

Blanca Saraí Izaguirre Lozano
National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH)
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

April 24, 2024

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We are disturbed and saddened to learn of an incident that occurred on the night of Sunday, March 17, 2024, which resulted in the assassination of **Marvin Dubón**, age 23, a dedicated community spokesperson and partner of the Tranvio Farmers Agricultural Cooperative in the Aguán Valley region of Colón Department. According to reports from various sources including the Agrarian Platform and the Coordinating Body of Popular Organizations of Aguán (COPA), Marvin Dubón was fatally shot by heavily armed assailants while driving his motorcycle with his life partner Elizabeth Gómez.

The attack took place around 7:00pm as Marvin and Elizabeth were returning home from a visit to their family in the La Confianza community. The perpetrators pursued them from the community of Salamá to the center of the community of Quebrada de Arena (Tocoa municipality, Colón), ultimately succeeding in taking Marvin's life.

Witnesses noted the presence of Juan Carlos Lizama, leader of a criminal group who is closely associated with Eldin Gabriel Martínez Echeverría, head of security for the Dinant Corporation. The company had previously pushed for the eviction of campesino families from some agricultural cooperatives (Chile, Camarones, and Tranvio). COPA reports that Juan Carlos Lizama has for several years participated in a series of acts of violence against peasant communities; it also states that there have been no serious investigative actions against him by the Public Ministry (MP) or the Police Investigation Directorate (DPI). This raises serious concerns about collusion among the assassins, the Dinant Corporation and local security forces in Tocoa.

We strongly demand that your government:

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination of Marvin Dubón, including the identification and prosecution of the material actors and intellectual authors
- investigate any potential collusion between criminal groups, private corporations, and local security forces
- fulfill its obligations under agreements signed to protect the lives of human rights defenders and members of agricultural associative and cooperative companies
- meet with leaders of agricultural cooperatives in the Aguán Valley to develop protection mechanisms to safeguard the lives of those working to defend land rights and promote community development.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai

Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Javier Efraín Bú Soto, Ambassador of Honduras in Washington, DC ~ via email and US mail
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR): Rapporteurs Andrea Pochak (for Honduras) ~ 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 Tegucigalpa: Laura F. Dogu (ambassador) and Joe Duran, Human Rights Officer ~ via email
US State Department: Bryan Schell, Honduras Desk Officer (Washington, DC)
US Senators Brown & Vance ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Brown, 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: