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August 15, 2025

BY E-MAIL

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Greetings:

On behalf of the over 750,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), I write to express my alarm at the arrest of human rights defender Leocadio Juracan, in Guatemala. I am deeply troubled to learn that he was arrested on August 13, at the La Aurora Airport while on his way to a Translocal Social Movement learning conference in South Africa.

Brother Leocadio is the Agrarian Reform Coordinator of the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (CCDA) – a movement for social justice that is active in over 70 communities in Guatemala. A Kaqchikel Maya human rights activist and the first Mayan farmer elected to Guatemala's National Congress, he is a close partner of our union in our work on international solidarity and the struggle against corporate power over local communities worldwide.¹ Brother Leocadio was a guest at our national convention in 2023, where he brought a message of solidarity and justice that inspired thousands of CUPE members in attendance.

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¹ CUPE, *Leocadio Juracán Salomé: A story union activists must care about*, 14 October 2024. Online: <https://cupe.ca/leocadio-juracan-salome-story-union-activists-must-care-about>.

I, like so many others around the world, was heartened when President Bernardo Arévalo was elected on a platform to weed out corruption and rein in corporate power in Guatemala. I therefore urge your government to take immediate measures to protect Brother Leocadio, a leader who has survived assassination attempts to advance those very ideals, from this egregious attack on his human right to liberty.

His allies and friends around the world are fearful for his safety. I call for his immediate release, and for assurance of his protection. I also call on your government to take measures to implement the recommendations of the former UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples in relation to access to justice for, and protection of, Indigenous defenders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK
National President

:sg/ceu

c.c.: C. Rennick; A. Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs; O. Jacques, Ambassador to Guatemala;
H. McPherson, Member of Parliament; E. May, Member of Parliament