

Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano

National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH)
via email

February 24, 2023

Dear Commissioner:

We write to you today out of grave concern for the **Indigenous Lenca community of Nueva Esperanza**, located in El Edén, Comayagua Department, which was violently evicted from their land by the National Police.


On the morning of February 2, the Police Investigation Administration (DPI) forcibly removed and violated the human rights of this Lenca community of at least 13 families and more than 20 children. The police used heavy machinery to destroy the houses, crops, and few assets that these families possessed, ruining their livelihoods and forcing them to live out on the streets.

The community of Nueva Esperanza had been occupying (“recuperar,” or recovering) this land for over 18 months, after the National Institute of Agriculture (INA), with promises of relocation, forced them to leave their previous peaceful settlement. For years, members of the community have struggled to obtain property titles from the INA and have faced constant threats and harassment for recovering and working the land. The community has expressed that they have no choice but to recover land in order to feed their families, work, and live decently.

This eviction comes as part of a pattern of increased violence towards peasant and Indigenous communities nationwide. We strongly urge that authorities:

- take responsibility for this eviction and safeguard the well-being and integrity of every family in this community
- require that the National Police of Honduras comply with the human rights protection measures issued by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)
- end the legal uncertainties that Indigenous communities have been experiencing around their ability to live on and work their land by issuing property titles and halting all evictions in the meantime

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Javier Efraín Bú Soto, Ambassador 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 on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (IACHR) ~ via email and US mail
COPINH: Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras / Council of Civic and Popular Organizations of Honduras ~ via email
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 Human Rights Officer ~ via email
US State Department: Bryan Schell, Honduras Desk Officer ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Vance ~ via email
US Representatives Balderson, Beatty, Brown, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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