

via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 <b>Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas</b> Attorney General of Honduras	via email: comunicacionCNDS@gmail.com <b>Sr. Arturo Corrales</b> Minister of Interior of Honduras
via fax: 011 504 2232-0226 <b>Sra. Karla Eugenia Cueva</b> Sub Secretary Justice and Human Rights of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2220-7648 <b>Sr. Roberto Herrera Caceres</b> National Human Rights Commission of Honduras

August 13, 2014

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are gravely concerned about the armed assault and abduction of **Father César Augusto Espinoza Muñoz** and **Father Abel Carbajal**, priests of the parish of Arizona in Atlántida Department and **three international human rights accompaniers** (two Swiss and one French citizens) with The Honduras Accompaniment Project (PROAH). The priests are part of the nonviolent resistance to a large-scale mining project being operated by Minerales Victoria of Honduras.

On July 3 at approximately 7pm near Siguatepeque in Comayagua Department, the parish vehicle in which they were traveling was intercepted by a white medium-size car. Three armed men jumped out, pointed their guns and forced the priests and PROAH team members into the back seat of their vehicle while a fourth assailant drove away in the parish vehicle. The assailants drove around for approximately 45 minutes, then issued death threats and left their captives in Siguatepeque.

Fathers César and Abel, sixteen members of the Nueva Esperanza community in the parish of Arizona and human rights defenders supporting them, are beneficiaries of protective measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). These measures were issued because of death threats and violence from representatives of Minerales Victoria, other mining interests and the National Police—all in response to the community's peaceful and legitimate opposition to the mine.

This assault is the latest example of the striking lack of protection by the Honduras government for recipients of IACHR precautionary measures and the high level of risk for national and international human rights defenders in Honduras. On June 9 a beneficiary of protective measures not only suffered new threats from an ex-general, but also his crops and property were damaged. Four months after Honduras pledged to implement IACHR precautionary measures, the threats and vulnerability of the community still continue (cf our letter of July 3).

We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a thorough investigation into the attacks and abductions of Father César Augusto Espinoza Muñoz, Father Abel Carbajal and three international human rights persons accompanying them;
- provide effective and appropriate protection for human rights defenders and for beneficiaries of IACHR protective measures.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

cc: PROAH ~ via email  
 Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Amabassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751  
 Julie de Torres, Chargé d' Affaires, US Embassy Honduras ~ via email in care of [Johnson-MillerA@state.gov](mailto:Johnson-MillerA@state.gov)  
 Amanda Johnson-Miller, Human Rights and Labor Attaché, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email [Johnson-MillerA@state.gov](mailto:Johnson-MillerA@state.gov)  
 Kelsey Cambronne, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
 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, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

PROAH July 8\_Honduras

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