

via fax: 011 504 2239 5667 Sr. Luis Alberto Rubi Attorney General of Honduras	via email: cedij@poderjudicial.gob Jorge Alberto Rivera Avilés President of the Supreme Court of Honduras
--	---

January 13, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the attack on **Father Marco Aurelio Lorenzo**, a parish priest (Macuelizo, Santa Bárbara Department), advocate for the poor and defender of natural resources.

On the evening of December 26, 2011, when he and his two brothers pulled off the road to rest on their way by car to El Rosario farm in Intibucá, a police patrol car with eight officers pulled up and, without demanding documents, began hitting one of the passengers who had gotten out to place a rock under the tire so the car would not roll. When Father Lorenzo got out of the car, they handcuffed him, thrown to the ground and severely beaten. He and his traveling companions were stripped of their personal belongings, food and money they were carrying to share with their family. Police forced them back into the car, removed the rock, and pushed the car into a ditch.

The police removed the car, handcuffed the victims to the bars of the patrol vehicle, took the injured to the hospital in La Esperanza, Intibucá, and left the car and documents at the police station. As a result of his injuries, the priest lost consciousness and required sixteen stitches in his head. His sister was given his wallet, documents and mobile phone, from which the SIM card and battery were missing.

Father Aurelio is a recognized advocate of the poor and an opponent of mining exploitation by corporate interests in the Merendón mountain ranges for which he has previously suffered attacks. On July 17, 2007, Silvio Edmundo Inestroza, an officer with the Preventive Police, ordered him arrested during a peaceful protest against open-cast mining. The police insulted him, hit him with their batons, pushed him to the pavement and detained him for more than six hours in the area police station. In 2004, when Father Lorenzo was returning from the community of San Antonio Chiquila, three armed, hooded men in a Toyota car without number plates intercepted him, made him get out of his car, severely beat him on his back, abdomen, chest, legs and hip, causing internal injuries, which resulted in his hospitalization.

Because of these facts, we **strongly urge** that you

- adopt effective measures to guarantee the life, physical integrity and access to justice for Father Marco Aurelio Lorenzo and his two brothers;
- suspend any reprisals against them.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: COFADEH ~ via email or fax
Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 966 9751
Lisa Kubiske, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax: 011 504 2238 5114
Nathan Anderson, Attache for Human Rights and Labor, US Embassy to Honduras ~ via fax: 011 504 2238 4446
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, Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458-3992
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

AFGJ_Honduras

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