

via U.S. mail <b>Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández</b> President of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 and U.S. mail <b>Sr. Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas</b> Attorney General of Honduras
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August 24, 2017

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged by repression committed by the Military Police and two elite special command squads, the COBRAS and TIGRES, against **peaceful protesters organized in resistance to a hydroelectric dam on the Mezapa River**, principal water source for 20 communities in the sectors of Mezapa y Pajuiles in Tela municipality, Atlántida Department.

Since March 22, communities have been organized in nonviolent resistance under the banner of the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ), maintaining their Encampment for Dignity, Life and Water at two roadblocks in Pajuiles. They are trying to stop the contamination of their drinking water and other environmental damages being caused by the construction of the Los Planes hydroelectric dam by Hidrocep (Hidroeléctrica Centrales El Progreso), owned and operated by Jason Hawit from one of Honduras' most powerful families.

On August 10 at 6:30 am the Military Police, COBRAS, and TIGRES raided the two roadblock camps, swiftly and forcibly evicted community members, confiscated materials and equipment, and aggressively prevented video or photos as they ripped up metal barricades. Police detained (and later released) MADJ leaders **Angélica Recinos** and her spouse **Oscar Martínez**.

On August 15 at 6am, police and military arrived in Pajuiles with a tank and several patrol vehicles, fired tear gas into the homes of community members, and arrested five people, including one pregnant woman (**Albertina López**) and one minor. They were later released but are required to check in weekly at the police station pending trial for criminal charges including "carrying out an illegal meeting."

We are glad to see that, in the presence of a representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, an agreement was reached on August 23 to suspend construction of the dam until there is an environmental impact study and a formal review of the licensing process. The agreement also called for soliciting the withdrawal of 17 criminal charges against MADJ encampment participants, and the creation of a dialogue committee to oversee implementation of the agreement.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned about the violence that has been waged against (and the criminalization of) the nonviolent MADJ protesters. For instance, the US-funded and -trained Los TIGRES, whose mandate covers organized crime, drug trafficking, and corruption, are being deployed to squash nonviolent civilian protest.

To resolve this ongoing conflict in a peaceful manner, we **strongly urge** that you

- dissolve Hidrocep's operational license and pay reparations for drinking water contamination and other environment damage to the community;
- halt the state security's harassment of the community's nonviolent presence at the construction site;
- drop all criminal charges against members of the Encampment for Dignity, Life and Water

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751  
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 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

WFP\_8/15/17\_Honduras

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