

<p>via FAX: 011 504 2553 6314 Sr. René David Díaz Special Prosecutor for Human Rights of Honduras</p>	<p>via FAX: 011 504 2220 1756 Sr. Arturo Corrales Minister of the Interior of Honduras</p>
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June 12, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at recent attacks on the peasant organization Campesino Movement of San Manuel, Cortes (MOSCAM) in the Sula Valley in Cortes Department, resulting in the deaths of **Marilú Miranda Orellana**, **Valentín Caravantes** and **Celso Ruizon** and grave injuries to **Adolfo Melgar** and **Santos Aníbal Melgar**.

We are outraged that today, approximately 400 military and police arrived at the community of El Coowle, launched tear gas canisters and violently displaced 1,000 families. At least six children were injured.

The land conflict between the campesino members of MOSCAM and the agribusiness sugar company CAHSA (Compañía Azucarea Hondureña, SA) has intensified since early 2012. In February 2012, CAHSA had them evicted from their land. In April 2012, campesinos reoccupied part of the land. In May 2012 the National Agrarian Institute (INA) ordered expropriated 4,258 manzanas of the peasants' land with the intent of giving it to the sugar company. CAHSA evicted them again.

This year MOSCAM obtained an order from the Court of Criminal Appeals which stated that the February 2012 evictions were illegal. So on May 17, 500 MOCSAM members held a demonstration to reclaim a section of their land. CAHSA security guards opened fire on the demonstrators, killing Valentín Caravantes and Celso Ruiz, and gravely injuring Adolfo Melgar and Santos Aníbal Melgar. MOSCAM claims that police did not intervene.

On the morning of May 20, as MOCSAM member **Marilú Miranda Orellana** left an encampment in El Coowle, four men followed her. As she neared her house in El Progreso they shot her several times in the back, killing her.

On May 22, MOCSAM spokesperson Nahum Ricardo Domínguez, who had recently held press conferences and interviews about the land dispute, was in the town square of El Progreso when three men in a white car with no license plate drove toward him. Two men in the car got out, made eye contact with him and brandished a pistol. Nahum Ricardo Domínguez ran into a shopping mall to escape.

We believe all MOSCAM members are in grave danger. Therefore, we **strongly urge you to:**

- provide appropriate protection immediately to Nahum Ricardo Domínguez and all members of MOCSAM, according to their wishes;
- order a thorough, independent investigation into the killings, attacks and harassment of MOCSAM members; and
- end the forced evictions of MOSCAM members

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Dra. Roxana Araujo, Health Minister ~ via email
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 and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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