

PUBLIC

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UA 28/09 Fear for safety/Death threats

HONDURAS **Bertha Oliva (f), coordinator of the Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras (Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras, COFADEH)  
Other members of staff at COFADEH**

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Bertha Oliva, coordinator of the Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras (Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras, COFADEH) has been threatened with death. The threats may be linked to COFADEH's work, in particular to its campaign for reparation for the relatives of Honduran victims of enforced disappearance, which has received national attention in recent months. Bertha Oliva's safety, and those of her colleagues, could be at risk.

On 27 January, Bertha Oliva received two threatening text (SMS) messages. The first message read "Do you want to know who I am. Best for you that you don't know it. And I don't want you all to keep calling me or I will have to shut your mouth in a different way and you already know what I'm talking about" (Quieres saber quién soy yo. Por tu bien más te vale que no lo sepas. Y no quiero que me sigan llamando o les tendré que cerrar la boca de otra manera y ya sabes a que me refiero). The second one read: "How are you this morning. I hope you're fine. Because when I want it to happen you may turn up with your mouth full of worms. And in a rubbish bag" (Cómo amaneciste. Espero que bien. Porque cuando yo quiera puedes amanecer con la boca llena de gusanos. Y en una bolsa de basura).

On the same day, flyers were handed out in the Central Park in Tegucigalpa, the capital. The flyers criticized COFADEH's campaign for a national reparation policy for the relatives of the victims of enforced disappearance, and accused Bertha Oliva and her colleagues of corruption.

COFADEH and other non-governmental organizations have been particularly active on behalf of many of the approximately 200 people who were subjected to enforced disappearance while in the custody of the Honduran security forces in the 1980s. On 5 December 2008, the Honduran president issued a decree establishing the framework for a programme of reparations for victims of human rights violations, including disappearances, during the period 1980-1993.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Bertha Oliva and COFADEH were mentioned, among 135 activists and their organizations, in a list discovered in the possession of two plainclothes police officers on 10 September 2008. The officers, who were carrying out surveillance outside the office of a trade union, also had a camera with photographs of the offices of several non-governmental organizations, including COFADEH. The two police officers remain in custody pending trial. The deputy director of the police Information and Analysis Unit remains suspended following this incident.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Bertha Oliva and her colleagues at COFADEH, following two death threats received on 27 January;
- urging the authorities to ensure that immediate, effective and appropriate measures are taken to guarantee their safety in strict accordance with their wishes;

- calling on the Attorney General to order a swift, full and impartial investigation into these threats, to make the results of such investigation public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- reminding the authorities of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Security

Coronel Jorge Alberto Rodas Gamero

Ministro

Ministerio de Seguridad Pública

Cuartel Casa Mata

Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

**Fax: +504 237 9070**

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Sr. Ministro**

Attorney General

Abogado Leonidas Rosa Bautista

Fiscal General del Estado

Ministerio Público, Lomas del Guijarro

Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

**Fax: +504 221 5667**

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Sr. Fiscal General**

**COPIES TO:**

Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH)

Barrio La Plazuela, Avenida Cervantes, Casa No. 1301

Apartado Postal 1243

Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 March 2009.