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via email: nilsonsalgado@hotmail.com Sr. Nilson Salgado Attorney for Ethnic Affairs of Honduras	via email: yoro@conadeh.hn Sra. Elena Marriga Human Rights Commission of Honduras, Yoro branch

July 3, 2014

Dear Sirs and Madams:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of **Santos Antonio Córdova** and **María Idalia Soto**, members of the Tolupán indigenous tribes in the rural community of El Terreno, near San Francisco de Locomapa, in Yoro Department. On June 9 at approximately 10am, ex-army general Finlander Uclés, armed with a pistol, and his bodyguards surrounded their home of Santos Antonio Córdova and María Idalia Soto. They told the family to stop any work, destroyed their belongings, their coffee and banana crops and stole building materials. Finlander Uclés upset Córdova's four children, who were the only ones home at the time, by threatening to tear down the house which he claimed was his property. The frightened children were forced to flee the house. Currently, the indigenous family is displaced from their home.

Finlander Uclés has been threatening indigenous communities since the 1980s and has stolen land, forests and minerals from the Tolupán people. This is the second time that this Tolupán family, defending their legitimate right to their land, has suffered aggression at his hands. In line with ILO Convention no.169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, the Córdova family has defended their right to their ancestral land as the original people of the area.

In February an official government commission pledged before the community to ensure the safety of the thirty-eight beneficiaries of precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), including Santos Antonio Córdova; this obliges the Honduran government to guarantee his physical integrity and protect him from the risks he faces because of his struggle to defend Tolupán ancestral lands. The IACHR has also pushed the government to arrest and sentence those responsible for the three murders that occurred in August 2013 (cf our letter of Sept. 1, 2013). However, the known perpetrators of the triple murder continue to be free. The lack of application of protective measures mandated by IACHR has once again increased tension and insecurity in the community.

Because of these threats against the Tolupán community, we **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a thorough investigation and immediate application of justice into the intimidation and harassment of the Córdova family
- end the political repression and criminalization against the Tolupán people and guarantee their safety as outlined in the ILO Convention No. 169.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

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US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, 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: