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## Guatemala: Upcoming hearing of criminalized woman defender Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo

On 27 May 2021, the interim hearing in the case of woman human rights defender **Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo** will be held before the second court of first instance in Cobán, Alta Verapaz. To date, the Public Prosecutor's Office has not found sufficient evidence in its investigation to continue the trial and has requested the provisional closure of the case until sufficient evidence is gathered. The upcoming hearing will therefore determine whether the Women's Prosecutor's Office Cobán Alta Verapaz request will be granted for the case to be provisionally closed.

[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 Evangelical 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 29 December 2020, members of the National Civil Police (PNC sub-station 51) violently detained Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo in her home. The search warrant provided by the officers did not include the woman human rights defender's name. Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo was then transferred to the sub-station of the Specialized Division of Criminal Investigation (DEIC) in Cobán, Alta Verapaz on fabricated allegations of kidnapping, trafficking and concealment. On 6 January 2021, the woman human rights defender gave her first statement in the court tower of the Second Court of First Instance, despite the fact that Article 9 of the Constitution provides that the initial hearing in a case must be held within 24 hours of arrest. In the days following her arrest, Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo was the victim of [smear campaigns and public stigmatization](#) in the media and social networks.

On 11 January 2021, the Second Criminal Court of First Instance of Cobán decided not to prosecute Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo on the baseless charges of kidnapping and trafficking of minors. However, the woman human rights defender was indicted on charges of concealment and attempted irregular adoption of two minors, for which she was granted freedom of movement as a substitute measure.

Front Line Defenders welcomes the request by the Public Prosecutor's Office to provisionally close the case against Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo's. However, it reiterates its concern that the criminal proceedings against the woman human rights defender have been marked by irregularities, and that her detention and the charges against her appear to be directly related to her peaceful and legitimate work defending human rights, in particular the rights of children and women.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Guatemala to:**

1. Immediately withdraw the fabricated charges against woman human rights defender Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo in reprisal for her legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Carry out the necessary measures to guarantee the security and physical and psychological integrity of Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo and her family members;
3. Guarantee that all human rights defenders in Guatemala, in the development of their legitimate activities, can operate freely without fear of judicial harassment.