13 June 2019

Presidente Jimmy Morales Cabrera
Presidencia de la República de Guatemala
Guatelama City, Guatemala

Cc: Ministro del Gobernación Enrique Degenhart
Ministro de Cultura y Deportes Elder Súchite Vargas

Dear Presidente Morales,

The American Historical Association wishes to register its grave concern over the uncertain future of the Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional (AHPN). The AHPN is a unique and irreplaceable resource for historical scholarship concerning Guatemala from 1882 to 1997, and especially in the late 20th century. The archive has inestimable value for studying not just the history of the Policía Nacional, but also the broad social history of Guatemala and the Americas. Continued access to the archive and its 60 million documents is crucial for the work of historians and the proper exploration of Guatemala's modern history.

The American Historical Association is the largest organization of professional historians in the world. With approximately 12,000 members spanning the globe, the Association promotes historical thinking, the work of historians, and respect for the integrity of historical scholarship.

The AHPN has been open and operating under the administration of the Ministry of Sport and Culture since 2009. Since that time it has been held up across the world as an extraordinary model of high-quality archival documentation, preservation, digitization, and openness, furthering research of vital current significance. The agreement concerning the housing of the archive expires on 30 June of this year and its future appears in doubt. The AHA urges you to make arrangements as soon as possible to permit the archive to remain in its current location so that it may stay open and freely accessible to researchers. We further urge that the AHPN continue the program of lodging digitized copies with the government of Switzerland and the University of Texas at Austin to allow global access to this indispensable archive.

Sincerely,

J.R. McNeill
President, American Historical Association