

via fax: 011 504 229 05088
Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández
 President of the Republic of Honduras

via fax: 011 504 2221 5667
Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas
 Attorney General of Honduras

September 13, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our outrage at the death of human rights defender and campesino leader **Margarita Murillo**, age 56, President of Las Ventanas, a peasant farmer rights organization that is part of the National Federation of Campesinos of Honduras. She was also an active member of the Social Forum of the Sula Valley.

On August 19, as president of Las Ventanas, she had attended a very tense meeting at the National Agrarian Institute (INA) about issues related to land disputes in Las Ventanas. On the morning of August 27 she was shot dead with gunshots to her face and chest while she was working on land in the community of El Planón, near the municipality of Villanueva in Cortés Department. The fatal attack occurred after she had reported being under surveillance and recently receiving threats. Over the weekend of August 30, police officers wanted to force their way into her daughters' home, arguing that it was part of the investigations into Margarita's death.

Margarita Murillo worked for more than 40 years defending the rights and better living standards of *campesinos* and women *campesinas*. In the 1980s she suffered torture and persecution in reprisal for her activism. She was a founding member of the national *campesino* trade union and of the Liberty and Refoundation Party (LIBRE) created after the June 2009 *coup d'état*. Since the time of the *coup d'état*, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has ordered the government of Honduras to protect her safety, but these measures had never been implemented.

Because we believe the safety of Margarita Murillo's family and that of other members of her organization could be at risk, we **strongly urge** you to

- carry out an immediate and independent investigation into the killing of Margarita Murillo, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- protect Margarita Murillo's colleagues and family members, in accordance with their wishes;
- adopt and fully implement a mechanism to protect those who are at risk of reprisal for their work in defense of human rights.

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

UA 219/14_Honduras

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