

via fax: 011 505 266 1222 <b>Sr. Presidente Daniel Ortega</b> President of Nicaragua	via email: agranera@policia.gob.ni <b>Sra. Aminta Elena Granera Sacasa</b> Director General of the National Police of Nicaragua
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May 1, 2017

Dear President Ortega and Director General Granera Sacasa:

We are very disturbed about the ambush against **Maynor López**, son of human rights defender Francisca Ramírez, as he was going from La Fonseca Municipality in Nueva Guinea Department to San Isidro in Metagalpa Department on April 23 about 4 pm.

A trap had been laid on the route on which Maynor López was riding his motorcycle whereby barbed wire was strung between two poles on opposite sides of the road. When he rode into the barbed wire, Maynor Lopez was thrown from his motorcycle and injured. Francisca Ramírez called the police to report the ambush, but they failed to show up at the site to investigate the report.

Francisca Ramírez, based in La Fonseca, is the Coordinator of the Council for the Defense of the Land, the Lake and Sovereignty, a civil society movement that opposes the construction of the Nicaraguan Grand Inter-oceanic Canal, financed by the Hong Kong-based HKND Group. The mega-project would displace thousands of small farmers and indigenous peoples in places such as Nueva Guinea and the Southern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS), without respecting their right to free, prior and informed consent. The main goal of the Council is to repeal Law 840, which grants a 100-year concession to HKND Group for the land over which the route of the canal will be built.

The ambush of Maynor López occurred one day after the police prevented a march from taking place against the inter-oceanic canal in Juigalpa in Chontales Department. In an interview with Radio Corporation, Francisca Ramírez stated that the attack was directly linked to her work against Law 840. It is the latest incident in which she has been intimidated, arbitrarily detained and her family members violently attacked in retaliation for her activism. On October 12 2016, her daughter, Gleydin López, was the victim of an attempted kidnapping. On December 1 2016, the National Police seized two of her trucks, ostensibly in retaliation for her leadership of a major mobilization of small farmers and indigenous peoples opposing the construction of the inter-oceanic canal (cf our letter of Dec 11 2016).

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the ambush against Maynor López, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Francisca Ramírez and her family members, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders 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  
Co-Coordinator

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

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 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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

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