

8 January 2021

Guatemala: Detention and upcoming hearing of human rights defender Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo

On Monday 11 January 2021, the first deposition hearing in the case of woman human rights defender **Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo**, a women's and children's rights advocate, will be held in Cobán. On 20 December 2020, Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo was arrested by members of the Guatemalan National Civil Police at her home in Coban, Alta Verapaz.

[Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo](#) is a woman human rights defender, teacher and feminist from Cobán, Alta Verapaz. As a prominent member of the Baptist church, she was involved in the establishment of a student centre that grants scholarships to impoverished and at-risk children in the region. Since 2007 Delia Leal Mollinedo has been the coordinator of the regional pastoral programme for women of the evangelic centre of pastoral studies in Central America (CEDEPCA). Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo is committed to promoting sexual and reproductive health to women from indigenous communities of the Q'eqchi' y Poqomchi' region of Guatemala.

On the morning of 29 December 2020, members of the National Civil Police violently entered the home of defender Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo. They had been issued with a search warrant by the Prosecutors office, however, the woman human rights defender's name was not written on the warrant. Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo was then taken to the sub-station of the Specialized Division in Criminal Investigation-DEIC of Cobán, Alta Verapaz, and arrested for the fabricated crimes of kidnapping, trafficking of minors, and obstruction of the investigation. During the raid her cell phone was also seized. On 6 January the woman human rights defender was transferred to the Tower of courts of the second Court of First Instance where she gave her first statement, despite the fact that Guatemalan law establishes in Article 9 of the Constitution that the initial hearing must be held within 24 hours of the arrest. After her statement was given, the hearing was suspended due to the absence of a report from the Attorney General's Office (PGN).

Unfortunately, since her arrest, woman human rights defender Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo has been the victim of smear campaigns and public stigmatisation in the media and social networks. Several departmental and national media outlets publicised the news of the case, making misinterpretations with misogynist content and distorting the information and facts, which has only contributed to creating an atmosphere of misinformation and stigmatisation around the case.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the detention and fabricated charges against Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo, which appear to be directly related to her work defending human rights, in particular children's and women's rights. Front Line Defenders condemns the consequent stigmatisation of the woman human rights defender by the media and social networks.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Guatemala to:

1. Immediately release and drop all charges against Delia Leal Mollinedo as Front Line Defenders believes that it is solely motivated by her legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee due process in the legal proceedings carried out against the defender and that her treatment in detention adheres to the conditions established in the 'Set of principles for

the protection of all persons under any form of detention or prison' adopted by resolution 43/173 of the UN General Assembly of December 9, 1988;

3. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo.
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Guatemala are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions judicial harassment.

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