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Honduras must guarantee broad civil society participation in the discussions on the regulation of the Law Protecting Human Rights Defenders

On 15 May 2015, was adopted the *Law Protecting Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Operators of Justice (Law Protecting Human Rights Defenders)*. Before the adoption of this law, the then Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, had signaled the absence of a national framework for the protection of human rights defenders, which was leaving them in a situation of greater vulnerability.¹

Amnesty International, the Center for Justice and International Law – CEJIL, and Protection International, recognise the *Law Protecting Human Rights Defenders* as an important step in implementing protection as well as recognition of the legitimacy of the work of those who promote and defend human rights. Despite the advance that the law signifies, its mere adoption is not sufficient for the state of Honduras to fully uphold its international obligations of respect, protection and guarantee of human rights for those who promote them. It is necessary that the Honduran authorities assure the effective implementation of the said law.

In this sense, **we urge the authorities to guarantee that the discussion on the regulation of said law will be both open and involve the participation of civil society**. The Inter- American Court of Human Rights recently condemned Honduras in a case relating to a human rights defender, and determined that the state should implement an effective public policy for the protection of human rights defenders, including the participation of ‘human rights defenders, civil society organizations and experts in the formulation of the standards’²

Keeping in mind that within the National Council of Protection of Human Rights Defenders the discussion on the regulation of the *Law Protecting Human Rights Defenders* has resumed. We call on the state of Honduras to guarantee the wide participation of civil society organisations and human rights defenders not affiliated with organisations, including defenders that are based and work in isolated communities. Furthermore, we urge the Honduran authorities to adopt a participative focus from human rights defenders as a

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, Addendum, Mission to Honduras, 13 December 2012, A/HRC/22/47/Add.1, par. 35.

² Inter-American Court Of Human Rights. Case of Luna López v. Honduras, Judgment of October 10, 2013 (Merits, Reparations and Costs), par. 243 and order 10.



necessary step in order to publically recognise the legitimacy of the work that they are undertaking.

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