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Institution: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Title/Style of Cause: Silvia Josefina Mendez Recinos, Magda Estella Arceo Carrillo, Gladys Anabella De Leon Ruiz and their families v. Guatemala
Doc. Type: Decision on Precautionary Measures
Dated: 13 December 2001
Citation: Mendez v. Guatemala, Inter-Am. C.H.R., OEA/Ser./L/V/II.114, doc. 5 rev., Ch. III, para. 35 (2001)

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35. On December 13, 2001, the Commission contacted the State of Guatemala in order to request the adoption of precautionary measures to preserve the right to life and personal integrity of Silvia Josefina Méndez Recinos, the former director of Guatemala's state printing press (TNG), Magda Estella Arceo Carrillo, a former member of the Guatemalan congress, Gladys Anabella De León Ruiz, a current member of congress, and their families. The information available indicates Ms. Méndez, Ms. Arceo, and Ms. De León denounced, in both public and judicial forums, the alleged use by the Guatemalan vice-president of the national printing press to print 20,000 posters and 500,000 handbills bearing accusations and slanderous comments about the president of the Guatemalan Chamber of Commerce, which were later distributed anonymously in the nation's capital and other cities. As a result of these complaints, Silvia Méndez was asked to resign and, subsequently, received a series of serious death threats that forced her to flee the country. In turn, Magda Arceo and Anabella De León also received death threats and were subjected to harassment. On January 9, 2002, the Guatemalan government informed the Commission that the director general of the National Civilian Police had assigned two officers and a vehicle to provide Congresswoman Gladys Anabella De León with personal security. With respect to Silvia Méndez y Magda Arceo, the Government noted that since they were beyond the country's borders, security measures had to be implemented for their families.