

Blanca Saraí Izaguirre Lozano  
National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH)  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

April 15, 2025

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We write this letter to denounce the recent escalation of violence and human rights violations against the Garífuna people of Honduras, a situation that reflects a deeply rooted pattern of oppression, impunity, and systemic discrimination.

In the early morning hours of April 12, **Max Gil Castillo Mejía**, brother of the president of the community council of Punta Piedra (Iruña municipality, Colón Department), was kidnapped from his home in San Pedro Sula (Cortés Department) by armed individuals who identified themselves as police officers. Just two days later, prominent Garífuna leader Miriam Miranda and other members of the Garífuna community of El Triunfo de la Cruz (Tela municipality, Atlántida Department) received threats. These violent acts occurred shortly after a Garífuna-led mobilization in Tegucigalpa on April 10, where communities demanded the Honduran government comply with binding rulings issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2015, 2023) in favor of three Garífuna communities in Colón (Punta Piedra) and Atlántida (Triunfo de la Cruz, San Juan).

This is not an isolated incident. The attacks follow a well-documented pattern of repression that strategically coincides with Garífuna mobilizations and symbolic actions—such as the recent symbolic funeral for the CIANCSI (Intersectoral Commission for the Compliance with International Sentences), held to protest the State's failure to implement international rulings. The Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH) has rightfully described this as a *synchronized cycle of terror* aimed at silencing community demands and halting the recovery of ancestral lands. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has already warned that this violence will persist as long as the Honduran State refuses to uphold international legal mandates.

The Garífuna, an Afro-Indigenous people with a profound historical and cultural presence in Honduras, continue to be targeted for defending their rights to territory, culture, and life. Despite legal victories, the Honduran government has failed to implement structural reforms or offer protection for these communities. Silencing Indigenous and Afro-descendant voices through fear and violence is a violation not only of human dignity but of binding international commitments. We call on you to stand with the Garífuna people and ensure that justice, reparation, and peace are no longer deferred.

We strongly urge you to:

- conduct an immediate and transparent investigation into the enforced disappearance of Max Gil Castillo Mejía, disclose where he is being detained, and allow members of OFRANEH to visit him
- conduct an immediate and transparent investigation into the threats made against Miriam Miranda and other Garífuna leaders and hold all those responsible as accountable
- fully implement the Inter-American Court's rulings, including the restitution and legal recognition of ancestral Garífuna lands, and the dismantling of corporate and political interests obstructing justice
- establish permanent protection mechanisms for Garífuna communities and their leaders, coordinated in consultation with OFRANEH and relevant human rights organizations

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martinez

copies: Javier Efraín Bú Soto, Ambassador of Honduras in Washington, DC ~ via email and US mail  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR): Andrea Pochak (Rapporteur for Honduras) ~ via email and US mail  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR): Gloria Monique de Mees (Rapporteur on the Rights of Afro-descendants) ~ via email and US mail  
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH): Isabel Albaladejo Escribano (Representative to Honduras), Alice Shackelford (UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras) ~ via email  
US Embassy in Tegucigalpa: Roy Perrin (Chargé d'Affaires ad interim) and Joe Duran, Human Rights Officer ~ via email  
US State Department: Honduras Desk Officer (Washington, DC)  
US Congress: Senators from Ohio (Husted and Moreno), US Representatives from Ohio (Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes) ~ via email

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