

via fax: 011-504-2231-0204 Sr. Roberto Herrera Cáceres National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
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June 26, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply distressed about recent threats to journalist **David Romero Ellner**, director of *Radio Globo*.

On May 14 Romero said he received the threats after revealing information about an alleged case of embezzlement of government funds involving President Juan Orlando Hernández. On a program broadcast by *Radio Globo* and its sister network *Globo TV*, Romero said he had obtained a video of a meeting implicating President Hernández and the managers of 30 fraudulent companies created to embezzle funds amounting to at least 300 million dollars from the Honduran Institute for Social Security (IHSS). At least some of the companies appear to have been fronts for collecting funds to finance Hernández's presidential election campaign. Romero said he was revealing this information because of his responsibility as an investigative journalist and denied claims that he was involved in a conspiracy against the president. According to the non-governmental international human rights organization Reporters Without Borders, Romero learned of the threats from an intelligence official who told him that two hit-men had been hired to carry out a contract on him.

On the afternoon of May 14, a key witness in the IHSS scandal was gunned down in San Pedro Sula. On June 8 David Romero reported surveillance and stalking at his home by unknown armed gunmen who wore brown body armor. Their red Rav 4 truck, identical to that of his wife, journalist Lidieth Díaz, had license plates of the Criminal Investigation Department. When discovered, the men said they were investigating the theft of a vehicle. When Romero spoke with police they said their department does not have the type of vehicle he described.

Since 2011 five employees of *Radio Globo* and *Globo TV* have been murdered, including 21 year-old Erik Arriaga was assassinated with ten bullets in February of this year. Thorough investigations have not been carried out. Because of our concern about the threats and armed surveillance of David Romero and his family, we **strongly urge** that you

- investigate fully and impartially the threats against David Romero, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that there is effective protection for David Romero, his family and employees of *Radio Globo*.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
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US Senators Brown & Portman and US and Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

RWB 5/16/15 and C-Libre 6/10/15_Honduras

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