



## **TOTAL SUPPORT FOR JUDGE MIGUEL ÁNGEL GÁLVEZ**

Organizations and personalities of the international community hereby express our full support for the work of Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez.

In Guatemala, a series of actions has been taking place for several years, which seeks to control the judiciary on the part of the ruling party from the executive power, the congress of the republic, as well as the business sectors that have managed the country's economy in the last decades and have seen their interests threatened by the fight against corruption and impunity.

These sectors constituted in the criminal pact of the corrupt have implemented a plan that has seriously eroded the judicial system, eliminating from their posts honest officials who have administered the justice system. Hence, with false accusations and perverse maneuvers, they have criminalized, transferred and removed from their posts judges, prosecutors, and magistrates, who have been characterized by their honesty and generate positive results by bringing to justice those who are corrupt and responsible for forced disappearance and the death of hundreds of Guatemalan citizens during the years of the internal armed conflict.

In the last year several prosecutors, judges and other justice functionaries have been forced into exile, in various countries; this constitutes an unprecedented event in the recent history of the Guatemalan judicial system.

The situation of Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez, head of High-Risk Court "B", who has been in charge of several high-risk cases, is one aspect of this context. He is currently presiding over the case known as the Military Diary (Diario Militar).

On May 6, he ruled to send nine former military and police officers to trial for forced disappearances, illegal detention, torture, and the murder of more than 195 people, including political opponents during the military regime of General Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores, who ruled Guatemala from 1983 to 1985.

This resolution has not been welcomed by right-wing sectors linked to the military, who seek to stop this process which has led the military and police involved in human rights violations to face justice.

As a consequence, Judge Gálvez has been subjected to coercion and threats that threaten his security and judicial independence in conducting justice in these cases. Previously, judges Pablo Xitumul and Erika Aifán faced proceedings to be stripped of their immunity and were then removed from office.

Faced with the various threats that he has been receiving in the exercise of his function, Judge Gálvez addressed a brief to the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) requesting that this judicial body rule on the matter; it also requested that the Court adopt protective measures and guarantee his judicial independence. The CSJ has not made any ruling in this regard.

On the contrary, on June 15, CSJ Magistrates "by majority" admitted to process the request for withdrawal of immunity against Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez, presented on May 11 by the so-called Foundation Against Terrorism (FCT), and Zonia Santizo of the Third Chamber of the Court of Appeals of the Criminal Branch was appointed as investigative judge. Santizo has shown a partial position in previous cases against rulings issued by Judge Erika Aifán and in favor of officials and their relatives involved in corruption.

Given these facts, we express our unrestricted solidarity with Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez.

We condemn all acts of threats and coercion on the part of sectors that seek to intimidate his work.

We demand that the government of Guatemala, in particular the president, Alejandro Giammattei, stop the criminalization policy against Judges and Prosecutors that has taken place particularly under his government, and all coercive and intimidating actions against Judge Gálvez.

We call on all social sectors in Guatemala and the international community to support the work carried out by Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez and raise their voices so that the Guatemalan government does not continue criminalizing the elements of the judicial system that act objectively and impartially dispensing Justice.

Todos por Guatemala/All for Guatemala-Canada