

Licenciado Juan Luis Florido
Fiscal General de la República y Jefe del Ministerio Público
Ministerio Público
8a. Avenida 10-67, Tercer nivel
Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Dear Licenciado Florido:

I am writing to ask you to move forward on the cases charging Efraín Ríos Montt and other former military officials with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The war survivors' organization Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR) presented their two cases in 2000 and 2001 against the military high commands of Romeo Lucas García and Efraín Ríos Montt, respectively. *Six years later*, the cases remain at a standstill in the investigative phase due to the constant switching of prosecutors assigned to the matter. I ask you, as Attorney General, to ensure that these cases advance in the justice system.

The lack of progress in these cases has led victims to seek justice outside of Guatemala.

In June 2006, Spanish judge Santiago Pedraz visited Guatemala in an attempt to investigate a case presented in the Spanish courts by Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum. Frustrated with the "obstructionist attitude" that he encountered in Guatemala, he issued international arrest warrants against eight former military officials, some of whom are included in the AJR's cases. Judge Pedraz concluded, "*There is sufficient evidence that the crimes of genocide, terrorism, torture, murder and illegal detention were committed by the defendants.*"

Legislators around the world are calling attention to the importance of the Guatemalan genocide cases.

On October 26, the European Union Parliament issued a resolution affirming that "*those accused of plotting and committing [wartime] crimes have never been brought before a court and some of them continue to hold high political office.*" Parliament urged "*the Guatemalan institutions fully to cooperate and do everything in their power to shed light on the human rights violations and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice and that the findings of the investigations are made public.*"

In the United States, members of Congress wrote to the Department of Justice to request the enforcement of the warrants originating from Spain: "*In light of the very serious nature of the crimes, we believe the United States should fully cooperate with the investigation and immediately comply with the arrest warrant.*"

Now is the perfect opportunity to prove to the world that Guatemala respects the state of law.

On October 5, 2006 the AJR formally requested that your office launch the next stage in the genocide cases. I urge you to act according to the legal principle that requires cases to progress in a timely way.

Licenciado Florido, you will be remembered in history either as the Attorney General who allowed impunity to reign, or as the Attorney General who courageously made history by pushing these benchmark cases forward. For the sake of the war survivors, I ask you to choose justice over impunity.

Name _____

Address _____
