

via email: mprelacionespublicas@gmail.com, gosorto@gmail.com

**Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas**  
Attorney General of Honduras

via email: karlacueva144@gmail.com

**Lica. Karla Cueva**  
Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs

December 21, 2020

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are writing to express our outrage over the disproportionate use of force by security forces in an eviction that occurred on the banks of the Río Blanco in San Pedro Sula, Cortés Department, on December 1. **Rafael Flores Hernández** died after being shot several times by Municipal Police agents, who, accompanied by military personnel, carried out a violent eviction. Several others were wounded.

Approximately 500 people have been residing on the riverbank for about five years, living under the threat of eviction for at least the past year. The mayor of San Pedro Sula, Armando Calidonio, ordered the eviction, despite the difficulties facing the people of the Sula Valley: two hurricanes hit Honduras in less than two weeks, plus the ongoing Coronavirus health pandemic. Authorities gave them only a 2-hour notice to abandon their houses, grocery stores, and other businesses and to salvage whatever personal belongings they could. The military and police carried out the forced removal, despite the lack of a relocation plan for the residents.

The eviction was violent. Municipal Police arrived in the early morning with a tractor to destroy homes and the car washing station that Rafael Flores Hernández operated with his mother and siblings. (His business, named "Mi Esperanza/My Hope," was one of about 75 car washing stations in this zone.) The police and military shot firearms, launched tear gas, and assaulted residents with batons. One resident reported that while she was atop her house trying to dismantle the metal roofing to salvage it, security forces launched a tear gas canister into her house where here four children were. Rafael Flores Hernández, trying to protect his business from the tractor, was shot several times in the neck and abdomen. He was taken to Hospital Mario Catarino Rivas but died due to the severity of his injuries.

**We strongly urge you to:**

- investigate the methods used by security forces to forcibly evict the residents of the Río Blanco riverbank on December 1 and publish a report of the incident
- investigate the killing of Rafael Flores Hernández and bring those responsible to justice
- guarantee safe housing for the people affected by hurricanes Iota and Eta
- comply with Honduras' international commitments regarding humanitarian law and the use of militarized force against civilian populations

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai and  
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Dr. Roberto Herrera Cáceres, National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH) ~ via email  
Luis Suazo Barahona, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail  
Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, Representative to Honduras of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
COFADEH: Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras ~ via email  
HSN: Honduras Solidarity Network ~ via email  
Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective – Honduras Team ~ via email  
CIPRODEH: Centro de Investigación y Promoción de Derechos Humanos ~ via email  
US Embassy in Honduras: Colleen Hoey, Chargé d’Affaires; Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer ~ via email  
Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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