

<b>Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano</b> National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH)	<b>Rosa Seaman</b> Vice-Minister for Protection Secretariat for Human Rights (SEDH)
--	---

May 23, 2022

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre and Vice-Minister Seaman:

We are writing to you today with sadness and anger about the assassination on May 1 of Garífuna community leader **Alonso Salgado Caballero** in the community of Río Tinto, located in Tela, Atlántida Department. Alonso Salgado Caballero, age 51, is the former treasurer of the Patronato de Río Tinto (the board of trustees of the community).

Unknown persons shot Alonso Salgado Caballero to death while he was sitting in a hammock outside the home of his cousin. Two others were seriously injured: **Zury Quintanilla**, the spouse of his cousin, and **Sury Mariela Quintana**, the sister-in-law of Alonso Salgado Caballero. After shooting Alonso Salgado Caballero, the assailants then entered the house and attacked Zury Quintanilla, secretary of the board of trustees of the Patronato de Río Tinto and a 7th grade teacher at the school CEBSAT Álvaro Contreras. Sury Mariela Quintana also received two gunshots to the head and was hospitalized.

This is not the first time that Río Tinto has experienced situations of extreme violence. In May 2020, Edwin Fernández, age 37 and father of seven children, was murdered by members of an organized criminal group. He was staffing a security gate outside Río Tinto, which had been established as a health prevention measure amid the Covid-19 pandemic. He was killed in retaliation for not handing over the key.

For many years, Garífuna communities along the Atlantic coast have suffered violence, killings, disappearances, and forced displacement due to powerful economic interests. This includes Honduran elites, international tourism, charter cities (aka ZEDEs), drug traffickers, industrial scale agriculture (e.g., African palm oil plantations), and more. The government of Honduras has enabled the stealing of Garífuna land because of its failure to ensure Garífuna communities the right to their ancestral territories, even when ordered to do so by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

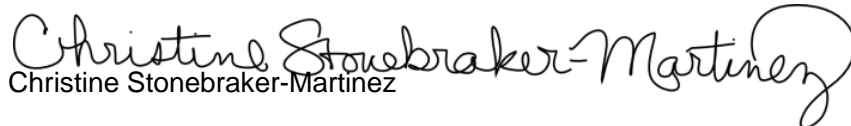
**We strongly urge you to:**

- carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Alonso Salgado and the attempted assassinations of Sury Mariela Quintana and Zury Quintanilla in order to find and prosecute the perpetrators
- protect the families of Río Tinto from further aggression, in strict accordance with their wishes
- create and implement legal instruments to eradicate all types of violence against those who lawfully work to protect the land, natural resources and territorial rights of Garífuna communities

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Luis Suazo Barahona, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail  
Carlos Bernal Pulido, 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  
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  
US Embassy in Honduras: Ambassador Laura F. Dogu and 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, Brown, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

03 MAY 2022\_Criterio.hn\_Honduras

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