

via fax: 011 504 2220 1756

Sr. Arturo Corrales
Minister of the Interior of Honduras

via fax: 011 504 2221 5662

Public Prosecutor's Office of Honduras

August 14, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned for the lives of **Orlane Vidal** and **Daniel Langmeier**, two international volunteers working for the Honduras Accompaniment Project (PROAH) in Nueva Esperanza community in Atlántida Department. On July 24 Orlane Vidal and Daniel Langmeier met to discuss issues concerning protection and international accompaniment with the members of Nueva Esperanza community who are campaigning against a mining project. At 9:00am the next day, thirty persons carrying machetes surrounded the house where the volunteers were staying. Seven heavily armed men forced their way into the house, and ordered the volunteers to leave at gunpoint. They called the volunteers communists and members of the Resistance, and claimed that it was because of them that they could not work in mining.

As they forced the volunteers to walk to the Nueva Esperanza community, some of the men made threatening sexual comments towards Orlane Vidal. In Nueva Esperanza, photos of company vehicles were deleted from their cameras and mobile phones. The leader of the armed gang told the volunteers that if they came back they would be "disappeared in the woods." They were forced into a pickup truck, continued to be held at gunpoint by two heavily armed men and warned not to talk publicly about what had happened. They were released at a bus stop in Nueva Florida. They subsequently filed complaints with the authorities.

PROAH is a project of the US non-profit organization Friendship Office of the Americas. Since 2010, volunteer delegates from Europe and North America have worked to dissuade violence and increase respect for human rights by providing protective accompaniment for individuals and organizations believed to be at risk of attack. In April 2012, two PROAH members were threatened by text message (see our letter of May 15 2012).

Because we believe that Orlane Vidal, Daniel Langmeier and the Nueva Esperanza community remain at risk, we **strongly urge you to**

- immediately provide appropriate protection measures, in accordance with their wishes, to members of PROAH as well as to activists in the Nueva Esperanza area that are campaigning against mining; and
- order a prompt, independent and thorough investigation into the abduction of and threats against Orlane Vidal, Daniel Langmeier and the family that hosted them, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Christine Stonebraker
Co-Coordinator

CC: 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
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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, 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: