



Casa Quivira

“Providing Hope for the Children of Guatemala”

PRESS STATEMENT

3 September 2007

More than three weeks after the raid on Casa Quivira Children’s Home not a single petition to the court from CQ attorneys relating to the accusations of illegally housing children and placing them into adoption has received a response. The whereabouts and well being of all forty-two (42) children who were ordered transferred from CQ continues to be unknown. The private property of Casa Quivira continues to be under state intervention and petitions to return control to the organization are ignored. The Ministerio Publico, MP, (District Attorney’s Office) refuses to allow CQ attorneys access to the case against the organization, violating article 14 of the Guatemalan Constitution.

After weeks of petitioning Judge Roxana Mena to resolve specific petitions related to the accusations of Casa Quivira illegally housing and placing 46 children into adoption not a single resolution has been made by the court. Casa Quivira attorneys filed petitions on Friday, 24 August requesting that judge Roxana Mena indicate why the children were transferred, to what orphanages they were transferred and the legal status and qualifications of those orphanages to provide the necessary medical oversight and foster care. To date, CQ attorneys have not received an answer to this petition, nor others. Judge Mena’s court now has the keys to the doors of Casa Quivira and a written report of activities from the President’s Office for Social Welfare (Secretaria de Bienestar Social de la Presidencia, SBSP) who had occupied the private property of Casa Quivira, but to date CQ personnel continue to be denied access to the property and the keys remain in the hands of the state. After repeated attempts by Casa Quivira attorneys to review the case against the organization, the MP refuses to allow them access to the case as guaranteed in article 14 of the Guatemala Constitution. CQ attorney Estuardo Castellanos states that he was forced to hand-write a complaint against the MP on 30 August “because the Ministerio Publico has continually refused to allow any CQ lawyer access to the case, clearly violating article 14 of the Constitution which guarantees the accused, or the attorneys of the accused, access to review the documents of the case against them.”

When Casa Quivira attorneys approached Judge Mena last week to request that the higher court (Sala de Niñez) be asked to emit an opinion as to the legality of Casa Quivira to house and care for children in adoption the judge responded that she could not remit the case to the Sala because there were too many petitions in the case pending resolution. Today Casa Quivira attorneys will formally petition Judge Mena to remit the case to the Sala de Niñez for consideration.

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