

via email: comunicacionsdhjgd@gmail.com <b>Sr. Héctor Leonel Ayala Alvarenga</b> Minister of Human Rights, Justice, Interior and Decentralization	via email: mprelacionespublicas@gmail.com <b>Sr. Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas</b> Attorney General of Honduras
---	---

October 26, 2019

Dear Minister Ayala and Attorney General Chinchilla:

We are very concerned about the escalation of violent deaths, primarily of women, in the Garfuna (African-Caribbean descendant) communities. Since the beginning of September, at least five women have been killed in Colón and Cortés Departments. Included in this list are also two men.

Sep 6: **Gilma Antonia Cacho** and her five-year-old daughter, **Fiori Amaya Cacho**, were shot dead by at least five armed men who forcibly entered their house in the municipality of Santa Rosa de Aguan in Colón Department.

Sep 7: **Nayda Reyes Jiménez and her husband** were abducted by persons wearing shirts with the DPI inscription (National Police Department) in the community of Bajamar in Puerto Cortés, Cortés Department. Their bodies were later found near the community.

Sep 8: **Mirna Teresa Suazo Martínez**, a Garífuna territorial defender, was shot and killed by unidentified assailants on a motorcycle at her restaurant at Masca beach in Omoa, Cortés Department. She was president of the board of trustees of the Masca community, which is located inside the zone of the "model cities." On several occasions the board has rejected the construction of hydroelectric power plants on the Masca River.


Oct 12: **María Digna Montero** was killed by several unknown assailants on the patio of her home in the community of Cuzuna in Iriona, Colón Department. María Digna was a teacher and member of the Intercultural Bilingual Work Group of OFRANEH (Honduran Black Fraternal Organization). Her murder occurred on the Day of Indigenous Resistance.

Oct 18: the body of **Óscar Francisco Guerrero Centeno**, age 39, was found in the same sector of Masca in which Mirna Suazo was killed on September 8. Originally from the Garífuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz in Atlántida Department, he had gone to Masca to support local land defense groups.

We **strongly urge** that you

- thoroughly investigate these recent murders in the Garífuna communities, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- establish policies that respect the rights of the Garífuna people and protect them from corporate extractivist policies and militarization that are destroying their territories and way of life

Sincerely,

  
 Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Karla Eugenia Cueva Aguilar, Secretary for Human Rights in Honduras ~ via email  
 María Dolores Agüero, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via website contact form and US mail  
 Colleen Hoey, Chargé d'Affaires, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email  
 Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer at the US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email  
 David Tagle, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
 Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
 Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
 Honduras Solidarity Network ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
 US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

10/13/19\_OFRANEH\_Honduras

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