Guatemala: Notes On Recent Disappearances Of Members Of Indigenous Communities Organization

by Deborah Tyroler
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On April 1, Luiz Ruiz and Macario Pu Chivalan, members of the Runujel Junam Ethnic Communities Council (Consejo de Comunidades Etnicas "Runujel Junam"-CERJ), were forcibly abducted from the Finca Trinidad Miramar, Suchitepequez department, by black-faced armed men dressed in olive drab. The two men, employed on the farm as seasonal laborers, are residents of Portrero Viejo and Santa Rosa Chujuyuapa, respectively, villages in El Quiche department. On April 7, two other CERJ members, Agapito Perez Lucas and Nicolas Mateo, were abducted by soldiers in black-face from the same farm. Perez and Mateo are residents of Sacualpa and Santa Rosa, respectively, El Quiche department. Family members witnessed the abductions. CERJ objectives include the denunciation of human rights violations suffered by indigenous groups, and the promotion and preservation of indigenous culture and identity. CERJ has been active in protesting the forced participation of peasant farmers in the Civil Defense Patrols by the Guatemalan army. Many CERJ members have received death threats, including the organization's president, Amilcar Mendez. Mendez has reported that on April 9, when he and family members of the four disappeared men were traveling to Guatemala City, a Ford car with polarized windows twice attempted to force him off the road. The attempts failed and no one was injured. (Basic data from 04/06/89 and 04/16/89 reports by Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, Washington DC)

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