

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 37/003/2009

31 March 2009

Further Information on UA 28/09 (AMR 37/002/2009, 4 February 2009) Fear for safety/Death threats

HONDURAS **Bertha Oliva (f), coordinator of the Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras (Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras, COFADEH)**
Other members of staff at COFADEH

Bertha Oliva was kept under surveillance on 11 March by a man who fled when he realised he had been seen. She has been receiving some police protection since 14 March, but it is inadequate, and she and her colleagues are still in danger.

On 11 March Bertha Oliva had been dining with a colleague and a relative at a restaurant in the capital, Tegucigalpa. At around 8.45pm a man walked into the restaurant and remained near the main door for about a minute, from where he watched Bertha Oliva. He then walked out, got into a car and drove off. Neither Bertha Oliva nor her companions saw the man.

About five minutes later, the same man drove up to the restaurant in a different car. He pulled up alongside Bertha Oliva's car, which was parked outside, and looked inside. When he realised that someone was watching him, he drove away. Bertha Oliva called the police, who arrived about 40 minutes later. The police officers did not question anyone at the restaurant that evening.

The Public Prosecutor's Office has not reported any advances in their investigations into this incident, or into the death threats Bertha Oliva received on 27 January.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bertha Oliva, some of her colleagues and the COFADEH offices have been targeted on other occasions. On 10 September 2008, two plainclothes police officers were discovered with a list of 135 activists and their organizations, including Bertha Oliva and COFADEH. The officers, who were carrying out surveillance outside the office of a trade union, also had a camera with photographs of the offices of several NGOs, including COFADEH. The two officers were arrested, but have since been released.

On 6 July 2008 Bertha Oliva and her daughter were followed by two men. On 31 August, a colleague of Bertha Oliva was followed by another two men. The offices of COFADEH had been broken into on 3 July and 5 August: both times, files containing sensitive information were stolen, together with some valuables. An investigation has yet to take place.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Bertha Oliva and her colleagues at COFADEH, following two death threats received on 27 January and an act of surveillance carried out on 11 March;
- expressing concern that the police protection provided to Bertha Oliva since 14 March could be strengthened;
- urging the Minister of Public Safety to ensure that immediate, effective and appropriate measures are taken to guarantee her safety and that of her colleagues at COFADEH, in strict accordance with their wishes;

- calling on the Attorney General to order a swift, full and impartial investigation into the 27 January death threats, the 11 March attempt to keep her under surveillance and other recent incidents, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- reminding the authorities that human rights defenders have the right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Public Safety

Coronel Jorge Alberto Rodas Gamero

Ministro

Ministerio de Seguridad Pública

Cuartel Casa Mata

Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Fax: +504 220 1756

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

Abogado Luis Alberto Rubí

Fiscal General del Estado

Ministerio Público, Lomas del Guijarro

Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Fax: +504 221 5667

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Sr. Fiscal General

COPIES TO:

Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH)

Barrio La Plazuela, Avenida Cervantes, Casa No. 1301

Apartado Postal 1243

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 8 May 2009.