

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 6, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Nikki Haley
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Secretary Tillerson and Ambassador Haley:

We write to express our profound concern about Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales' recent decision to expel Ivan Velásquez, Commissioner of the United Nations' International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), from the country.

The United States has worked closely with the Morales Administration in Guatemala on a number of issues relevant to US interests in the region, and the work of CICIG and that of Commissioner Velasquez have been instrumental in strengthening the rule of law in the country. Together with the Guatemalan Attorney General Thelma Aldana, Commissioner Velazquez has worked diligently to reduce levels of impunity and strengthen judicial institutions.

We were pleased to see President Morales' comments stating, "the rule of law should always prevail" after the Guatemalan Constitutional Court issued a ruling in favor of Commissioner Velasquez and we encourage the Morales Administration to honor the Court's decision.

We commend the strong statements by Ambassador Haley and the State Department on this issue, and reiterate that it is imperative that CICIG continue its critical work without interference. We believe that combatting impunity and strengthening the rule of law should be at the core of U.S. engagement in Central America.

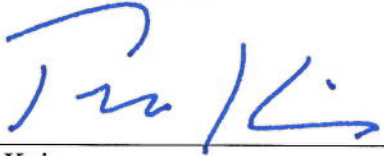
In this context, we reaffirm that the FY 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 115-31) requires the Department of State to withhold 50 percent of U.S. assistance to Guatemala if the government is not taking effective steps to address a series of issues. In particular, Section 7045(4)(B)(vii) of the Act establishes the need for "cooperation with commissions against corruption and impunity." We ask that you consider this when you begin the State Department's certification process.

In closing, we reiterate our unwavering support for continued application of the rule of law in Guatemala and recognize the necessity for Commissioner Velasquez and Attorney General Aldana to continue their important work against impunity.

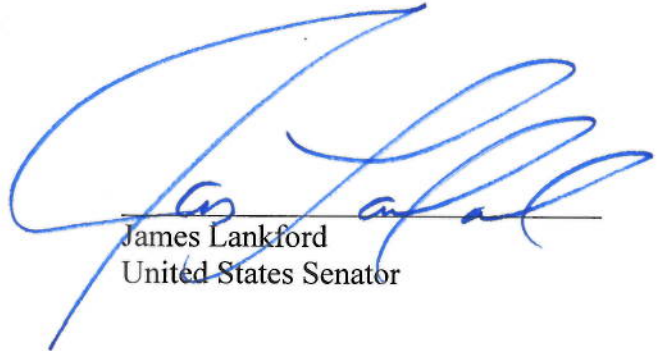
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator