

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

April 16, 2025

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We are writing today to firmly denounce the alarming threats made against the community leaders of **El Triunfo de la Cruz (Tela municipality, Atlántida Department) and the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH)**, including renowned leader Miriam Miranda. These threats are the latest act in a cycle of violence aimed at silencing the Garífuna people's rightful defense of their ancestral lands and cultural survival.

On April 14, leaders of the El Triunfo de la Cruz community received voice messages containing direct threats. The threats came from an individual claiming to be a bodyguard for an investor tied to a tourism complex illegally situated within Garífuna territory—land that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has ruled must be restored to the community. These threats came just two days after two buses carrying armed individuals—allegedly hired to “clear” land—arrived in the community, only to be turned away by residents. April 12 is the same day that Max Castillo, the brother of the president of the community council of Punta Piedra, another Garífuna community, was forcibly disappeared (cf our letter 15 April 2025).

These acts are not isolated. They follow a pattern of intimidation that often emerges in the aftermath of public mobilizations by Garífuna communities, such as the recent demonstration in Tegucigalpa. On April 10, Garífuna communities left their homes along the Atlantic coast to lead a mobilization in Tegucigalpa, demanding that 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). Also disturbing is that on April 14, national media outlets appeared suspiciously close to the site of the disturbance in El Triunfo de la Cruz, suggesting a coordinated attempt to portray the community as hostile rather than as defenders of their legally recognized land rights.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR/OACNUDH) has made it clear: the violence, dispossession, and systemic discrimination facing the Garífuna people will persist until the State of Honduras takes concrete action to implement the three binding rulings issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These rulings require the return of ancestral lands and protection for Garífuna communities and their leaders. The world is watching. Continued impunity and inaction will only deepen the historic injustices suffered by the Garífuna people. Justice, accountability, and respect for indigenous and Afro-descendant rights cannot wait.

**We strongly urge you to:**

- immediately and fully implement the Inter-American Court’s rulings by returning the ancestral territories of El Triunfo de la Cruz, Punta Piedra, and San Juan to their rightful Garífuna communities and removing any illegal developments or actors from these lands
- launch an immediate, transparent, and independent investigation into the recent threats and events surrounding El Triunfo de la Cruz, including the attempted land incursion
- ensure full protection for community leaders and members of OFRANEH, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martinez

copies: Javier Efrain 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:**