

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298
Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández
 President of the Republic of Honduras

via fax: 011 504 2221 5667
Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas
 Attorney General of Honduras

February 12, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our sadness and anger at the attack on **Jesús Flores Satuye**, a member of the Afro-descendant Garífuna community of Nueva Armenia in Atlántida Department, and a concurrent attack on the offices of La Via Campesina in Tegucigalpa.

Early in the morning on January 26 Jesús Flores Satuye was walking with a group of 40 Garífuna people toward their ancestral land in Armenia when they were attacked with firearms from assassins who tried to block their way. He was shot in his head and arm by an assassin allegedly working with an organized drug trafficking organization. This is the second violent attack on Jesús Flores Satuye. In January 2011 he was attacked by members of the Honduran Navy in Los Cayos Cochinos in Bay Islands Department. His case is still pending before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The Garífuna community is trying to reclaim their land which, for the past 80 years, had been occupied by the Standard Fruit Company (Dole) and is now being taken by powerful drug traffickers who are heavily armed. According to Armenia residents, the delta of the Papaloteca River and its neighboring lands have been used as clandestine landing strips by organized drug traffickers for many years, in spite of repeated complaints filed with the police. On August 8, 2014 the community of Armenia suffered a violent attack in which they were forced to evacuate, their homes were burned, and their crops destroyed.

The day before the attack on Jesús Flores Satuye, two dozen high caliber rounds were fired at the office of La Via Campesina in Tegucigalpa. (La Via Campesina is an international grassroots movement representing 200 million small farmers in 73 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.) The organization suspects the attacks were an attempt to intimidate and discourage them from their work in denouncing the *coup d'état* of June 2009, their demands for comprehensive agrarian reform, and their opposition to the Military Police, which has been linked to many cases of human rights abuses.

Because of our concern for the integrity and safety of the Garífuna community, **we strongly urge you to:**

- carry out a thorough investigation to determine who is responsible for the attack on Jesús Flores Satuye and on the La Via Campesina offices, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- protect the lives and rights of those working for human rights in Honduras, as guaranteed under the law.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
 James Nealon, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037
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 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email JohnsonCD@state.gov
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur on the Rights of Afro-descendants, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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