

**InterReligious Task Force on Central America (IRTF)**  
3606 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113 USA  
tel: 216.961.0003 fax: 216.961.0002 email: irtf@igc.org

via FAX: 011 504 221 4552  
Sr. Manuel Zelaya Rosales  
President of Honduras

via FAX: 011 504 221 5667  
Sr. Leonidas Rosa Bautista  
Attorney General of Honduras

January 11, 2007

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely troubled by the murders on December 20, 2006 of **Heraldo Zuñiga** and **Roger Ivan Cartagena** who were extrajudicially executed by National Police agents outside the mayor's office in the central plaza of Guarizama in northern Olancho Department in front of local residents. Both men were activists in the Environmental Movement of Olancho (MAO); we are certain that their deaths are related to their work for human rights and justice. Police officers who are linked to logging companies, including Juan Lanza, have been implicated in these murders. This brings to six the number of environmental activists murdered in Olancho in recent years.

We have written letters to Honduran authorities in recent years about concerns for environmental activists in Olancho and Intibucá Departments who are organizing opposition to illegal logging and hydroelectric dam construction:

Aug 1 2003: murder of Carlos Arturo Reyes; protection for Father Andrés Tamayo, Gilberto Flores, Orlando Najera

Oct 12 2003: protection for Bertha Oliva de Nativi of COFADEH

June 3 2004: protection for José Idalecio Murillo of the Regional Coordinating Body of Popular Resistance in Intibucá

Because loggers blamed MAO for the logging ban declared in several municipalities in northern Olancho, there have been numerous death threats against environmental activists. As a consequence of these threats, MAO requested that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights seek protective measures. It is incomprehensible that such measures were not granted until December 22, after the murder of Zuñiga and Cartagena. Other MAO members in need of protection are **Santos Efrain Paguade, Victor Manual Ochoa, René Wilfredo Gradiz, Macario Zelaya, Pedro Amado Acosta** and **Father Andrés Tamayo**.

The latest murders of MAO activists follow the December 4, 2006 death of Association for a More Just Society (ASJ) lawyer Dionisio García, about which we wrote to you on December 23. Because of his death, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHRC) ordered the Honduran government to provide protective measures for ASJ investigative journalists **Dina Meza, Robert Marin Garcia, Claudia Mendoza** and **ASJ President Carlos Hernández**.

Based on the information stated above, we insist that you

- order an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation into these crimes against MAO activists;
- investigate the links between police sergeant Juan Lanza and other authorities with the logging companies;
- implement IAHRC-ordered protective measures for ASJ investigative journalists listed above.

Threats and intimidation of human rights workers in Honduras must end. You have the authority and the responsibility to put an end to human rights violations such as those detailed above. We urge you to do so.

For Peace with Justice,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies: Dr. Ramón Custodio López, Comisionado Nacional de Derechos Humanos ~ via fax: 011 504 221 0528  
José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, President of the Honduras Republic ~ via fax: 011 - 504 235 7700  
Ambassador Norman Garcia Paz ~ via fax: 1 202 966 9751  
Marcos Mandojana, Desk Officer for Honduras ~ via fax: 202-647-2597  
Ambassador Charles A. Ford ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037  
Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ fax: (202)458-3992