

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION ACTIVIST GETS DEATH THREATS

A teacher, who has been an opposition activist and written articles critical of the 28 June 2009 coup that installed a *de facto* government, has received a series of death threats and had her car interfered with. A colleague who was also an opposition activist was killed on 23 March.

Rosa Margarita Vargas was driving home on 6 April, after work at the secondary school where she teaches. A taxi driver called to her to stop because there was a problem with her car. Rosa Vargas drove straight to a garage, where the mechanic told her that her right-hand front tyre had been slashed. The school where Rosa Vargas works had opened that day for the first time since the end of March, when another of the teachers was killed.

On 11 April, Rosa Vargas's former neighbours told her, two armed men came to the house where she had lived until December 2009, and asked where she was. Rosa had received a series of phone calls on 9-12 April, from a man who threatened her, telling her that she should do nothing to investigate the killing of her colleague, José Manuel Flores Arguijo, and that if she persisted, or carried on working with the Resistance movement, she would be *eliminada* ("eliminated").

Rosa Vargas has told Amnesty International that in December 2009, shortly after she had moved house, a neighbour told her that three men wearing balaclavas and blue uniforms like those worn by the police had come to her old house: they had shouted and kicked at the door. They asked neighbours if Rosa Vargas still lived there, if the neighbours knew where she had moved to, and where she worked. Later that month, she said, the left-side wheel bolts were loosened when the car was parked outside her new house.

Rosa Vargas had received handwritten threats about five times between October and November 2009, left under her car's windscreen wipers. The messages contained threats that Rosa should not write any more articles, and should stop working with the Resistance movement, or she would be killed.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to order a thorough and impartial investigation into the threats and acts of intimidation against Rosa Margarita Vargas as a matter of the utmost urgency;
- Urging them to act immediately to give all necessary protection to Rosa Margarita Vargas, in accordance with her wishes.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 MAY 2010 TO:

President

Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa
 Presidente de la República
 Casa Presidencial
 Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo
 Palacio José Cecilio del Valle
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: + 504 232 1666

Salutation: Dear President

Attorney General

Sr. Luis Alberto Rubí
 Fiscal General de la República
 Lomas del Guijarro, Avenida República
 Dominicana
 Edificio Lomas Plaza II
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: + 504 221 5667

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

And copies to:

NGO

Comité de Familiares de Detenidos
 Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH)
 Barrio La Plazuela, Avenida Cervantes,
 Casa No. 1301
 Apartado Postal 1243
 Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Fax: +504 220 5280 (say "tono de fax")

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Rosa Vargas's colleague José Manuel Flores Arguijo was shot dead in front of teaching staff and pupils in the school playground by three men. He had been a well-known member of the Resistance movement, a broad-based opposition alliance of individuals and organizations which emerged in response to the 28 June 2009 coup. He had written many articles criticizing the rule of the *de facto* authorities installed by the coup, and continued to write pieces criticising the present government, which was elected in November 2009, and highlighting issues of social injustice.

Rosa Margarita Vargas has written articles and essays critical of the coup, some of which criticise the armed forces for their role in it. She has also written recently about the killing of José Manuel Flores and the flaws she saw in the investigation of his death.

The democratically elected president of Honduras, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, was deposed by the 28 June coup, carried out by a military-backed group of politicians led by the head of Congress, Roberto Micheletti. Following the coup, there was widespread unrest in the country, with the police and army clashing frequently with protestors. Amnesty International documented the human rights abuses carried out by the *de facto* authorities, including the excessive use of force against protestors, arbitrary detentions, curbs on freedom of expression, and harassment of independent members of the judiciary.

A new government led by Porfirio Lobo took office on 27 January 2010.

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