

Gunmen Raid Home of Leading Human Rights Lawyer in Guatemala



Guatemala, August 16 (RCH/TELESUR)--Gunmen broke into the home of one of Guatemala's most prominent human rights lawyers Monday morning trashing the place, in what is seen as part of an intimidation campaign against people investigating former military officials over alleged war crimes.

Claiming they were police officers, armed men forced their way into the home of Ramón Cadena Rámila, Central America director of the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists, reported The Guardian newspaper. Cadena has been involved in numerous high-profile human rights cases in his career, including the trial of former military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt.

The gunmen pillaged the lawyer's house after forcing a security guard and Cadena's family to wait outside. Cadena was not home at the time.

Guatemala's attorney general had also been threatened with death for fighting impunity among the country's elite, according to the TV network TELESUR.

Grahame Russell, director of the human rights organization Rights Action, told TLESUR that threats of

this kind were the norm in Guatemala, dating back to the 1954 U.S. coup that ousted the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz.

The aim of these threats, Russell said, is obviously to derail any effort to achieve justice in Guatemala, especially, he said, when members of the political, military and economic elites are implicated.

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