

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 <b>Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández</b> President of the Republic of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 <b>Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas</b> Attorney General of Honduras
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November 12, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the unjust detention of indigenous human rights defender **Calixto Vásquez** on November 3 in front of the town hall in Santa Elena in La Paz Department. He is an active member of the CinPH (La Coordinadora Indígena del Poder Popular de Honduras, or Indigenous Coordinating Body of Grassroots Power in Honduras) and a member of the Indigenous Council of Monte Copado. CinPH works for the defense of the land and the environment and for improving the living conditions of communities of indigenous peoples. He is also involved in the Lenca de La Paz Indigenous Movement (MILPA), which has confronted a number of municipalities because of their violation of the rights of indigenous communities.

At approximately 9:00a.m. on November 3 Calixto Vásquez was taking part in a peaceful protest march from the Llano Largo community to Santa Elena when he was arrested and detained at the police station in Marcala municipality. The protest was against the proposed construction of a hydroelectric dam in the area that would affect many Lenca indigenous communities in the La Paz and Intibucá provinces. Although Calixto Vásquez was released without charge later the same day, we consider this incident to be harassment motivated solely by his peaceful and legitimate work in defense of human rights, particularly those of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous communities across Honduras are defending their rivers, lands and way of life against construction of hydroelectric projects. This is the latest in a series of instances of repression against and attempts to criminalize indigenous communities who work peacefully for the defense of land and natural resources (cf our letter of Jan 26, 2014). Some members of the indigenous environmental resistance movement have been killed, including community activist William Jacobo Rodríguez and his 15-year old brother Maycol Ariel Rodríguez (cf our letters of June 21 and November 11, 2014).

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the arrest of human rights defender Calixto Vásquez, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological security of Calixto Vásquez and of all members of CINPH;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751  
James Nealon, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037  
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US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 11/11/14\_Honduras

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: