

PUBLIC

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Fear for

HONDURASKilled: Carlos Roberto Flores

Community leaders: José de la Cruz Flores, José Braulio Zúñiga, Orlando Najera, Javier Padilla, Orlando Santos, Javier Cardona, Isidro Zúñiga Guillermo Espinal, Ramón Zúñiga, Issac Chirinos, Gilberto Flores, Enemecio Veliz, Rafael de Jesús Ulloa

Other members of communities in the municipality of Gualaco, Olancho department

Family of Carlos Roberto Flores: Rosa Elvira Flores (f), Martín de Jesus Solís (his parents) Tereza Martínez Avila (f) (his wife) and their two children, aged 3 and 5

A community leader protesting against the construction of a hydroelectric dam was shot dead on 30 June. Eyewitnesses say the gunmen were security guards working for the private company building the dam. Amnesty International is concerned that other leaders and their communities in the region may be at risk of further attacks.

The power company Energisa won a government contract in May 2000 to build and run a hydroelectric dam on the river Babilonia, in the municipality of Gualaco, Olancho department. The communities that will be affected, and non-governmental organisations, believe the dam will seriously damage the environment and ruin the livelihood of local people, who may be forced off their land. Energisa have carried out environmental impact studies, but the affected communities and NGOs claim these studies have underestimated the damage the dam will cause.

The communities protesting against the planned dam received death threats, and in April 2001 they issued a public statement in a national newspaper, together with the human rights organization *La Coordinadora Nacional Contra La Impunidad* (CONACIM), National Coordination Against Impunity, denouncing these threats and calling on the authorities to withdraw warrants for the arrest of community leaders (named above) for alleged criminal damage to Energisa property. Carlos Roberto Flores was one of the named community leaders.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented a number of cases in Honduras in recent years where local communities, many of them indigenous, have been threatened and their leaders killed in apparent reprisal for highlighting environmental damage and campaigning in favour of community rights. The gunmen responsible often have links to powerful local landowners. Environmental activists Carlos Escaleras and Carlos Antonio Luna were murdered in 1997 and 1998.

At least 25 indigenous leaders have reportedly been murdered in the last 10 years. The authorities have taken no action to bring those responsible to justice, and Amnesty International is concerned that this can only encourage the killers to commit further human rights abuses.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish, English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the murder of Carlos Roberto Flores on 30 June 2001 in the municipality of Gualaco, Olancho department;
- expressing concern for the safety of his family and of members of the communities in the municipality of Gualaco which are protesting against the

construction of the hydroelectric dam on the river Babilonia, particularly those named above;

- asking the authorities to take action to protect all those at risk, and to consult with them on what action is appropriate;
- urging the authorities to conduct a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation of the killing and the threats the communities and their leaders have reportedly received, to make public the results of the investigation and to bring those responsible to justice;

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

S.E. Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Casa Presidencial
Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo
Palacio José Cecilio del Valle
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Telegram:Presidente, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: + 504 234 1484

E-mail: law_bureau@hotmail.com

Salutation: Dear President/Señor Presidente

Attorney General

Dr. Roy Edmundo Medina
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General, Ministerio Público
Edificio Castillo Poujol, 4 Avd,
Colonia Palmira, Boulevard Morazán
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Telegram:Fiscal General, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax:+ 504 239 3698 (this number may be hard to obtain)
Salutation:Dear Attorney General/Señor Fiscal General

Minister of Security

Dr. Gautama Fonseca
Ministro de Seguridad
Ministerio de Seguridad
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Telegram:Ministro Seguridad, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: + 504 238 0238
Salutation:Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

COPIES TO:

National Human Rights NGO

Coordinadora Nacional Contra la Impunidad
Apartado Postal 1243
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

National Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights

Dr Leo Valladares Lanza
Comisionado Nacional de Protección de los Derechos Humanos
Avda. La Paz No. 2444
Contiguo a Galerías La Paz
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 17 August 2001.