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Oral Statement The Lutheran World Federation

44th Session of the Human Rights Council Item 3: ID with Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers

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Delivered by:

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The Lutheran World Federation

Thank you Madame Vice-President:

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) thanks the Special Rapporteur for his report and expresses its concerns about the current situation in Guatemala regarding the election of judges for the high courts.

We are concerned about possible unlawful practices in the process of election of the judges, including the alleged intervention of certain public officials and private actors, which may undermine the independence of the judiciary.

Recently, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted precautionary measures in favour of three magistrates of the Constitutional Court of Guatemala who are facing impeachment proceedings. These magistrates have been playing a key role in the process of election of judges of the Supreme Court of Justice and the Appeals Chambers of the Judicial Power in Guatemala, and therefore need protection.

It is important to recall that last year the Guatemalan government surprisingly decided to terminate the mandate of the International Commission Against Impunity, in spite of the Commission's achievements in fighting corruption in the country.

Therefore, the LWF call on:

- The Special Rapporteur and the Human Rights Council to follow-up closely to this process of election of judges in Guatemala to ensure transparency in the process
- The protection of the magistrates of the Constitutional Court so they can carry out their duties without fear of threats, harassment or intimidation

I thank you, Madame Vice-President