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| <p>Via Fax: 011 504 2290 5129 Ana Pineda Minister for Justice and Human Rights of Honduras</p> | <p>Via Fax: 011 504 2220 1756 Oscar Alvarez Minister of the Interior of Honduras</p> |
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January 12, 2011

Dear Madam and Sir:

We are very concerned for the safety of **Esdras Amado López**, a journalist and the Director of TV channel Canal 36. At 7:45am on January 5, as he was driving from the airport to Tegucigalpa, he was followed by a green Jeep with two people inside. The driver, dressed in army uniform, was loading a pistol, while the passenger was taking photos of Amado Lopez's car. When the vehicles stopped in a traffic jam and both drivers got out, Amado Lopez asked why they were taking photos of him. The man with the gun told him "I know who you are and I'm not frightened of your TV channel. Your channel and you are criminals." Because he feared the situation could escalate, Esdras Amado López left. The green vehicle changed route after following his car for a few blocks. At midnight Amado López received five text messages, all referring to the incident and threatening him with death.

This is a further example of attacks on journalists and media outlets since the coup on June 28, 2009. According to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ten journalists were killed in Honduras in 2010. Canal 36 has been active in exposing corruption and in denouncing the role of the army during the coup. On June 29, 2009 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR) issued precautionary measures in favor of Esdras Amado López. To date, they have been only partly implemented and the journalist is still at risk.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** you to:

- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the incident described above and the threats against Esdras Amado López, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to fully comply with the IACHR order of June 29, 2009, in accordance with his wishes;
- take immediate action to fulfill your commitment to protect journalists.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: *Canal 36 ~ via U.S. mail*
Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax (202) 966 9751
Hugo Llorens, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011-504-2236-9037
Jeremy Spector, Attache for Human Rights and Labor, US Embassy to Honduras ~ via fax 011 (504) 2236-9320 X4733
Benjamín Gadan, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax 202-647-2597
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: 202 458-3992
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 4/11 Honduras

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