

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER ABDUCTED AND THREATENED WITH DEATH

A lawyer working for the human rights organization Association for a more Just Society (Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa – ASJ) was abducted by two unknown men in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, on 19 October. During her 40-minute ordeal she was threatened with death, and her life could be in danger.

On 19 October, at 2.15pm, the lawyer, who has asked not to be named, hailed a taxi outside the ASJ office. Two men approached her while she was negotiating a price with the taxi driver. They forced her into the taxi with them. The men ordered the taxi driver to follow their directions.

In the taxi, the two men exchanged a gun between them and then asked the lawyer “Do you work for ASJ? Who pays you? How much do they pay you? Are you investigating SETECH?” [SETECH is a private security company] (¿Trabajas para ASJ? ¿Quién te paga? ¿Cuánto te paga? ¿Estás investigando a SETECH?). The lawyer refused to answer. The men said to each other “You know we were paid to execute her ...we have to carry out the plan” (Sabés que nos pagaron para ejecutarla ... hay que seguir con el plan). One of the abductors said “Bitch, we are asking you a question, answer it” (Hija de la gran puta, te estamos haciendo una pregunta, contestá). They continued to ask the lawyer questions about her work.

After around 30 minutes, the two men had an argument. One of the men said that he had second thoughts, which appeared to irritate the other man, who then ordered the taxi driver to come to a halt in front of a hardware store. The abductors told the lawyer to get out by saying “Come on! Quick! Get out! [...] may God be with you” (Bueno, bajese pero ya, no lo piense bajese ya [...] que Dios ande con usted). The taxi drove on with the men inside and left her on the street.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the incident and the threats against the ASJ lawyer, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- Urging that the authorities take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection to the victim, in accordance with her wishes.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 DECEMBER 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: + 504 239 3298
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Interior

Oscar Alvarez
 Secretario de Estado
 Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de
 Seguridad, Plantel Casamata, subida al
 Picacho, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C, Honduras
Fax: +504 220 1756
E-mail: despachoministro@yahoo.com
Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimado
Sr.Ministro

And copies to:

Asociación para una Sociedad más
Justa (ASJ)
 Apartado 30676
 Tegucigalpa
 Honduras

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The lawyer had previously suffered from intimidation on 21 September. She was in the offices of the Secretary of Labour to look at documents on labour laws that protect cleaners and security guards. At around 12.10pm a woman approached and advised the lawyer to drop the investigation into security companies, because of the personal risks involved. She asked if the research focussed on SETECH and reminded the lawyer of the case of the ASJ lawyer Dionisio Díaz García, who was killed in 2006 because of similar work. Around 15 minutes later, a man arrived and started to talk to the lawyer "... Look, there are former army officers in security companies ... they have hit-men" (Mire, las empresas de seguridad son formadas por ex militares ... tienen sicarios). He added "When you take a taxi, at any time a motorbike can show up and boom! Boom! Your body falls to the ground ... Leave this job and go away from this institution" (Usted toma un taxi, usted se para en cualquier momento aparece un motorizado le hace bum bum, y su cuerpo queda inerte ... deje ese trabajo, váyase de la institución). He then asked whether she was investigating SETECH on behalf of ASJ. The lawyer responded that she was not looking at any company in particular, and she was simply a legal consultant.

Dionisio Díaz García, was shot dead on 4 December 2006 by a man riding pillion on a motorbike. Dionisio had been representing a number of former security guards who claimed to have been unfairly dismissed at the time he was killed. Amnesty International issued various Urgent Actions on this case in December 2006, highlighting the threats suffered by other ASJ members after the killing of Dionisio Díaz. The ASJ was issued with protection measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2007 following Dionisio Díaz's killing.

The investigation and trials on Dionisio's case were carried out from 2007 to 2009 and resulted in the sentencing of a former security guard, who had worked for SETECH, and a police officer for his killing.

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