

C U S J

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

A national faith-based organization founded in support of Unitarian values

P.O. Box 40011, Ottawa, ON, K1V 0W8

President, Katharine Im-Jenkins

president.cusj@gmail.com

Astor Escalante,
Attorney General,
El Salvador
Fax: 011-503-2523-7170

Dear Hon. Astor Escalante;

On behalf of the members of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, I am writing to express concern regarding the violence directed against community leaders opposed to possible gold-mining in Cabañas.

As people who respect the interdependent web of all existence, we are sympathetic to the concerns these community leaders raised about the ecological impacts of the proposed gold-mining project and the possible pollution of ground and water by the poisonous chemicals used in gold extraction.

As people committed to the right of conscience, we support the right of these leaders to speak out and to mobilize others in opposition to Pacific Rim's El Dorado mining project.

As people who seek justice, we are concerned about the lack of prosecutions related to the murders of mining opponents and by the inability or unwillingness of the police and the office of the attorney general to protect community activists and halt the violence.

We urge the attorney general and Salvadoran authorities:

- to carry out impartial, exhaustive and effective investigations into the assassinations of Marcelo Rivera, Ramiro Rivera, Felícita Echevarría and Dora Alicia Sorto and to bring those responsible to justice;
- to ensure the safety and protection of all members of the Santa Marta Association for Economic and Social Development (ADES), the Cabañas Environmental Committee, and other community activists and their relatives;
- to guarantee the rights of environmental and human rights activists to dissent and peaceful protest.

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We respect the courage the government of President Funes has shown in opposing this mining project and resisting pressure from the mining industry. We hope only for similar courage in confronting the continuing violence threatening these community activists.

Sincerely,

Katharine Im-Jenkins
President
CUSJ

CC

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