

January 14, 2010

Via Fax: 011 504 239 3298
 Mr. Robert Michetti
De facto President of Honduras

Dear Mr. Micheletti:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of **Rafael Cáceres**, Deputy Director of the School of Fine Arts in Tegucigalpa. He has run for a seat in Congress for the Democratic Unification Party and has been outspoken against the coup of June 28.

He has received a number of threatening mobile phone text messages, all from the same mobile phone number: on July 11, October 19, December 20, 24 and 30. On December 22 he reported details of the threats and the telephone number to the Police National Department of Criminal Investigation. On December 30 at 8.20 pm he received another threat: "we will be waiting for you these days we have to complete our mission."

We are extremely concerned about the ongoing climate of repression against human rights defenders in Honduras. **Walter Tróchez**, who escaped a kidnapping attempt on December 3, was killed in a drive-by shooting on December 13. Since June, Tróchez had been documenting human rights violations during protests against the coup d'état. He was already known for his human rights work with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Honduras. Human rights advocates report that up to 18 gay and transgender men have been killed nationwide in the last six months of 2009—as many as the five prior years.

Several other human rights defenders have also been killed since June 28. The latest victim, **Carlos Turcios**, was kidnapped outside his home in Choloma Cortes on December 16. He was found dead the next day, with his hands and head cut off. Carlos had been vice-president of the Choloma chapter of the Resistance Front, a town located a few hours outside of the capital. Andres Pavón, president of CODEH (Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Honduras), commented: "We believe this horrendous crime joins others where the bodies show signs of brutal torture...This aggression is directed to the construction of collective fear."

In light of these threats to Rafael Cáceres, we strongly urge you to:

- order a thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Rafael Cáceres;
- act immediately to give him all necessary protection in accordance with his wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH) ~ via fax: 011-504-220-5280
 Eduardo Enrique Reina, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-966-9751
 Hugo Llorens, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037
 Rebecca Valerin, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 1-202-647-2597
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: 1-202-458-3650
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA 02/10 Honduras

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