

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

July 24, 2026

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We are writing to express our concern for the safety of the residents of the **Garifuna community of Tornabé**, Tela Bay, Atlántida Department, whose lives and ancestral land are being threatened.

On July 9, unidentified men arrived at the Garifuna community of Tornabé and installed a sign reading: "PRIVATE PROPERTY. NO TRESPASSING." Furthermore, a fence was situated around the community gardens, forbidding entrance. This was a strategic tactic to intimidate community members who rely on the gardens and land for various crops and food. Following this initial threat, multiple patrol cars passed through the land as other armed individuals surveilled it.

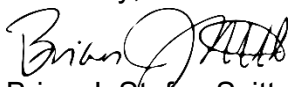
When human rights defenders went to the Directorate of Police Investigations (DPI) and requested to file a complaint, they were informed that one had already been placed. When they said they would await arrival of their legal representative, they were advised to leave before the Directorate supervisor arrived, saying that the supervisor might mistake them for residents of San Juan-Tela and might dispel tear gas on them. (This is reference to the police violence against another Garifuna community in the Tela Bay, the July 6 violent eviction at San Juan-Tela [cf our letter 23 JUL 2026]). The residents interpreted this as a threat. When they asked the police officers why they were being racist, the officers became angry and began to video record them, at which point they decided to leave.

On Sunday morning July 12, heavily armed men arrived in several vehicles at Tornabé. Officers from the National Police and the Directorate of Police Investigations (DPI) were present. But despite the seizure of at least five high-caliber magazines in a single vehicle and complaints from community residents, the police did not arrest anyone nor did they inform the community as to the identities of the armed men.

In the light of these events threatening the residents of the Garifuna community of Tornabé, we strongly urge that authorities in Honduras:

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the incidents at Tornabé on July 9 and 12 and hold those responsible accountable
- implement the rulings of the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights court that recognize and protect the rights of the Garifuna communities of San Juan-Tela, Triunfo de la Cruz, Punto Piedra, and Cayos Cochinos
- stop all violent violations of the territorial, civil, and human rights of the Garifuna people

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinator

copies: Roberto Flores Bermúdez, Embassy of Honduras in Washington, DC ~ via email and US mail
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR): Andrea Pochak (Rapporteur for Honduras) and Gloria Monique de Mees (Rapporteur on the Rights of Afro-descendant Persons) ~ via email
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH): Juan Carlos Monge (Representative to Honduras)
UN Team in Honduras: Alejandro Alvarez (Resident Coordinator) ~ via email
US State Department: Honduras Desk Officer (Washington, DC) ~ via email
US Embassy in Tegucigalpa: Colleen Hoey (Chargé d'Affaires) and Human Rights Officer ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio (Husted and Moreno)
US Representatives from Ohio (Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes) ~ via email

13 JUL 2026_IM-Defensoras_Honduras

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