

via fax: 011 503 2523 7409 Romeo Benjamín Barahona Meléndez Attorney General of the Republic of El Salvador	via fax: 011 503 2231 1152 David Morales Human Rights Director of the Republic of El Salvador
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January 26, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are extremely concerned for the safety of **Hector Berríos**, a community activist and human rights lawyer in Cabañas Department. Starting at 10pm on January 22, he received ten anonymous phone calls. On January 23 at 12:20pm he received a call on his landline from an unknown man claiming to be a friend and asking for Hector's whereabouts. A minute later, the same person called Hector Berríos' mobile phone, saying that they had been paid a lot of money to kill him or a member of his family. "We have been watching you in San Isidro and Mejicanos, we have got you close; look, we know you work for the people." Hector Berríos put the phone down when the caller stated that if he withdrew from his work, they would not kill him.

Hector Berríos has been threatened and intimidated previously because of his campaigns against mining, impunity and his legal defense of human rights activists. On October 7, 2009 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ruled that El Salvador should provide him protection. However, he has not yet received appropriate protection and we believe his life is at risk.

We have previously written to you concerning the deaths in 2009 of Hector Berríos' colleagues in Cabañas (cf our letters of 9/11/2009 and 1/3/2010). We are again **strongly urging** that you take the following steps:

- Comply fully with the IACHR order of October 7, 2009 according to Hector Berríos' own wishes;
- carry out an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against him, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

CC: Mari Carmen Aponte, US Ambassador to El Salvador ~ fax: 011-503-2501-2154
 Francisco Altshul Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of El Salvador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-234-3834
 Mark Hove, El Salvador Desk at U.S. State Dept. ~ fax: 202-647-2597
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 Maria Silvia Guillén, El Salvador member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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