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Australia

The Acting Foreign Minister
The Hon. Craig Emerson
c/- Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Re: the General Elections in Guatemala

We wish to draw your attention to the General Elections in Guatemala to be held on September 11th.

We have considerable concerns following reports from Guatemalan citizens as well as Australian citizens who were refugees from that country of bribery, violence and intimidation marring the possibly of free and fair elections.

There are already widespread reports that opposition candidates and members have been assassinated and that large scale vote buying is underway.

We know that the Australian Government would not interfere in the internal operations of another country. However, it could request the Guatemalan Government to take all the steps necessary to ensure that the September 11th elections are free and fair.

We appeal to you to do all you can to inform the Guatemalan Government of these concerns and to urge them to ensure that the elections are transparent, democratic and fair in accordance with the Guatemalan Constitution.

There is considerable disquiet internationally that the main presidential candidate, General Perez Molina, is a former army major implicated in the massacre of civilians during the civil war in Guatemala.

He is also implicated in the murder of a prominent Bishop Juan Gerardi whose work on human rights had gained him a significant reputation. There are further allegations he is connected with narco trafficking and that as President he would facilitate drug trafficking which could eventually reach into Australia.

Finally, on a more personal note, we express our hope that Kevin's recovery from recent surgery is progressing well and that you will soon return to complete good health.

Yours sincerely