

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Presidente Juan Orlando Hernández President of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Fiscal Oscar Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
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February 26, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the ongoing violence inflicted upon members of the Tolupeán indigenous community in Yoro Department who are defending their land, natural resources and way of life. Five members of the Tolupeán community of San Francisco Locomapa were killed on February 21.


For many years, Tolupeán communities have been organizing to defend their ancestral lands from the economic interests of outsiders: large private landholders, hydroelectric dam companies, mining companies, and the timber industry. Many are members of the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ). Several Tolupeán residents have been killed because of their peaceful resistance to these outside forces. We have written to officials in Honduras to demand investigations into some of these killings (cf our letters of Sep 1 2013 and July 3, 2014).

Because of the danger to Tolupeán residents, especially those active in environmental defense, in December 2013 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted precautionary measures for the protection of 18 MADJ members and their families, mostly Tolupeanes. Although the precautionary measures are in force, violence against Tolupeanes continues. In April 2015, Luis de Reyes Marcia, husband of Vilma Consuelo Soto (a beneficiary of the precautionary measures), was stabbed to death. In May 2015, Vilma Consuelo Soto was the victim of an attempt on her life by gunfire. In June 2015, Erasmo Vieda Ponce was assassinated.

In light of the ongoing danger to the Tolupeán people in Yoro, we **strongly urge** that you:

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the killing of the five Locomapa Tolupeán residents, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological wellbeing of Tolupeán residents, especially those who are beneficiaries of the IAHCR precautionary measures;
- guarantee that all human rights defenders in Honduras are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all undue and unlawful restrictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and **Christine Stonebraker-Martínez**
 Co-Coordinators

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
 Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Rapporteur for Honduras and for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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