

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
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July 16, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the break-in at the offices of the human rights organization **Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ)** in the Barandillas neighborhood of San Pedro Sula in Cortés Department. In the early hours of July 13, surveillance cameras filmed an unknown man breaking into the offices. He raided archives, shelves and desks; he took hard-drives, computers and cameras containing key evidence MADJ had gathered to pursue high profile cases on corruption and human rights violations. None of the costly equipment and cash in the office was taken. When MADJ members arrived early in the morning they immediately contacted the police to report the incident. However, the police did not arrive until 2pm and brought none of the equipment necessary to document the scene. They did not lift fingerprints or footprints.

MADJ is an organization dedicated to combating corruption and upholding human rights. It has consistently advocated for environmental and land rights related to mega-projects and industrial mining in indigenous communities. Víctor Fernández, the Director of MADJ's Human Rights Department, is a lawyer with the Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organizations (COPINH) and is one of a team of lawyers representing the family of murdered indigenous leader Berta Cáceres (cf our letter of March 7). He has actively advocated for the land and environmental rights of the Toluma people in Locomapa in Yoro Department.

Members of MADJ have been subjected to constant threats and harassment. Earlier this year, the organization denounced the military presence and harassment at the farm of Martín Fernández, the General Coordinator for MADJ. It is located in Atlántida Department where MADJ has led a constant struggle against corruption and in defense of the environment. MADJ members have also been harassed and threatened because of their active participation in bringing to justice the killers of COPINH leader Berta Cáceres, denouncing human rights violations committed in the context of hydroelectric and mining projects in the northwest of the country, and in combating corruption of high profile public officials in the Honduras Institute for Social Security (IHSS).

As a result of attacks, threats and harassment, the 18 members of MADJ and their families were granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on December 19, 2013. In spite of these measures, they continue to be attacked. Therefore we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the break-in and robbery of the MADJ offices, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the security of all MADJ members and their relatives, in accordance with Precautionary Measures No. 416-13 issued on their behalf by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- guarantee in all circumstances 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 restrictions.

Sincerely,

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

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 7/14/2016_Honduras

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