

via fax: 011 504 2232 1666 or 2239 3298 <b>Sr. Presidente Porfirio Lobo Sosa</b> President of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 221 5667 <b>Sr. Luis Alberto Rubí</b> Attorney General of Honduras
via fax: 011 504 2220 1756 <b>Sr. Pompeyo Bonilla</b> Minister of Interior and Security of Honduras	

September 24, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are shocked and outraged at the assassination of **Antonio Trejo**, attorney for the Authentic Claimant Movement of Aguán Campesinos (MARCA), one of the main campesino collectives involved in the Aguán Valley disputes between peasant farmers and large landholding palm oil industrialists

Trejo, who was also a Protestant minister, received a telephone call late September 22 while he was in a church near the Tegucigalpa airport after having performed a wedding; he stepped outside and was gunned down. He died an hour later in a hospital. Trejo was active in two major political conflicts: a long-standing dispute over land in the Lower Aguán Valley and a new struggle over the Special Development Regions (RED, also known as "Model Cities"), a neoliberal project for creating several privatized semi-autonomous zones.

A number of legal challenges have been filed against the "Model Cities" project on the grounds that it cedes national sovereignty to private and foreign groups; the main investors appear to be Canadian and US firms. Several civil society groups, united in the National Campaign against Model Cities, are making their opposition public. On September 21 teachers included the issue in their one-day strike. On August 26 some 200 Garifuna (Afro-descendant) families occupied the Vallecito area on the coast, claiming ancestral rights to land that is being considered for the "Model Cities."

In the Aguán Valley, Trejo was representing four campesino communities in the process of regaining land titles. After a series of court rulings in 2011 and early 2012, land titles that had illegally been taken from the communities in 1994 by large landholding palm oil industrialists (Miguel Facusse, Reinaldo Canales and Rene Morales) were transferred back to the rightful campesino owners. On June 29 police evicted the security guards of the palm oil companies so that the campesinos could begin to retake their land. But threats, assaults and assassinations of MARCA members continue.

We **strongly urge** that you:

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation of the assassination of Antonio Trejo, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- enforce the legal right of the MARCA campesino communities to occupy and their work their lands, free from harassment by others who have interest in their lands

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

Copies: Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Amabassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751  
 Lisa Kubiske, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037  
 Nathan Anderson, Attache for Human Rights and Labor, US Embassy to Honduras ~ via email  
 Benjamin Gedan, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax 202.647.2597  
 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email  
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 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

Sep 23 Rights Action\_Honduras

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