 2018. International organisations in Europe that cooperate on Guatemala condemn the decision of President Jimmy Morales not to renew the mandate of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), as well as the subsequent decision whereby its Commissioner, Iván Velásquez, has been barred from entering the country, which put at serious risk the justice system and the rule of law. The CICIG has contributed significantly to the work of the Public Prosecutor's Office and to fighting the corruption networks embedded in the state of Guatemala, but there is still a long way to go before the latter really has strong and independent institutions. We are concerned that as a result of this decision, the judicial processes initiated by the CICIG will remain inconclusive, and that the networks of corruption will regain full control of the state. Therefore, we consider that **international accompaniment and support for the CICIG, including Commissioner Iván Velásquez as well as for the other key Guatemalan institutions working to uphold the rule of law, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, independent judges, and the Human Rights Ombudsman, remains imperative.**

In recent years, we have noted with concern the constant defamation campaigns against Commissioner Iván Velásquez and other CICIG officials by the Government of Guatemala and powerful groups that feel threatened by their investigations. The fact that President Morales declared Commissioner Velásquez persona non grata and tried to expel him from the country in August 2017, because the CICIG had initiated investigations against his son and brother for acts of corruption, and has now barred Commissioner Velásquez, who has initiated a process against President Morales on allegations of his party receiving illicit financing during the electoral campaign of 2015, from entry into the country, is a case in point.

We are gravely concerned that on 31 August 2018, the Government of Guatemala used tanks and heavily armed policemen to intimidate CICIG personnel, as well as Guatemalan citizens, while announcing the decision not to renew the mandate of the CICIG. The image of President Jimmy Morales surrounded by the military and police at the press conference evokes the memory of the coup d'état and the military dictatorships during the dark years of the internal armed conflict, and generates fear in the population. The use of intimidation measures like these

demonstrate the real risk that Guatemala will return to past repression and impunity. The international community cannot stand by and tolerate the use of such intimidation or of undemocratic practices of this kind.

In light of the foregoing, we call on the European Union and its Member States to demand that the state of Guatemala complies with its international obligations and guarantees the necessary conditions for Commissioner Iván Velásquez and the CICIG to continue their work safely and independently. This is all the more important, given the crucial support the CICIG gives to the development of independently functioning rule of law institutions in Guatemala. Moreover, we call on the European Union and its Member States to see to it that the state of Guatemala respects the human rights of its citizens and does not return to the violent, repressive and undemocratic practices of the past.

Both Ends

Center for Development of International Law (CDIL)

CNV International

EU-LAT Network (former CIFCA and Grupo Sur)

Free Press Unlimited

Hivos

Impunity Watch

International Commissions of Jurists (ICJ)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Platform against Impunity

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)

Open Society Justice Initiative

TRIAL International

World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP)

