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## **Guatemala: Union Organizers Forced To Flee The Country**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

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On Aug. 16, Juan Francisco Alfaro, chief of the Guatemalan Confederation for Trade Unity (CUSG), was quoted by daily newspaper El Grafico (Guatemala) as saying that three workers involved in efforts to organize a union at the El Pilar sugar processing plant in Retalhuleu department were forced to flee the country with their families. In mid-July when the three were walking on a highway near Cuyotenango, Suchitepequez department, unidentified men fired at them from a vehicle, and then attempted to run them over. In addition, they were victimized by numerous death threats and weeks of surveillance. The workers blame El Pilar plantation owners for their exile. In efforts to destroy the union, plant owners fired 100 employees earlier in the year. In March, an employee who had been elected to the union's provisional directorate, was assassinated. (Basic data from Cerigua weekly briefs, 08/13-19/90)

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