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Institution: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Title/Style of Cause: Carlos Albacete Rosales and Piedad Espinosa Albacete v. Guatemala
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Dated: 22 January 2007
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22. On January 22, 2007, the IACHR issued precautionary measures in favor of Carlos Albacete Rosales and Piedad Espinosa Albacete, co-directors of the environmentalist organization Trópico Verde, devoted to defending the Maya Biosphere Reserve in the Petén region, in northern Guatemala. The information available indicates that on September 12, 2006, the beneficiaries' house was machine-gunned and that since late 2006 they have been subjected to persecution and threats. It is also indicated that after a series of threats, the office of Trópico Verde in the Petén region was forced to close, so that it could reopen in a safer place. On January 10, 2007, four uniformed persons were said to have shot at the beneficiaries when they were traveling in a taxi from the La Aurora National Airport. Finally, it is indicated that Carlos Albacete and Piedad Espinosa had to leave the country due to the threats and attacks directed against them, and that they would attempt to return to Guatemala to resume their activities in defense of the environment. The Commission asked the Guatemalan State to adopt the measures necessary to protect the life and personal integrity of the beneficiaries from the moment they return to Guatemala and to investigate the facts gave rise to the precautionary measures, so as to identify the persons responsible and impose the respective sanctions on them. On February 28, 2007, the IACHR decided to expand the precautionary measures to include Ms. Rut Delmira Catalán Rangel, who was said to have been the target of threats and harassment because of her work with the organization Trópico Verde. The Commission continues to monitor the beneficiaries' situation.