

URGENT ACTION

SURVEILLANCE AND ATTACKS ON HUMAN RIGHTS NGO

Members of COFADEH, a prominent Honduran human rights organization based in Tegucigalpa, the capital, have reported being the subject of surveillance and attacks in recent weeks. The Honduran authorities must fully comply with an IACHR order to implement effective measures to protect members of COFADEH and their families.

Since 13 May staff members of the Committee of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (Comité de Familiares de los Detenidos y Desaparecidos en Honduras, **COFADEH**), a prominent human rights organization, have reported ongoing surveillance of their office in Tegucigalpa, the capital. Members of COFADEH reported seeing the same red car with tinted windows stationed near the entrance of their office at the same time every morning, when staff go to work. On 29 May at around 10.00am a man was seen taking pictures of the building. Also at the end of May, another man carrying a gun was spotted standing near the COFADEH office.

On 4 June a female member of staff, who had recently attended an event on forced displacement at a hotel in Tegucigalpa, was kidnapped for two hours. After boarding a shared taxi, two women and a man aboard the taxi severely beat her on her face with the butt of a gun, stabbed her leg, neck and hand with a pencil, and attempted to strangle her with a cable. She was held for two hours, robbed and then released. On 15 June, the same staff member was mugged in the street near COFADEH's office.

In November 2009 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) called on the Honduran authorities to protect the members of COFADEH and their immediate families. However, members of the organization have said that the authorities have so far failed to implement these effective measures to protect them, including lack of regular police patrolling of the COFADEH office for the past two months, as had been previously agreed.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the kidnapping, attacks, and surveillance of COFADEH members of staff;
- Urging them to take immediate steps to fully comply with the IACHR's orders to protect those who work at COFADEH and their families, in accordance with their own wishes;
- Reminding them that human rights defenders have the right to carry out their activities without any unfair restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JULY 2014 TO:

Attorney General

Oscar Chinchilla Banegas
Ministerio Público, Lomas del Guijarro
Avenida República Dominicana
Edificio Lomas Plaza II
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 2221 5667
Twitter: @MP_Honduras

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
Señor Fiscal General**

Minister of Interior

Sr. Arturo Corrales
Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de
Seguridad
Aldea el Ocotal, Antiguo Local de la
Academia Nacional de Policía ANAPO
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Email: comunicacionCNDS@gmail.com

**Salutation: Dear Minister of Interior/
Señor Ministro del Interior**

And copies to:

Comité de Familiares de Detenidos
Desaparecidos en Honduras
(COFADEH)
Barrio La Plazuela, Avenida Cervantes
Casa No. 1301
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Email: prensacofadeh@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COFADEH was founded in 1982 by the relatives of political activists, students and trade union leaders who were “disappeared” by the security forces during a previous military government. Since then, it has continued to collect testimony from victims, protecting people at risk and supporting people who are searching for justice.

Human rights defenders face high levels of risk in Honduras. According to the National Commissioner for Human Rights, 30 journalists and 70 lawyers have been killed in Honduras since January 2010. Among the dozens of cases of human rights violations and abuses committed against human rights defenders in the last five years, according to the information Amnesty International has received, in only one case were those responsible prosecuted, convicted and sentenced. For more information, see Amnesty International's *Open letter to the presidential candidates of the Republic of Honduras*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/014/2013/en>.

In June 2014 the Honduran Congress approved a first draft of a Law to Protect Journalists, Human Rights Defenders and Justice System workers (Ley de Protección para los Defensores de Derechos Humanos, Periodistas, Comunicadores Sociales y Operadores de Justicia). Given the context of violence against human rights defenders, journalists and justice system workers, it is absolutely crucial that the law is approved and implemented, and that adequate resources (including financial and human) are devoted to the task of establishing an effective protection mechanism.

Name: Members of COFADEH

Gender m/f: both

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