

via FAX: 011 504 2220 1756 Sr. Arturo Corrales Minister of Interior of Honduras	via FAX: 011 504 2221 5662 Public Minister Intervening Committee at the Public Prosecutor's Office of Honduras
via FAX: 011 504 2235 8379 Ana Pineda Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Honduras	

July 26, 2013

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are concerned about the violence waged by the police and army against peaceful protesters at the construction site of the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam. We are deeply distressed at the killing by the Honduran army of Lenca indigenous leader **Tomás García** and at the serious injury to his son, **Allan García Domínguez**, age 17, in Achotal, Río Blanco, in the Department of Intibucá. Tomás García was a member of the Lenca community's Indigenous and Auxiliary Council, and an active member of the Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organizations (COPINH).

On July 15 Tomás García, his son and 100 community members were walking to a peaceful protest, under the supervision of the police and the army, to the site of the construction of the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam, owned by Desarrollo Energético Sociedad Anónima (DESA) and the multinational SINOHYDRO (a Chinese state-owned company). Tomás García was killed by shots to his arm, chest and head when the army opened fire against the demonstrators. His son, who was also shot, had emergency surgery on July 17.

COPINH and community members have been mobilizing for three months against the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam project on the Gualcarque River because it would restrict their access to the river and threatens their way of life. They were not adequately consulted before the project began, as required by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and International Labor Organization Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, ratified by Honduras in 1995.

Other members of COPINH have recently been targeted. In a military operation on May 24, COPINH leaders Bertha Caceres and Tomás Gómez Membreño were arrested for carrying an unlicensed gun in a vehicle. On June 13 a temporary stay in proceedings was granted because of lack of evidence.

Because of our concern about these incidents and the continuing threats to indigenous communities, we **strongly urge** that you

- order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Tomás García and the wounding of Allan García Domínguez, and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide immediate, appropriate protection measures to the leaders of COPINH and activists in the Río Blanco area who are demonstrating against the hydroelectric project;
- fulfill your obligation to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples before undertaking measures affecting their land and natural resources.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-coordinator

copies: Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
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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: