

via email: comunicacionCNDS@gmail.com
Sr. Arturo Corrales
 Secretary of State of Honduras

via fax: 01 1504 2221 5667
Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas
 Attorney General of Honduras

August 16, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the abduction of human rights defender **Miriam Miranda**, general coordinator of the Fraternal Black Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) and other members of the Afro-descendant Garífuna community in Vallecito in Colón Department.

Early on July 17 when Miriam Miranda and others were visiting a remote area in the Garífuna territory, they were captured by four heavily-armed men who searched them, took their mobile phones and said they were going to kill them. When the attackers realized there were more Garífuna members still in the area who would become aware of the abductions, they phoned their boss. Those abducted were freed four hours after negotiations with the reinforcements who responded to the call. During a previous visit to the area, community members discovered that an illegal airplane runway used by drug traffickers, which had been destroyed by the army, was being rebuilt.

Miriam Miranda is the general coordinator of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) which works to promote and defend the rights of the Afro-descendent Garífuna community. In 2011, she was granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights because of harassments and threats to her. These measure have not been properly implemented

After the abduction on July 17 numerous national and international organizations launched calls for action. Army contingents were sent to the area to ensure protection of those abducted, but this was a provisional and partial measure that will not ensure security for Miriam Miranda, other Garífuna members and their families when they return to their homes. The entire community is also at risk because no measures are in place to secure the Garífuna territories where drug traffickers are reportedly operating.

Because of these renewed threats to the Garífuna community, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate and independent investigation into the abduction on July 17, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- implement fully the precautionary measures of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to provide effective protection to Miriam Miranda, her family and all members of the Garífuna community.

We remind you of your duty to guarantee that human rights defenders carry out their work without fear of violence and threats, as established in 1998 by UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

copies: OFRANEH ~ via fax: 022 504 2552/2523 2449 0003
 Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
 Julie de Torres, Chargé d' Affaires, US Embassy Honduras ~ via email in care of Johnson-MillerA@state.gov
 Amanda Johnson-Miller, Human Rights and Labor Attaché, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email Johnson-MillerA@state.gov
 Kelsey Cambronne, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur on the Rights of the Afro-Descendants ~ via email OSobers@oas.org
 US Senators Brown & Portman and 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: