



Laureates:

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)
Jody Williams, USA (1997)
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

H.E. Mr. Jimmy Morales
President of the Republic of Guatemala

Your excellency,

We, the undersigned Nobel laureates, wish to express our grave concern over the recent developments occurring in Guatemala.

Guatemala's International Commission against Impunity (CICIG) has been recognized both nationally and internationally for its invaluable contribution to the fight against corruption and impunity in Guatemala.

We believe that the decision to terminate its mandate, and the expulsion of Commissioner Velasquez and his team --despite the Constitutional Court vote to maintain the Commission--sets a dangerous precedent for Guatemala, and deeply compromises the independence of the judiciary, a cornerstone for peace and democracy globally.

Guatemala achieved remarkable advances in the fight against impunity, human rights violations and crimes against humanity, through the 1996 Peace Accords. However, a series of recent legal initiatives are now putting these advances at great risk, at the expense of the people of Guatemala.

Several national and international mechanisms have documented growing restrictions on fundamental rights in Guatemala, such as freedom of expression and association. In 2018, 26 human rights defenders –most of them Indigenous activists– were killed. Between 2015 and 2016, 231 attacks were registered against women human rights defenders in Guatemala, most of them land and natural resources defenders.

Elected officials have also been subjected to state harassment, as is the case with the recent intrusion in the offices of opposition members of Congress.

In light of this democratic crisis and the risk of a worsening situation ahead of the national elections, scheduled next June, we urge the State of Guatemala to:

- Guarantee the rule of law, by upholding the judicial independence of the Constitutional Court and the respect of all democratic institutions;
- Reinstate the CICIG and provide it with all necessary guarantees to operate fully and independently;
- Guarantee the freedom of expression, opinion, peaceful assembly and association of all Guatemalan citizens, as well as full protection for victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders, particularly those from indigenous communities.

Advocating for peace, justice and equality

As President of the Republic of Guatemala, you bear the unique responsibility to protect the welfare, freedom and peace of all Guatemalans at this important juncture in your country.

The people of Guatemala have endured enormous hardship to safeguard their fundamental rights. We urge you to uphold the principles of Guatemala's constitution, and ensure peace and democracy prevail in Guatemala.

Sincerely,