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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Honduras: ARTICLE 19 Welcomes UPR Recommendations**

**Mexico City 12.11.10: The UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review of Honduras has reiterated the poor state of freedom of expression and information in the country. ARTICLE 19 welcomes the UNHRC’s 129 recommendations, and calls on the Honduran government to launch a comprehensive policy to protect and promote freedom of expression in the country.**

*“Freedom of expression has deteriorated dramatically in Honduras since the June 2009 military coup and the ousting of President Manuel Zelaya. Harassment, attacks and killings of journalists, human rights defenders and political activists have ensued. Opposition media has been shut down, protesters face disproportionate use of force, and the websites of international media are blocked,”* says Dr Agnes Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director. *“The absence of political will to properly investigate such cases has resulted in impunity and widespread self-censorship.”*

Over the last two years, ARTICLE 19 has documented a number of violations of the right to freedom of expression and submitted reports and recommendations to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Universal Periodic Review. The violations include:

- An inadequate legal and regulatory framework ensuring diversity of sources and voices in the media, due to a lack of recognition for community broadcasting, the compulsory membership of journalists, and criminal punishment of defamation
- Persistent obstruction to implementing the Access to Information Law
- Failure of the State to investigate cases of aggression against the media, including the killing of nine journalists so far in 2010
- The complete absence of protection measures and legal remedies for journalists at risk.

ARTICLE 19 welcomes President Porfirio Lobo’s willingness for Honduras to take part in the UPR and submit to international scrutiny, and the Honduran delegation’s commitment to improving its human rights record. In particular, ARTICLE 19 welcomes the delegation’s decision to promote discussions in Congress to reform the legal and policy framework regulating the media to recognise pluralism and diversity, and to accept technical assistance from Colombia to establish a mechanism to prevent the killing of journalists.

At the same time, ARTICLE 19 reiterates its offer to provide technical assistance to

the Honduran authorities to develop and implement a comprehensive policy to promote and protect free expression and to reform the existing legal framework so that it meets the requirements of international law and standards.

Finally, ARTICLE 19 calls upon the international community to assist and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the UN Human Rights Council.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- ARTICLE 19 and C-Libre's UPR submission is available at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/submissions/honduras-submission-to-the-un-universal-periodic-review-of-article-19-c-libr.pdf>
- For more information please contact Ricardo Gonzalez, [ricardo@article19.org](mailto:ricardo@article19.org) +52 55 10546500 ext. 103.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.