

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

July 14, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our outrage and frustration at yet another murder of a human rights defender. On July 6 **Lesbia Yaneth Urquia Urquia**, a defender of indigenous and environmental rights, was found dead from head trauma near the municipal dump of Marcala in the Department of La Paz. Lesbia had disappeared on July 5 at around 5pm, after she left her house to go cycling.

Lesbia Yaneth Urquia Urquia was a community leader and a member of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). She actively worked to oppose the construction of the hydroelectric dam "Aurora I" in the municipality of San José, La Paz Department. The company developing the project is owned by Gladys Aurora López, President of the National Party and Vice-President of the National Congress.

COPINH has been active for more than 20 years, peacefully defending the territory and rights of the indigenous Lenca people. They have led campaigns against illegal logging and mega-projects, opposing detrimental effects on the rights of indigenous peoples and the environment.

Since the killing on March 2 of Berta Cáceres, co-founder and coordinator of COPINH, members of the organization have been facing increasing harassment, threats and attacks (cf our letter of March 7). COPINH stated that the killing of Lesbia Yaneth Urquia Urquia "confirms there is a plan to disappear the people who are defending the environment and the common good."

We strongly condemn this killing and **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the death of Lesbia Yaneth Urquia Urquia, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the universally recognized right to defend human rights, established in the U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998;
- dismantle structures that create insecurity for human rights defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

copies: CONADEH (National Commission for Human Rights) ~ 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  
Jose de Jesus Orozco Hernandez, Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, 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

Frontline 7/7/2016\_Honduras

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