

Edwin Cordero Ardid , First Commissioner National Police, Managua, Nicaragua Fax: 011 -505 277 1871	Aminta Granera , Inspector General National Police, Managua, Nicaragua fax. 011-505 278 1688
Juan Baez , Chief of Internal Affairs National Police, Managua, Nicaragua Fax: 011 -505 277 1871	

January 25, 2006

Dear Police Officials:

We are appalled at recent police brutality stemming from an ongoing land dispute in La Grecia, Yasica Sur, Matagalpa, between hacienda owner José Esteban McEwan and peasant farmer **Martin Vicente Padilla**. Mr. Padilla has had title to his land and worked the land since 1991. This dispute needs to be resolved in the courts and certainly not through police brutality.

On December 29, 2005, seven members of the Special Forces Police (TAPIR) brutally beat Martin Padilla, two of his sons and four neighbors. Padilla was dragged away unconscious and with a broken rib. The police took Padilla and his sons away in a vehicle owned by McEwan's Finca Santa Elena (which is owned by State Street Coffee).

Martin Padilla and his oldest son were imprisoned for two days and released without charges. While imprisoned, McEwan's workers picked Padilla's coffee while police stood guard.

Witnesses affirm that McEwan's guards have previously come to Padilla's farm, fired guns, made threats, and destroyed property.

It appears that the police in Nicaragua are up for the highest bidder. In this case they have created disorder, and violated human rights by beating Padilla unconscious even while handcuffed.

We urge that you

- conduct a thorough investigation of the December 29 beating and unjustified imprisonment of Martin Padilla and his sons, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- protect Martin Padilla and his family;
- instruct the police to act in a professional and nonpartisan manner.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Ambassador Salvador Stadthagen, Nicaraguan Embassy ~ via fax
 Barbara Moore, US Ambassador to Nicaragua ~ via fax
 Tom Pierce, Nicaragua Desk at the US State Dept ~ via fax
 US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Reps Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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