

<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)
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May 24, 2022

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre and Vice-Minister Seaman:

We are disturbed to learn of continued state harassment of Indigenous campesino communities. On May 18, two campesino leaders, **Ramon Domínguez** and **Juan García**, were arbitrarily detained in La Paz.

In 1999 the National Agrarian Institute (INA) gave property title to 229 hectares of ancestral land to the Lenca Council of Palestine in Marcala, La Paz Department. However, a private landowner, Juan Gabriel Argueta, has an ongoing land dispute with the Lenca campesino cooperative. Juan Gabriel Argueta was also granted property by INA in 2016, but his title affects only about two blocks of the 229 hectares. Nevertheless, he was successful in obtaining an eviction order instructing Lenca campesino families to abandon three plots of land.

The president of the Lenca-Palestine Council, Martin Gámez, reported that at 10:00 a.m. on May 18, between 40 and 50 state security officers, including preventive police and military, under the command of the sub-inspector Alex Bladimir Diaz Medina, arrived at the Lenca-Palestine campesino cooperative. About 200 employees of the Argueta family accompanied the security officers, telling the campesino families that they had to leave by order of a court of law.

The deputy police inspector gave them a copy of an eviction order to abandon three plots of land, issued by Rolando Arturo Tome Molina, in his capacity as Sectional Judge of First Instance-La Paz. Because Ramon Domínguez and Juan García, two members of the Lenca-Palestine Council, showed resistance to the eviction, security officers arrested them, took them to the police station and detained them for seven hours. Although they opposed the eviction, they were not charged with any crime.

We urge that you

- instruct INA to clarify the land titles in dispute
- uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the State of Honduras, by protecting the rights delineated in the document, including food, land and water, and respect for the cultural identity and traditional knowledge of Indigenous populations

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinators



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  
Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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

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