

via fax: 980-636-5600 Manuel Rodríguez Vice President for Labor Relations Chiquita Bananas	via fax: 212-677-2187 Sally García Legal Department Rainforest Alliance
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September 3, 2013

Dear Mr. Rodríguez and Ms. García:

We are extremely concerned for the life of union leader and radio broadcaster **José María Martínez** of the Federation of Agro-Industry Workers' Unions (FESTAGRO). On June 25, unidentified persons called him from an untraceable number, demanding that he "stop talking sh*t on the radio or [they] will shut his mouth for him," and to "prepare your burial clothes because we are going to kill you." They repeated the threats the following day. The perpetrators reiterated the death threats in repeated calls to his wife and cited the specific clothing Martínez wore each day as proof that they were following him.

On July 5 an unmarked vehicle staked out Radio Progreso, from which Martínez broadcasts the program "Trade Unionist on Air," a daily radio call-in show about labor rights, human rights, and citizenship information for agricultural workers. The vehicle circled Martínez's place of work four times at the time he was getting off air. Father Ismael Moreno, director of Radio Progreso, escorted Martínez out through a back exit. For his protection, the local police have warned Martínez not to leave his home without first notifying them.

Since May 2013 a frequent topic on Martínez's radio program has been the troublesome pattern of worker rights violations at Tres Hermanas, which employs more than 400 workers on three plantations located near El Progreso, Yoro Dept. (Tres Hermanas is Rainforest Alliance-certified and a supplier for Chiquita Bananas.) In 2012, the AFL-CIO and Honduran unions submitted a complaint under the DR-CAFTA free trade agreement that alleged failure to pay overtime and anti-union discrimination. In August 2012 the Honduran government legally recognized SITRAINBA, the workers' union. Since September 2012, Martínez has been working closely with SITRAINBA workers in their struggle for a collective bargaining agreement in the face of harsh employer repression.

We believe that José María Martínez and SITRAINBA leaders are in danger. Since the coup d'état in Honduras in June 2009, 31 trade unionists and 28 journalists have been murdered. Therefore we **strongly urge** that you

- investigate whether the Honduran government is providing protection for José María Martínez, in strict accordance with his wishes;
- urge Tres Hermanas to recognize SITRAINBA as the legitimate workers' bargaining unit;
- ensure that labor conditions at Tres Hermanas meet Rainforest Alliance standards for certification;
- urge Honduran authorities to conduct an investigation into the threats described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

copies: Office of the Attorney General, Honduras ~ via email denuncias@mp.hn
 Jose Lorenzo Obregon, Owner of the Tres Hermanas Plantation ~ via email: jolobregon@gmail.com
 Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Amabassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
 Lisa Kubiske, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037
 Mariana Grayson, Attache for Human Rights and Labor, US Embassy to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2238-4446
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 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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