Over the past few decades, RRN members have sent more than a dozen letters to officials in Honduras. They have denounced an endless series of politically motivated killings and attacks against the Afro-descendant Garífuna people, carried out by wealthy and powerful sectors trying to take over Garífuna lands on the Atlantic coast for agribusiness and the global tourist industry. The government of Honduras has been either complicit in the repression, or complicit through its utter lack of political and legal action to hold the powerful accountable for their political crimes.

“Due to the plan to install a luxury hotel complex in their community, […] the community has suffered two eviction attempts and legal complaints against them for land usurpation resulted in the entire community being summoned to court from May 12-14, 2015.

According to OFRANEH [Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras], “The case of Barra Vieja is a violation of ILO Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples,” which has been ratified by the State of Honduras.

In the preliminary report on its in situ visit to Honduras in December 2014, the Inter American Commission on Human Rights called on the government to: 1) “recognize the cultural identity of the Garífuna” people and 2) “intensify its actions to respect and guarantee their lands, adopt the necessary measures for completing the obligation of the state to guarantee prior, free and informed consultation regarding projects developed in their lands, territories and that impact their natural resources, taking into consideration the special relationship between these peoples, the land and natural resources.”

On June 4, 2015 the Court in Tela acquitted 66 Garífuna members from the community of Barra Vieja who were charged with land usurpation. However, a trial against eight leaders of the Barra Vieja community continues.

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