

<b>Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano</b> National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras	<b>Lica. Karla Eugenia Cueva Aguilar</b> Secretary for Human Rights of Honduras
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May 11, 2021

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre and Secretary Cueva:

We are concerned about a death threat against community leader and member of OFRANEH (Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras) **Mabel Robledo** of the Garífuna community Nueva Armenia, Jutiapa municipality, Atlántida Department. Threats were made against Mabel Robledo and her friend two weeks after Mabel Robledo denounced before local and national officials the appropriation of ancestral Garífuna territories and the extraction of sand from the Papaloteca River.

At around 4:00pm on April 16, an unknown individual entered her business and threatened: "If you keep messing with drug traffickers, we are going to kill you," and then he left. At around 4:30 pm, a close friend of Mabel Robledo was threatened by strangers who assured him that "if you do not want to die, stop hanging around her, because we have already been authorized them to kill her."


Garífuna communities in Atlántida Department have been actively trying to reclaim their ancestral lands which, for the past 80 years, have been occupied by the Standard Fruit Company (Dole) and more recently by owners of African palm plantations (for palm oil). The recent expansion of African palm cultivation along the Atlantic has resulted in 1,000 hectares cultivated with palm in Jutiapa alone; 70 percent of these crops are within Nueva Armenia. African palm plantations are causing destruction of forests, threats to local food sovereignty, and harm to wetlands and the contamination of water sources due to the use of agrochemicals.

Another significant threat to the community is drug trafficking. Heavily armed drug traffickers have taken over the delta of the Papaloteca River for clandestine aircraft landing strips.

We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the threats against Mabel Robledo and her friend, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- instruct INA (National Agrarian Institute) to cease the legalization of land dispossession in Atlántida (i.e, giving Garífuna tracks of land to palm growers)
- instruct INA to create a process for transferring Garífuna ancestral lands back to the Garífuna communities, in consultation with OFRANEH and the local impacted communities

Sincerely,

  
 Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordiators

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Oscar Chinchilla Banegas, Attorney General ~ 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 (IAHCR) ~ via email and US mail  
 Margarete May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and Against Racial Discrimination, IAHR ~ 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  
 OFRANEH: Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras ~ via email  
 HSN: Honduras Solidarity Network ~ via email  
 US Embassy in Honduras: Colleen Hoey, Chargé d'Affaires; Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer ~ via email  
 US State Dept: Honduras Desk ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
 US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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