

via fax: 011 504 2221 5667

**Sr. Luis Alberto Rubí**

Attorney General of the Republic of Honduras

via fax: 011 504 2220 1756

**Sr. Pompeyo Bonilla**

Minister of the Interior of Honduras

October 21, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are gravely concerned for the safety and life of **Karla Zelaya**, a journalist for the Unified Campesino Movement of Aguán (MUCA). On August 27 she received a threatening text message that said "this is how everybody who talks is going to end up...watch your back." This followed a similar message of August 25. Between September 18 and 19 she received anonymous silent phone calls. On September 20, a message said ". . .you think you got rid of me but I'm here and following you close."

MUCA campaigns for the land rights of peasant farmers amid ongoing disputes over land ownership in the Aguán region. Karla Zelaya routinely films forced evictions of peasant communities or detention procedures following public demonstrations. The threatening text messages and phone calls she received occurred in the days immediately preceding the murder of Antonio Trejo Cabrera, a lawyer defending peasant cooperatives in land-rights disputes in the Lower Aguán region of Colón Department (cf our letter of Sept. 24). They are further evidence of the ongoing targeting of human rights defenders in the country. Following a visit in February 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders said that human rights defenders continue to suffer death threats, attacks, harassment and stigmatization. They urged the authorities to establish a protection program for defenders.

The internationally-respected Committee to Protect Journalists has named Honduras the most dangerous country in the world for journalists; twenty have been assassinated since the June 2009 coup d'état.

Because we believe that Karla Zelaya's life is at risk, we **strongly urge** you to

- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats made against Karla Zelaya, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide her appropriate protection, in accordance with her wishes;
- establish a protection program for human rights defenders as urgently recommended by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

CC: COFADEH – via fax 011+504 2220 5280  
 Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador 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  
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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