

September 1, 2020, Amsterdam

To the attention of:

Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández, Presidente de la República de Honduras
Canciller Lisandro Rosales, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores y Cooperación Internacional
General Fredy Santiago Díaz Zelaya, Secretaría de Defensa y Seguridad Nacional
Ministro por ley Ing. Elvis Yovanni Rodas, Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Ambiente
Sr. Ebal Díaz Lupian, Secretaria de Estado de la Presidencia
Sr. Roberto Herrera Cáceres, Comisionado Nacional de los Derechos Humanos
Sr. Reinaldo Sánchez, Secretaria de desarrollo e inclusión social (SEDIS)
Fiscal General Óscar Chinchilla, Ministerio Público
Director Rommel Martínez, Dirección Policial de Investigación (DPI)

We, the undersigned, express our concern, indignation at and repudiation of the kidnapping of Alberth Snaider Centeno Tomas - president of the Patronato de Triunfo de la Cruz - Milton Joel Martínez Alvarez, Suami Aparicio Mejía and Albert Sentana Thomas.

As you are aware of, **members of the Triunfo de la Cruz community** in Tela city, and members of OFRANEH, the Afro-Indigenous Garifuna Peoples' organisation of Honduras, **were abducted on 18 July 2020 from their homes by heavily armed gunmen wearing national police uniforms and waistcoats bearing the Police Department of Investigations (DPI) badge.**

Ever since, and despite continued complaints by national and international organisations and movements, **we have not received any information or effective response regarding ongoing investigations into the whereabouts of the four kidnapped men.**

As is well known within and beyond this Central American country, the indigenous Garifuna community of Honduras has been suffering systematic attacks for several years now. These attacks are perpetrated by agribusinesses, among others, and more recently by land grabbers for housing and tourist developments.

OFRANEH's longstanding democratic and legitimate commitment to defending the territory, and their ongoing public denunciation of violations of peoples' rights and their own human rights, has resulted in the organisation's members becoming the targets of attacks. They repeatedly face threats, persecution, killings and despicable actions such as the one we here denounce: the kidnapping of those who oppose the neoliberal model of privatisation and commodification of the territories and natural resources upon which communities rely. Garifuna peoples have not been consulted on any of the projects developed by these companies, as is legally mandated in order to comply with the right of Indigenous Peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, under the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 169, ratified by Honduras in 1995.

The attacks have seen a sharp rise since 2015, **when the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACrHR) ordered the restitution of land and reparation of damages for the Triunfo de la Cruz community. The complaint was filed in 2003 in the IACHR and admitted on 14 March 2006. On 8 October 2015 the IACrHR issued a ruling against the State of Honduras for all these acts of violation of the territorial and collective rights of the Triunfo de la Cruz community. This ruling establishes the State's responsibility and its obligation to guarantee the rights of the community, to repair the damages caused, and to ensure adequate mechanisms to prevent the repetition of such acts. Yet so far, almost five years later, the ruling has not been enforced, the community is still being violated and 17 people were murdered last year – eleven men and six women.**

Recently and in the past several years, organisations at the national and international level have denounced the brutal violence endured by organisations, social movements and communities in Honduras. We have compiled information, documented complaints, and placed on the ethical and historical record the appalling situation to which the Garifuna people have been driven, with no decisive action being taken by the Honduran State and the successive governments in office to address this situation.

In view of the increasing criminalisation of this Indigenous Peoples and all the combined strategies of community dispossession dispensed on them and the continued violation of their rights we reiterate our condemnation and denunciation of the kidnapping of the Garifuna community defenders. We also denounce all crimes against humanity inflicted on community leaders who are political subjects in resistance to the extermination model and in defence of their ancestral territories –men and women who are essential in dignifying the life of the popular classes.

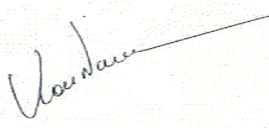
We emphatically denounce the systematic violence that is being inflicted on the Honduran peoples and is resulting each day in ever more victims –more men and women murdered and more families unable to meet their basic needs— while neoliberalism is plundering territories to benefit transnational corporations profiting from the pandemic that their irresponsible and criminal actions are exacerbating.

Given the prevailing impunity in Honduras - that we denounce through this declaration - **we join forces with the social organisations of Honduras in demanding from the national government:**

- The **immediate location alive of the four kidnapped Garifuna members of the Triunfo de la Cruz community**, including the chairperson of the community's Patronato association and member of OFRANEH.
- The **immediate end to the systematic and intentional violence against the Garifuna people.**
- The urgent **enforcement of the IACrTHR ruling that orders the State –among other actors—** to clean up, issue land titles for and demarcate 2840 hectares that are part of the Garifuna ancestral territory, and restore 22 hectares of land in the hands of the Tela municipality Workers Union back to the Triunfo de la Cruz community as the legitimate owner, as well as 98 hectares that are illegally held by the MACERICA and IDETRISA companies who are developing the Marbella and Playa Escondida housing projects

We stand in solidarity with OFRANEH and all the Honduran social and popular organisations and movements, and we will continue practicing internationalist solidarity until those kidnapped are found alive and the systematic violence and attacks against our peoples are stopped.

Karin Nansen
Chair of Friends of the Earth International



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karin Nansen', is written over a faint, dotted grid background.

With the support of the organizations that sign below:

International and regional

1. Amigos de la Tierra Internacional
2. Amigos de la Tierra América Latina y el Caribe – ATALC
3. Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific (FoE Apac)
4. Friends of the Earth Europe – FoEE
5. Acción por la Biodiversidad
6. World forum of fisher People (WFFP)
7. Both Ends
8. Bread for ALL
9. Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM)
10. Coordinadora Latinoamericana de cine y comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas – CLACPI
11. FIAN International
12. Focus Association for Sustainable Development
13. Grassroots Global Justice – GGJ
14. La Via Campesina Internacional
15. Marcha Mundial de Mujeres
16. Transnational Institute
17. WoMin African Alliance

National

LATIN AMERICA

18. ACI PARTICIPA
19. Amigos da Terra Brazil
20. Amigos de la Tierra Argentina
21. Asociación Madre Tierra Honduras - Amigos de la Tierra Honduras
22. CENSAT- Amigos de la Tierra Colombia
23. CESTA – Amigos de la Tierra El Salvador
24. COECOceiba – Amigos de la Tierra Costa Rica
25. Colectivo de DDHH EMPODERATE
26. Comunidades SETAA - Sembradoras de Territorios, Aguas y Autonomías Colombia
27. Diálogo 2000 - Jubileo Sur Argentina
28. Ecofeministas SAG, Argentina
29. ECOSUR, Ecología, Cultura y Educación desde los Pueblos del Sur
30. Espacio Intercuencas
31. Instituto Pacs
32. Organización de Lucha por la Tierra- OLT PARAGUAY
33. Otros Mundos A.C. - Amigos de la Tierra Mexico
34. Proceso de Comunidades Negras -PCN-
35. Rede Jubileu Sul Brasil
36. REDES - Amigos de la Tierra Uruguay
37. Unión de Afectados por las Operaciones de Texaco – UDAPT
38. Vía Campesina Paraguay

NORTH AMERICA

39. Friends of the Earth US
40. Wild Heritage

EUROPE

41. ACTUAR - Associação para a Cooperação e o Desenvolvimento
42. Amigas de la Tierra España
43. Centar za zivotnu sredinu/ Friends of the Earth Bosnia and Herzegovina
44. CIVG Centro de Iniciativas para la Verdad y la Justicia
45. Climaxi - FoE Belgium
46. FIAN Portugal

47. Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
48. Friends of the Earth Ireland
49. Fundación Mundubat
50. Jordens Vänner /Friends of the Earth Sweden
51. Milieudéfensie - Friends of the Earth Netherlands
52. Mouvement Ecologique – Friends of the Earth Luxembourg
53. Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland

AFRICA

54. Environmental Rights Action - Friends of the Earth Nigeria
55. Friends of the Earth Ghana
56. groundWork - Friends of the Earth South Africa
57. Jerba El Mezyana
58. Justica Ambiental - JA! - Friends of the Earth Mozambique
59. Les Amis de la Terre Togo – Friends of the Earth Togo
60. National Association of Professional Environmentalists NAPE - Friends of the Earth Uganda
61. ONG CADI-TOGO
62. South Durban Community Environmental Alliance ,Durban , South Africa
63. Sustainable Development Institute FOE Liberia

ASIA PACIFIC

64. Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association – Friends of the Earth Bangladesh
65. Centre for Environmental Justice – Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka
66. Friends of the Earth Japan
67. Friends of the Earth Indonesia – WALHI
68. Friends of the Earth Australia
69. Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center- Friends of the Earth Philippines
70. Pengon – Friends of the Earth Palestine
71. Russian Social-Ecological Union - Friends of the Earth Russia
72. Sahabat Alam Malaysia - Friends of the Earth Malaysia

And the support of 117 individuals who adhere to this letter.

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