

Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH)	Rosa Seaman Vice-Minister for Protection Secretariat for Human Rights (SEDH)
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September 24, 2022

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre and Vice-Minister Seaman:

We are writing with deep concern that **Benedicto Hernández**, the coordinator of the community of the Tolupán de Luquigüe tribe in Yoro Department, is being harassed, threatened and intimidated. The actions against Benedicto Hernández are rooted in the coordination of actions to change the board of directors of the Luquigüe tribe, the fight against corruption, and the defense of the common and natural resources of their community.


The threats against Benedicto Hernández have led to acts of intimidation against members of his family and other members of the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ) who reside in the area. Two weeks ago, MADJ issued an alert via social media: “recently, two men with high-caliber weapons set up surveillance around his house with the intention of harming him. They also make calls to his cell phone warning him that they are outside his house and that he should come out.”

Peace Brigades International has expressed concern about "the repeated threats against members of the Tolupán people, who carry out important work in defense of common goods in Honduras." The tribes of the Tolupán people in Honduras face structural challenges that include: illegal cutting of their forests, lack of recognition of ancestral titles, and lack of access to basic rights such as health, food and education. In the middle of this year, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice reaffirmed the protection guarantee in favor of the San Francisco de Locomapa tribe (also in Yoro) after their rights to food and health were violated due to discrimination and political sectarianism by municipal authorities. The ruling set a precedent to end abandonment against Indigenous peoples in Honduras.

We strongly urge you to:

- investigate these threats against Benedicto Hernández and hold accountable those responsible
- take the necessary measures to safeguard the lives of Benedicto Hernández and his family, as well as other members of the nucleus of the Tolupán de Luquigüe tribe in Yoro, in strict accordance with their wishes
- ensure that all Indigenous community leaders enjoy the protections they deserve to carry out their work protecting their ancestral lands and human rights

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: 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
 Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (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: