

Sr. Fiscal General  
**Oscar Chinchilla Banegas**  
 Ministerio Público  
 Lomas del Guijarro. Avenida República Dominicana  
 Edificio Lomas Plaza II  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

September 22, 2022

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla:

We urge that you drop criminal investigations against Garífuna community leaders **Miriam Miranda** (General Coordinator of OFRANEH, the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras), **Dr. Luther Castillo** (an OFRANEH member who is the current government's Minister of Science and Technology), and **Edy Tábora** (a lawyer for OFRANEH).

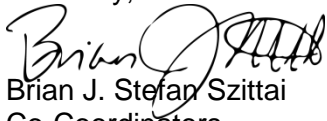
On August 9 (Indigenous Peoples' Day), members of OFRANEH, organizations of Indigenous peoples, and Garífuna community members went to the Public Ministry in Tegucigalpa in a peaceful protest. They demanded that the Public Ministry hear their legitimate concerns about the lack of prompt and effective justice in the case of the July 2022 disappearance of four young Garífuna men in the community of Triunfo de la Cruz, Atlántida Department: Alberth Centeno Tomas, Suami Mejía García, Gerardo Róchez Cáliz and Milton Martínez Álvarez. Also present on August 9 were relatives of the young men who created SUNLA (Committee for the Search and Investigation of the Disappeared of Triunfo de la Cruz) in February 2021. During the protest, which occurred both inside and outside the offices of the Public Ministry, Deputy Prosecutor Sibrían Bueso began using Twitter to stigmatize the presence of OFRANEH and SUNLA in the facilities.

After the protest, the Public Ministry ordered its investigative body under the supervision of Deputy Prosecutor Sibrían Bueso, the ATIC (Technical Agency for Criminal Investigations), to begin criminal investigations against the three leaders (Miranda, Castillo, Tábora) for crimes including disrupting the order (which carries a sentence of 1 to 3 years) and illegal deprivation of liberty (a 5-7 year sentence). Instead of investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible for the forced disappearance of the four young Garífuna men, it appears that the Public Ministry is abusing its authority by criminalizing OFRANEH leaders.

We urge that you

- drop any criminal investigations against Miriam Miranda, Dr. Luther Castillo and Edy Tábora
- create a Special Prosecutor's Office on forced disappearances
- incorporate SUNLA into the investigation of the disappearance of the four Garífuna men

Sincerely,

  
 Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano, National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH) ~ via email  
 Rosa Seaman, Vice-Minister for Protection, Secretariat for Human Rights (SEDH) ~ via email  
 Embassy of Honduras in Washington, DC c/o Alejandra Sandoval Taixes ~ via email and US mail  
 Carlos Pulido, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email and US mail  
 Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, IACHR ~ 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: Bryan Schell, 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

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