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Honduras: Reaching an agreement is the first step

The agreement reached yesterday by the indigenous and black peoples in Honduras and the Public Ministry, *Ministerio Público*, could pave the way for a greater respect for the human rights of these peoples, declared Amnesty International today.

The agreement put an end to the demonstrations and the hunger strike initiated by the indigenous peoples in their struggle to right the measures taken against their interests, and to put an end to the injustices they continue to suffer.

“It is now of the utmost importance that the commitments of the agreement are put into practice,” stated Amnesty International assuring that it will monitor the implementation of the agreement.

“Too many similar agreements in the past have remained as good intentions” added the organization.

Among the most important elements of the agreement, Amnesty International noted the recognition of the 169 Convention, *Convenio 169*, as the instrument that would rule government relations with the indigenous and black peoples, and that it would be publicised among the pertinent sectors.

The human rights organization also called positive the agreement to clear up the murders of members of these peoples which have remained, up until now, completely unpunished. However, Amnesty International used this opportunity to point out that impunity still exists in the cases of the “disappeared” of the 80's.

Background Information

The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention known as Convention 169, *Convenio 169*, was adopted 27 June 1989 at the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation, *Conferencia General de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)*. The treaty came into force in Honduras in 1995, after being ratified in 1994. The treaty aims, among other things, to protect indigenous people, to ensure their participation in any decisions which pertain to them, and to preserve their cultures. It also indicates measures which governments should adopt in order for the indigenous people to enjoy on equal terms with all other sectors of the population, the rights and opportunities that the law grants them.