

Uppsala, September 7th, 2018
Diarienummer KS 2018-0997

Margot Wallström
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

CC

Annika Ben David Ambassador for Human Rights
Annika Söder, Cabinet Secretary
Karin Höglund, Departementsråd
Anders Carlsson, Deputy Head of Unit
Tove Wennergren, Desk Officer
Anders Kompass, Swedish Ambassador in Guatemala

Regarding the urgent situation in Guatemala

Dear Margot Wallström,

Greetings to you from Church of Sweden/Svenska kyrkan.

The reason for this letter is to express our concern for the worrying situation in Guatemala regarding the threats to democracy, principles of rule of law and the integrity of human rights defenders – including state actors within the judicial system and the Ombudsman. The actions taken by the government of Guatemala regarding CICIG – Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala - and its personnel on August 31st and this first week of September have raised serious concerns and fears among the Guatemalan civil society and amongst our partners. Attached you will find a statement from the Christian Ecumenical Council of Guatemala –CEG- (in Spanish) that touches upon much of the content in this letter.

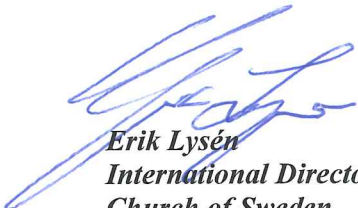
Church of Sweden would like to express our appreciation for Sweden's effective contributions given to the work of CICIG and also for the public statements to defend democratic institutions, rule of law and the integrity of the work and personnel CICIG.

The CICIG has contributed significantly to the work of the Public Prosecutor's Office and to fig 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 the recent governmental decisions, the judicial processes initiated by the CICIG could remain inconclusive, and that the networks of corruption could 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, remain imperative. It is

of equal importance to stay vigilant to address any threats to the integrity of human rights defenders and the enabling environment of their work and the civil society democratic space.

Finally we would like to reiterate our appreciation for the Swedish responses and to recommend continuous prioritization of meeting Guatemala's current challenges. We encourage that Sweden continues to alert the international community and especially the EU to promote democracy and rule of law in Guatemala, specifically in support of the CICIG. As Church of Sweden with partnerships and as part of global and regional faith based networks we also look forward to further cooperation and dialogue.

Respectfully,



Erik Lysén
International Director
Church of Sweden