

via fax (504) 2269-3000 2269-3069 Jorge Alberto Rivera Avilés President of the Supreme Court of Justice of Honduras	via fax (504) 2221-5667 Luis Alberto Rubí General Prosecutor for the Republic of Honduras
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September 24, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our outrage and concern for the violation of rights of journalists, social communicators, and especially for the safety of **Mario Castro Rodríguez**, Director of the Program "Whip Against Corruption" (Látigo Contra la Corrupción), transmitted two hours each day by Globo TV.

Since September 8, threats against his life and physical safety have intensified. He has received 70 text messages on his cell phone threatening him with death. Unknown persons who monitor his program sent threatening, insulting, and profanity-laden text messages from four different numbers. Three identical messages from the same number said "It would be best if they take you all out" and "You old fool, I hope they kill you all." A message from another number, "hahaha, they are killing the pinkos, you idiot," was repeated seven times.

In May 2010, Mario Castro and his brother Edgardo Castro, entered into the protection program provided by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). On three occasions, Mario Castro had been followed by an unmarked white van with four armed men inside wearing ski masks. On one occasion one of the men mimed the act of shooting him with a thumb and forefinger.

These latest threats are further examples of crimes against journalists and the escalation of violence against freedom of expression across the country that have reached intolerable levels never before seen in Honduras. Since the June 2009 coup d'état, at least 15 journalists have been murdered, 25 journalists have received death threats, 14 have suffered illegal detention, 4 have been kidnapped and tortured, and 37 have been assaulted. We have written at least nine letters to Honduras officials in the past two years protesting these assaults on journalists and others who work in the media.

Therefore, **we strongly urge you to**

- provide protection measures for Mario Castro Rodríguez, in accordance with his wishes;
- carry out an urgent, exhaustive, and impartial investigation into the activities that have put Mario Castro's life at risk, and publish the results;
- investigate the homicides of the 15 journalists and the threats against other journalists, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- publicly condemn the intimidation of journalists and commit to protecting them;
- implement all protection orders for journalists dictated by the IACHR

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: COFADEH: Committee for the Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras ~ via fax: 504 2220 1528
Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax
Lisa Kubiske, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax
Nathan Anderson, Attache for Human Rights and Labor, US Embassy to Honduras ~ via email or fax
Benjamin Gadan, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax 202-647-2597
Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
US Senators Brown and Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

COFADEH_9/15/Honduras

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