

Rights Action  
June 8, 2015

## **Guatemala**

### **Hit Squad Assassinates Lawyer Defending Mynor Padilla, Former Head Of Security For Hudbay Minerals, On Trial For Murder And Aggravated Assault**

On June 3rd, Francisco Palomo was shot 12 times. Besides representing Hudbay Mineral's former head of security, Palomo was a lawyer for General Rios Montt who was found guilty of genocide against the Mayan Ixil people during the worst years of U.S.-backed repression and genocide.



(Former Hudbay Minerals head of security, Mynor Padilla, standing center in court in Puerto Barrios, April 14, 2015. Seated first to his left is Francisco José Palomo Tejeda, along with 2 other defense lawyers Frank Manuel Trujillo Aldana and Carlos Rafael Pellecer López.)

It is not yet known if this assassination will affect the legal defense for Hudbay Mineral's former head of security. It is not known if Hudbay Minerals was actually paying for the legal services of Francisco Palomo, and what, if anything, Hudbay will now do to continue defending the accused murderer Mynor Padilla.

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### **Rios Montt's Defense Attorney Killed by Hitmen in Guatemala City**

by Emi MacLean & Sophie Beaudoin, June 4, 2015

<http://www.ijmonitor.org/2015/06/rios-montts-defense-attorney-killed-by-hitmen-in-guatemala-city/>

Prominent Guatemalan attorney Francisco Palomo died yesterday, June 3, shot to death in broad daylight while driving his car a block from his office. According to [witnesses](#), Palomo was killed around 1:00PM by two men on a motorbike who followed Palomo's car and fired at him repeatedly before fleeing.

Palomo, who represented former military head of state Efraín Ríos Montt, died at the scene with at least 12 gunshot wounds. Investigators described the killing as a "direct attack" on Palomo. The identity of his killers remains unknown.

Palomo, who was 63 years old, was involved in many of Guatemala's most politically fraught trials, including serving on the legal team defending Ríos Montt during his 2013 prosecution for genocide and crimes against humanity.

He served as an alternate judge with the constitutional court from 2001 to 2005, where he supported a controversial 2003 [resolution](#) authorizing Ríos Montt to be a presidential candidate, despite a constitutional ban on the election of former coup leaders as president. He also served as a parliamentarian with the Central American Parliament from 2001 to 2006, representing Ríos Montt's Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG) party.

Palomo also defended former president Alfonso Portillo on corruption charges, before he was extradited to the United States to serve time. He represented former interior minister Carlos Vielmann on charges of extrajudicial killing. Vielmann currently faces [trial](#) in Spain for his role in the death of 10 detainees in 2005 and 2006.

In 1997, he represented former interior minister Danilo Parrinello, after Parrinello was charged in connection with the 1994 killing of a student leader Mario López by the now-defunct national police.

He represented agricultural businesses which, in 1995, challenged the president of the Peace Commission (COPAZ) for negotiating with guerrillas at the close of the armed conflict.

Family, friends, and colleagues arrived at the scene of the crime. Among them was Zury Ríos, daughter of Ríos Montt and presidential candidate in Guatemala's September elections. Interior minister Eunice Mendizábal was also present and confirmed that the government assigned an "elite" investigative team to respond to the killing.

Others offered their condolences, expressed outrage at the killing, and demanded accountability. Portillo offered his "condolences and solidarity," and described "each violent death as the slow death of [Guatemala]."

Marco Sagastume, president of the country's bar association, described Palomo as an honorable man and called for the legal fraternity to defend the right to life.

A coalition of human rights organizations condemned the killing as an affront to all those who engage with the justice system. Prominent human rights lawyer Edgar Perez, who was on the other side of the courtroom from Palomo during the genocide trial, also paid his respects and described the crime as incomprehensible. The Human Rights Ombudsman Jorge de León Duque condemned the crime and called for an “immediate” investigation.

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### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)**

Rights Action continues to fund the victims and their supporters, so they can attend the criminal trial in Guatemala, and the civil lawsuits in Canada, and do everything they can to break the wall of impunity that Hubday and CGN enjoy in Guatemala, and see that a measure (however so small) of justice is done. Make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- United States: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8
- Credit-Card Donations (Canada & U.S.): <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>
- To donate stock, contact: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

### **Civil Lawsuits in Canada Against Hubday Minerals and CGN**

Klippensteins Barristers and Solicitors, [www.chocversushudbay.com](http://www.chocversushudbay.com)

### **“Defensora”**

Screen this award winning film by Rachel Schmidt that documents the lives and vision of the Mayan Qeqchi people and their efforts to seek justice in Canadian courts against Hubday Minerals and CGN. Trailer/Information: [www.defensorathefilm.com](http://www.defensorathefilm.com)

### **More Information**

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