

Via fax: 011 - 504 235 7700 <b>José Manuel Zelaya Rosales</b> President of the Honduras Republic	Via fax: 011 504 220 4352 <b>Alvaro Romero</b> Public Security Minister:
Via fax: 011 504 221 5667 <b>Leonidas Rosa Bautista</b> Attorney General	Via fax: 011 504 232-6894 <b>Dr. Ramón Custodio López</b> National Human Rights Commission

July 13, 2007

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the safety of the members of the Garífuna community of Afro-indigenous Hondurans on the Atlantic coast. On June 11, 2007 a Garífuna community leader, **Felix Ordoñez Suazo**, was assassinated in Punta Piedras (Colón).

The delicate situation in the community of Punta Piedras started in 1992 when a group of peasants invaded lands owned by the Garífuna community of Punta Piedras. This group of *campesinos* was financially supported by well-known military personnel, businessmen in the palm/palm oil industry, and government employees.

Over the past few years, we have denounced an endless series of politically motivated killings and attacks against the Garífuna people, carried out by wealthy and powerful sectors trying to take over Garífuna lands for agri-business and the global tourist industry.

The government of Honduras has been either complicit in the repression, or complicit through its utter lack of political and legal action to hold the powerful accountable for their political crimes.

We have written on at least three previous occasions urging authorities to protect members of the Garífuna community:

- June 21, 2005: OFRANEH coordinator Gregoria Flores was shot; CNTC leader Edickson Lemus was killed
- Dec 11, 2005: the home of community leader Wilfredo Guerrero was burned, archives destroyed.
- Aug 16, 2006: threats and harassment against Garífuna leader Jessica García, and the kidnapping and murder of Mirna Isabel Santos Thomas

To stop the repression against the Garífuna people, **we strongly urge you to**

- take immediate steps to implement protection measures to ensure the safety of the Garífuna community of Punta Piedras;
- conduct a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation into the assassination of Felix Ordoñez Suazo, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

- Copies: Ambassador Roberto Flores Bermudez, Embassy of Honduras ~ via fax  
 Marcos Mandojana, Desk Officer for Honduras ~ via fax  
 Ambassador Charles A. Ford ~ via fax  
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax  
 Rights Action ~ via fax  
 U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich ~ via email  
 U.S. Representatives Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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