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<p>via email: <a href="mailto:observatorio@sdhjgd.gob.hn">observatorio@sdhjgd.gob.hn</a> <b>Sr. Héctor Leonel Ayala</b> Secretary of State for the Offices of Justice, Human Rights, Governance and Decentralization</p>	<p>via email: <a href="mailto:central@conadeh.hn">central@conadeh.hn</a> <b>Dr. Roberto Herrera Cáceres</b> National Commissioner for Human Rights</p>

April 25, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about the assassination of human rights lawyer **Carlos Hernández** by unidentified assailants on April 10 at his office in Tela municipality, Atlántida Department. Carlos Hernández had been legally defending Arnaldo Chacónis, the mayor of Arizona municipality, who is supporting the organized resistance against the Río Jimalito hydroelectric project, being constructed by Generación Eléctrica (INGELSA).


Arnaldo Chacónis has joined surrounding communities in their opposition to the project because of its negative environmental impacts and the lack of prior, informed consent. A case was filed against him on March 12 for his involvement in, and support of, an encampment known as the Honorable Encampment in Defense of Río Jilamito, which was set up in May 2017 to oppose INGELSA's activities. He is charged with unlawfully occupying property belonging to the government and to Generación Eléctrica (INGELSA). This encampment was organized by the Wide Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ). Four MADJ members—Elena Gaitán, Tulio Enrique Laínez Gonzales, Julio César Leiva Guzmán, and Claudio Ramírez Espinoz—are also facing criminal charges; they are legally represented by Witness for Peace, an international NGO solidarity organization.

The assassination of Carlos Hernández is an example of the increasing threats and violence against MADJ, the communities involved with their cause, and their supporters (cf our letter of Jan 24). Since the disputed presidential election in November 2017, there has been a military and police raid on MADJ's headquarters, assaults on and surveillance of their members, and threats against Martín Fernandez Guzmán, MADJ's General Coordinator. Four members of MADJ have been murdered by state security forces and paramilitaries during the ongoing post-electoral crisis.

Because of these events, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Carlo Hernández, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of the members of MADJ;
- 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 restrictions.

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Jorge Alberto Rivera Avilés, President of the Supreme Court of Honduras ~ via email  
Marlon R. Tábora Muñoz, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via website or fax, and US mail  
Heide B. Fulton, Chargé d'Affaires, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email  
Jason Smith, Human Rights and Labor Representative, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email  
Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 4/16/2018\_Honduras

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