

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

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

June 2, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the escalating attacks against members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) since the murder of their founder, Berta Cáceres, on March 3 (cf our letter of March 7).

Since her killing, many members of COPINH have had to flee their homes because of increasing harassment, threats and attacks including the following:

March 15, an unknown attacker killed COPINH member **Nelson García** as he returned to his home in Río Lindo after accompanying a community in Río Chiquito, Cortés Dept., that was violently evicted by police and military officers (cf our letter March 31, 2016)

May 6, as COPINH leader and Lenca human rights defender **Alexander García Sorto** was shot outside his home in Llano Grande (municipality Colomoncagua in Intibucá Dept.), wounding him in the left shoulder. The attacker was Eneclito Alvarado, a former member of the military and private security guard who had previously threatened to kill Mr. García. The local police briefly detained, then released Mr. Alvarado, charging him only with illegal possession of a firearm. Alvarado is now threatening to “finish killing” Alexander García. García Sorto is an opposition leader to the Negro and Chinacela Rivers hydroelectric dam, being developed by AURORA S.A., a company owned by the husband of Gladis Aurora López, Vice-President of the National Congress.

May 8, as COPINH General Coordinator **Tomás Gómez Membreño** and some of his colleagues were travelling to a demonstration in Tegucigalpa, an army vehicle driven by military personnel followed them and attempted to force them off the road. The driver was able to control the vehicle, scarcely avoiding an accident. A few weeks earlier, Mr. Gómez Membreño heard gunshots outside his home.

International observers and activists collaborating with COPINH have also been under attack. On May 13 **Giulia Fellin** from Italy, who has been accompanying COPINH, experienced harassment and interference as she tried to go to her embassy. An anonymous YouTube account called “Nos Queda Claro” (It Is Clear to Us) published a video, demanding the deportation of Ms. Fellin because of her alleged role inciting violence. The video was an edited recording of her observation of a peaceful demonstration organized by COPINH in Tegucigalpa on May 9. Following these events, Honduran immigration authorities summoned Ms. Fellin. As a result of this concerted intimidation campaign, she decided to leave the country. There are reports of other international observers being summoned for meetings with immigration authorities for no apparent reason other than their legitimate and peaceful work supporting local community’s struggles.

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks on Tomás Gómez Membreño and Alexander García Sorto, including the immediate arrest and adjudication of Eneclito Alvarado
- investigate instances of harassment and intimidation against international observers.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and Christine Stonebraker-Martinez
 Co-Coordinators

copies: COPINH: Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras ~via email
 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

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