

via Fax: 011 504 235 7700 Manuel Zelaya President of the Republic of Honduras	via Fax: 011 504 221 5620 ext. 2122 Licda. Jany del Cid Attorney General's Special Prosecutor for Ethnic Affairs
via Fax: 011 504 220 1756 Coronel (R) Jorge Alberto Rodas Gamero Minister of Public Security of Honduras	

June 25, 2008

Dear Sirs/Madam:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of **Santos Feliciano Aguilar Alvares**, a member of the Afro-descendant Garífuna community of San Juan, Atlantida Department in northern Honduras. On June 5 he had taken part in a community assembly attended by representatives of the local real estate company in San Juan whom he accused of pressuring Garífuna people to sell their land. At 9:30pm ten men, thought to be private security guards working for the real estate company, surrounded him as he walked down a street in the outskirts of San Juan, took him to premises owned by the real estate company and beat him. While holding him against his will, they accused him of being "a spy for the leaders of Nuevo San Juan" and said to each other "let's kill him and bury him right here."

He was released shortly after the beating; the injuries he sustained required hospital treatment.

We have written to you several times over the past few years (6/21/05, 12/11/05, 8/16/06, 7/13/07) about the 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. We are outraged that the government of Honduras has been complicit in either the actual repression or in its utter lack of political and legal action to hold the powerful accountable for their political crimes.

Again, we **strongly urge** you to:

- take immediate steps to implement the protection measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to ensure the safety of the Garífuna community;
- begin a swift, thorough, and impartial investigation on the threat and attack against Santos Aguilar and previous threats, attacks, and killings of leaders and members of the Garífuna community, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate measures to end the intimidation of indigenous people.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

Copies: Roberto Flores Bermudez, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax
 Charles A. Ford, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax
 Marcos Mandojana, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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