

Washington DC. May 24th, 2024.

The undersigned organizations join in extending our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Francisco Villagrán de León, affectionately known as “Paquito”, a Guatemalan diplomat of unparalleled trajectory. His legacy will endure in the memories of all who had the privilege of knowing him and working alongside him, as well as in the history of the struggle for democracy in Guatemala.

Francisco was renowned for his integrity, sensitivity, honor, and moral authority—qualities that steered him through more than three decades of devoted diplomatic service. From his prominent position as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to his roles as Guatemala’s ambassador to various countries and multilateral organizations, and as an ally to Guatemalans exiled due to criminalization in recent years, Francisco left an indelible impression.

Guatemala and the world have lost an unwavering advocate for democracy and human rights, a man whose empathy and solidarity transcended borders. His sudden passing has left a significant void in our hearts and in diplomatic circles, where his presence epitomized commitment, honesty, and excellence.

We will fondly recall his courage, profound wisdom, and unwavering dedication—qualities that will continue to inspire us as we strive towards a more democratic region. During times of severe democratic regression, Francisco's memory will serve as a beacon of hope for all those striving to build more just and equitable societies. His legacy will endure in our collective memory, and his spirit will continue to light our path forward.