

# *More than 500 attacks on human rights defenders denounced in Guatemala*

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Guatemala City, September 4 (RHC)-- A Guatemalan human rights organization has denounced that in the first six months of 2021, 551 attacks on human rights defenders were registered in the Central American country.

According to the report of the Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders Guatemala (Udefegua), in the same period, five murders of activists were documented when they worked in the defense of their rights or were leaders in their communities. According to Udefegua, 97 percent of the attacks were against human rights defenders.

In presenting the report, the organization warned that if the trend of aggressions continues, 2021 will become the period with the highest number of attacks against people, organizations and communities defending human rights.

The general coordinator of the organization, Jorge Santos, warned that people and organizations working for human rights face an increasingly risky situation.

For Jorge Santos, the deterioration of the situation is due in large part "to the measures taken by the State itself to limit their independence and criminalize critical actors who act from their autonomy."

The representative of the independent human rights organization maintained that the State is guaranteeing "impunity for the actors who are dedicated to impose a regime of violence and corruption".

The coordinator of Udefegua commented that the country is in the midst of a democratic regression that has favored the expulsion of independent prosecutors, judges and magistrates, the criminalization of communities that oppose extractivist projects or the restriction of fundamental freedoms under the pretext of the pandemic.

Finally, the entity considers that "the permanent siege, harassment, harassment and aggressions against those who defend human rights opens the door to the consolidation of an authoritarian regime" in Guatemala.

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