

via fax 011 503 2281 5959 Gen. David Munguía Payés Minister of Justice and Public Security of El Salvador	via fax 011 503 2527 1145 Sr. Francisco Salinas Rivera Chief of Police of El Salvador
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September 25, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned for the safety of **Father Antonio Rodríguez López** who works in San Salvador on rehabilitation projects with former gang members and on prevention projects with young people at risk of joining gangs. On September 5 a reliable source told him he was at risk of being killed. The following day another source confirmed the information. On September 7, as Father Antonio walked toward his office, the driver of a parked car rolled down his window, said “They’re going to kill you” and drove off. Father Antonio reported the incident to the police.

Because gang violence is such a serious problem, membership in a gang was made a criminal offence in 2011. In March 2012, a truce was brokered between two of the country’s biggest gangs and government authorities. Although the truce has allegedly contributed to a decrease in the numbers of unlawful killings, several human rights groups have observed that before the truce the government did not consult with those who work on rehabilitation and prevention programs for gang members. A week before the threats against him, Father Antonio had publicly criticized the truce because he feels that the truce does not deal with gang members’ rehabilitation.

Because we think the death threats are a consequence of this criticism, we **strongly urge** that you

- order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Father Antonio Rodríguez López, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection to Father Antonio Rodríguez López, in accordance with his wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: FESPAD: Foundation for the Study and Application of the Law ~ via email
 Mari Carmen Aponte, US Ambassador to El Salvador ~ via fax: 011-503-2501-2775
 Francisco Altshul, El Salvador Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 1-202-234-3834
 Melanie Bonner, El Salvador Desk at US State Dept. ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
 Rosa Maria Ortiz, Rapporteur for El Salvador, 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

UA 267/12 El Salvador

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