

<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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November 23, 2021

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre and Secretary Cueva:

We are saddened and outraged to learn of the assassinations of campesino leaders **Celenia Bonilla** and her husband **Nelson García**, on November 21. They were attacked while gardening on the patio of their home in the Cañada de Flores sector of Guaimaca municipality, Francisco Morazán Department. Their three children (the youngest one-year-old) are now left orphaned.

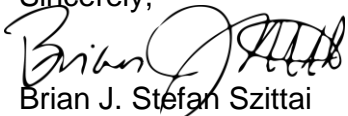
Nelson García was president of the campesino association Hombres y Mujeres de Fé (Men and Women of Faith). Together with another campesino association, Unidos al Campo (United to the Field), 44 families have been farming the land in Cañada de Flores for ten years against a backdrop of persecution. The campesino families have previously received threats and attacks, including violent acts such as evictions and arrests, as well as criminalization processes against them. According to the Office in Honduras of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), these incidents were reported at the time to State institutions, without obtaining effective responses.

The campesino organization CNTC (National Center of Rural Workers) has previously denounced threats and harassment of members of these two campesino associations. There is documentation dated September 28, 2020, signed and stamped by the National Property Registry of Municipality of Guaimaca (the institution in charge of land issues, including the determination of the legal standing of lands) which states that, "the land possessed by the campesino base is legally classified as ejidal (public) being a part of the communal title of Guaimaca." The dispute over ownership comes from Maximiliano Rivera Elvir, who claims private ownership.

We condemn the killing these two campesino leaders and **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough, impartial, and transparent investigation into the killings of Celenia Bonilla and Nelson García, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- address the structural causes of land conflicts, including the development of public policies on access to and tenure of land and avoiding the use of criminal law and the practice of forced evictions

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

and



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Oscar Chinchilla Banegas, Attorney General of Honduras ~ via email  
Luis Suazo Barahona, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail  
Joel Hernández García, 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  
Alice Shackelford, UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email  
CNTC: Central Nacional de Trabajadores del Campo ~ via email  
US Embassy in Honduras: Colleen Hoey, Chargé d'Affaires; Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer; Ariel Jahner, Human Rights Officer ~ via email  
US State Department: Molly Runyon, Honduras Desk Officer ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, 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:**