15 March 2018

Agenda Item 6: UPR Outcomes: Guatemala
The Advocates for Human Rights
Delivered by Amy Bergquist
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Mr. / Madam (Vice) President:

The Advocates for Human Rights is concerned that domestic violence, femicide, sexual and physical assault against women, and other forms of violence against women remain serious problems in Guatemala. In the United States, The Advocates for Human Rights provides free legal services to asylum seekers, including individuals who have fled human rights abuses in Guatemala. Our Guatemalan clients share stories of being raped, often repeatedly, and of being violently beaten. They report that police often fail to respond to calls for help related to domestic violence; others are too afraid to go to the police at all. One client, who is now 16 years old, reported that, after attempting to report her husband to the police, he beat her until she miscarried. Despite the high incidence of violence against women there is widespread impunity due to the failure of the Guatemalan government to adequately investigate and prosecute these crimes. Many victims choose to leave the country rather than face potential reprisals and stigma.

Since its second UPR in 2012, Guatemala has taken some steps toward combating violence against women, including establishing agencies to give effect to a 2008 law criminalizing gender-motivated murder. Nonetheless, such laws and mechanisms have been poorly implemented.

We commend Guatemala for accepting Switzerland's recommendation to "Implement policies and programmes preventing violence against women and children," and for accepting Australia's recommendation to "Thoroughly investigate and promptly prosecute cases of femicide and other acts of violence against women." We encourage the Government of Guatemala to effectuate these recommendations by collaborating closely with civil society, by strengthening existing legislation, and by providing the funding and training necessary to effectively implement the law.

Thank you.