

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández President of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
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January 22, 2017

Dear Sirs:

It deeply concerns us that on January 11, members of the National Police attempted to detain **Miriam Miranda**, Coordinator of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH), while she was passing through a checkpoint in La Ceiba in Atlantida Department with fellow human rights defenders **Luis Gutierrez**, **Oscar Gaboa** and **Luis Miranda**, who are members of the Platform of Social and Popular Movements of Honduras (PMSPH).

Four police officers stopped their vehicle, reviewed the driver's documents, and aggressively demanded, using racist and discriminatory language, that they "get out of the vehicle, you are going to jail." When Miriam Miranda made phone calls to alert support groups and other human rights organizations about the situation, the police, speaking directly to Luis Miranda, demanded that they be silent or they would be beaten. After about thirty minutes the police gave up on the arbitrary arrest.

Since 1978 OFRANEH has worked for the promotion of the Afro-Caribbean Garífuna people's right to self-determination through programs that support their political, social, economic and cultural advancement. Miriam Miranda is a highly respected land, human rights and environmental defender in Honduras. For many years she has suffered attacks and acts of repression. On March 29, 2011, while participating in a peaceful protest in Triunfo de la Cruz., she was shot with a tear-gas canister, hospitalized, and subsequently charged with sedition (cf our letter of Apr 5, 2011). On July 17, 2014, heavily armed men kidnapped her and five other Garífuna community defenders for peacefully protesting the operation of an illegal landing strip on Garífuna territories used by organized crime drug traffickers (cf our letter of Aug 16, 2014). These threats and attacks happened despite having been granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on September 20, 2011 (MC 322/11).

Honduras is known for failing to protect human rights defenders, as stated by the UN and the IACHR Special Rapporteurs for human rights defenders in a joint statement last year. In 2016, at least 33 human rights defenders were killed, while several others were victims of attempted assassinations.

We **strongly urge** that you:

- take all measures necessary to stop the harassment and attempted arbitrary detention of Miriam Miranda and other members of OFRANEH, as well as members of PMSPH;
- guarantee that law enforcement officers protect, rather than attack, human rights defenders;
- work to protect and defend ancestral Garífuna land rights in Honduras, as ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (October 8, 2015 and September 1, 2016)

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, 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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Jose de Jesus Orozco Hernandez, Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ via fax: (202)458-3650
Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 1/12/2017_Honduras

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