

via fax: 011 504 220 4479 / 011 504 220 4352 Dr Oscar Alvarez Minister of Public Security, HONDURAS	via fax: 011 504 221 5667 Sr. Ramon Ovidio Navarro Duarte Attorney General of HONDURAS
Via fax: 011 504 233 8089 / 011 504 233 6784 Lic. Vilma Cecilia Morales President of the Supreme Court of Justice, HONDURAS	

August 2, 2005

Dear Dr. Alvarez, Sr. Navarro and Judge Morales:

It is difficult to credit the degree of the torment of which some people are capable of committing on others.

Unfortunately, for the past two years we have been forced to record and to protest the sadistic treatment visited upon Marcelino Miranda, his brother Leonardo and, since June 5, 2005, on Feliciano Piñeda. (We have written to Honduran officials four times in the past two years about the politically-motivated arrest and sentencing of the Miranda brothers.)

Piñeda and the Miranda brothers are community leaders at the Montaña Verde communities of Lempira Department. The many incidents of abuse and arbitrary detention against indigenous people are intended to obstruct the efforts of indigenous leaders to secure recognition of their community's land rights.

After having been brutally attacked with machetes by three men on June 5, Piñeda was taken to two distant hospitals by his wife. He was arrested by police at the hospital and taken to the Gracias prison where fellow prisoners, including the Miranda brothers, bathed and fed him. His poor health continues. He depends on fellow prisoners to bathe, go to the toilet, eat and move around. Amnesty International believes that the charges against Piñeda, which included murder, are fabricated.

Marcelino Miranda is suffering from trypanosomiasis (Chagas' disease). He and Leonardo Miranda were arrested on January 8, 2003, tortured, and taken to prison where torture continued. They were charged with the murder of Juan Reyes Gómez, tried, convicted and sentenced on December 16, 2003 to 25 years in the Gracias prison. Amnesty International also believes that the charges against the Miranda brothers are politically motivated and that they were not given fair trials.

It is imperative that the authorities

- acknowledge the poor health of Feliciano Piñeda and Marcelino Miranda
- give these prisoners immediate and adequate medical care.
- conduct an immediate investigation into the June 5 attack and arrest of Piñeda, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.
- release Feliciano Piñeda, Marcelino Miranda and Leonard Miranda, unless there is clear and substantive evidence against them.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Ambassador Mario Miguel Canahauti ~ via fax: 1 202 966 9751
Ambassador Larry L. Palmer ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037
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Honduras Mission to the United Nations ~ via fax: 212-223-0498
COPINH (Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas) ~ via email
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email
U.S. Representatives Brown, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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