

I R T F

InterReligious Task Force on Central America
3606 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113
tel: 216.961.0003 fax: 216.961.0002 e-mail: irtf@irtfcleveland.org

via Fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Presidente Juan Orlando Hernández President of Honduras	via Fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

September 11, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of **Elizabeth Zúñiga**, a journalist working with Section 6 of the Workers' Union of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (SITRAUNAH). She is being subjected to a pattern of intimidation resembling patterns inflicted on other journalists, including those who have been assassinated in recent months.

On August 12, Elizabeth Zúñiga noticed strange noises from her car after she drove it from the university parking lot, which is monitored by a private security firm. After recording the noises as she drove it during the next three days, she took the car to a mechanic who informed her that three bolts had been loosened on the back left wheel. This could easily have caused a serious accident. During this time, Elizabeth Zúñiga's mother received a phone call in which she was warned, "Tell your daughter to shut up now, or else she will get it where it hurts most." On August 17 Elizabeth Zúñiga publicly denounced that her vehicle had been sabotaged in an act possibly intended to kill her.

Elizabeth Zúñiga had been collaborating with Hector Orlando Martínez Motiño who was killed on June 17 (cf our letter of July 1). His vehicle was sabotaged in a similar way several months before his murder. Both journalists had been working on 34 cases of human rights violations, including a number of cases related to the personnel of the university. Elizabeth Zúñiga is now the only person with information on these cases.

Since the assassination of Hector Orlando Martínez Motiño and subsequent harassment and intimidation of his lawyer, Reina Lilian Rodríguez, (cf our letter of August 14), there have been no advances in the case. This climate of impunity makes us extremely concerned for the safety of Elizabeth Zúñiga because she is being subjected to the same pattern of intimidation.

We therefore **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the intimidation and threats against Elizabeth Zúñiga;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of Elizabeth Zúñiga;
- guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

Sincerely,

Brian 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
Kelsey Cambronne, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email CambronneKL@state.gov
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
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 8/24/15_Honduras

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

