

via fax 011 504 232 1666
Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa
 President of Honduras

via fax 011 504 221 5667
Sr. Luis Alberto Rubi
 Attorney General of Honduras

April 26, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We are gravely concerned for the safety of journalists in Honduras; six have been shot dead in the last eight weeks by unknown assailants, and numerous others have received death threats. After the June 2009 coup d'etat, military personnel closed several media outlets and journalists have suffered threats and attacks; many are documented by Amnesty International in the report "Honduras: Recommendations to the new Honduran government following the coup of June 2009." No one has been held to account and no action taken to support and protect journalists who write or speak out about organized crime, human rights violations, or the government.

The first victim was Joseph Hernandez Ochoa, a 26-year-old student and journalist who was shot dead in Tegucigalpa on March 1. Number six was Jorge Alberto Orellana on April 20, shot as he left television station TVH in Tegucigalpa. The other four were: Victor Manuel Juarez and Jose Bayardo Mairena (reporters for news program *Asi es Olancho*), David Meza Montesinos (radio journalist investigating drug trafficking) and Nahum Palacios (news director for TV Channel 5, investigating the Aguan land dispute and out-spoken against the coup d'etat).

We are especially concerned for journalists being threatened who are still alive. **Ricardo Oviedo Reyes**, a television journalist and President of the Association of Media workers of Colon reported that a group of people fired shots at him on April 9; he has also been followed by two men on a motorbike and has received a threatening phone call. While presenting his news program on April 18, broadcaster **Jorge Otts Andersen** was threatened by a caller. Just one month before this, also during his show, a man called in and said, "Your head already has a price on it."

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has called on Honduras to protect over 100 people whose lives are at risk. Many of these are journalists, including Nahum Palacios, who was assassinated March 14; authorities had taken no action to protect Palacios.

In light of these facts, we urge the administration of President Porfirio Lobo to

- publicly condemn killings and intimidation of journalists and make a commitment to protect journalists;
- carry out an urgent, thorough and impartial investigation into the killings of the six journalists, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- act immediately to provide all necessary protection to journalists under threat, in accordance with their wishes; and
- implement the orders for protection from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

CC: Comite de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH) ~ via fax 011 504 220 5280
 Roberto Flores Bermudez, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-966-9751
 Hugo Llorens, Ambassador of the US to Honduras ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037
 Rebecca Valerin, Desk Officer for Honduras, US State Department ~ via fax: 1-202-647-2597
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 1-202-458-3650
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccheri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Sutton, Wilson, Space ~ via email

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