

# URGENT ACTION

## CAMPESINO LEADER SHOT DEAD IN HONDURAS

**Prominent *campesino* (peasant farmer) leader Margarita Murillo was shot dead in the community of El Planón, north-western Honduras, on 27 August. The safety of other members of her organization and family could be at risk.**

In the morning of 27 August **Margarita Murillo** (56) was working on a piece of land in the community of El Planón, near the municipality of Villanueva in the department of Cortés, when she was shot dead. Margarita Murillo's dead body was found over her mattock with shots to her face and chest. The fatal attack occurred after she had reported being under surveillance and receiving threats in recent days. Over the weekend of 30 August, police officers wanted to force their way into Margarita's daughters' home, arguing it was part of the investigations into her death.

Margarita Murillo was the president of the *campesino* organization of Las Ventanas (Empresa Asociativa Campesina de Producción Las Ventanas), which is part of the National Federation of Campesinos of Honduras. She was also an active member of the Social Forum of the Sula Valley (Foro Social del Valle de Sula). On 19 August, as president of the *campesino* organization of Las Ventanas, she attended a very tense meeting in the National Agrarian Institute (Instituto Nacional Agrario, INA) about issues related to land disputes in Las Ventanas. In April 2014 another member of Las Ventanas *campesino* group was killed in circumstances that are yet to be clarified.

Margarita Murillo worked for over 40 years defending the rights and better living standards of *campesinos* and women *campesinas* in Honduras. She was a founding member of the national *campesino* trade union (Central Nacional de Trabajadores del Campo) and of the Liberty and Refoundation party (Libertad y Refundación, LIBRE) which was created after the June 2009 coup d'état. In the 1980s Margarita Murillo suffered torture and persecution in reprisal for her activism. In the violent context of the 2009 coup d'état, Margarita's 23-year-old son was disappeared and was found a few weeks later. Since the time of the coup d'état, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had ordered Honduras to protect her safety, but these measures were never implemented.

### Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to carry out an immediate and independent investigation into the killing of Margarita Murillo, to make the results public and bring those found responsible to justice;
- Urging them to protect Margarita Murillo's colleagues and family members in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to adopt and fully implement a mechanism to protect those who are at risk of reprisal for their work in defence of human rights, and reminding them of their responsibilities as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 OCTOBER 2014 TO:

President of Honduras  
Sr. Juan Orlando Hernandez  
President of Honduras  
Casa Presidencial, Barrio las Lomas  
Boulevard Juan Pablo II, Tegucigalpa,  
Honduras  
Email: ygarcia@presidencia.gob.hn  
Fax: +504 22905088  
**Salutation: Dear President/  
Señor Presidente**

Attorney General  
Sr. 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**

**And copies to:**  
Comité de Familiares de Detenidos  
Desaparecidos en Honduras  
(COFADEH)  
Barrio La Plazuela, Avenida Cervantes  
Casa No. 1301  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
Email: mail@cofadeh.org

**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**



# URGENT ACTION

## CAMPESINO LEADER SHOT DEAD IN HONDURAS

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In June 2014 the Honduran Congress discussed 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). This draft has now been shared with civil society organizations with the intention of gathering their suggestions and recommendations but further discussions are pending. Given the context of violence against human rights defenders, journalists and justice system workers, it is absolutely crucial that the law is soon approved and implemented, and that adequate resources (including financial and human) are devoted to the task of establishing an effective protection mechanism.

The *campesino* communities in Honduras have long struggled to claim their rights and a fair distribution of lands, in many cases at the cost of their own lives. The National Federation of Campesinos of Honduras, among others, has also been campaigning for a comprehensive agrarian law that includes a gender focus and addresses the different needs of *campesino* communities.

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>).

Name: Margarita Murillo

Gender m/f: f

UA: 219/14 Index: AMR 37/010/2014 Issue Date: 2 September 2014