



Carlos Hernández and Dina Meza © ASJ

"Thanks to the effort, thanks to the letters, thanks to the urgent actions ... today we can smile and we can be alive, because they drew attention to our situation.... The powerful people who wished to take our lives, the government, the circles of power, realized that our situation is not only known in Honduras but in the world..."

- Human rights defender,
Dina Meza

DEATH THREATS TARGET FREEDOM

Award-winning journalist Dina Meza and colleagues at online publication *Revistazo.com* and its publisher the Association for a More Just Society (ASJ), were subjected to a campaign of harassment and intimidation after investigating several private security firms for labour rights violations.

One colleague, lawyer Dionisio Díaz García, was shot dead in December 2006 while on his way to the Honduran Supreme Court to prepare for a related case taken up by ASJ. No one has been brought to justice for his murder.

In the months leading up to his murder, Dionisio and Dina were followed by unmarked cars. Dina's children were followed home from school and personal, derogatory comments were posted about her on the *Revistazo.com* online message board.

Soon after Dionisio's death, ASJ president, Carlos Hernández, received a text message saying, "You are the next because you the heat [sic – head]". Around the same time he received the threatening text message, he was pursued and kept under surveillance by two men on a motorbike. Other ASJ members also reported an intensification of threats and intimidation. They were also told of an apparent plan by private security firms to assassinate ASJ members: the same source implied it would be better for ASJ journalists to leave the country for their own safety.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights asked the Honduran government to protect members of ASJ, but so far the investigations to identify those responsible for the killing of Dionisio Díaz García and for the threats and intimidation of other ASJ members have produced no concrete results. While the perpetrators remain at large, ASJ members remain vulnerable.

Some protection measures have been put in place, but these do not appear to be adequate. ASJ is also paying substantial costs every month to cover the transport and food costs of the police agents assigned to the job – money which otherwise would be available for their human rights work.

In July 2007, Dina Meza received AI UK's 'Special Award for Human Rights Journalism Under Threat' for her work on *Revisitazo*.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Write to President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales

Start your letter "Estimado Sr Presidente" or "Dear President"

Lic. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Casa Presidencial
Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo
Palacio José Cecilio del Valle
Tegucigalpa
Honduras

In your letter ask President Zelaya:

- to **investigate the threats and intimidation** against Carlos Hernández and Dina Meza and the killing of Dionisio Díaz García immediately and to bring those responsible to justice
- to take immediate action to provide **regular, effective, and impartial protection** for them and their colleagues
- to fulfil obligations to **recognize the right of human rights defenders** to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals as set out in the UN declaration on human rights defenders.

2. Support ASJ by sending your personal words of support

Send letters or cards to:

Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa (ASJ)
Apartado Postal 30676, Toncontín
Comayagüela, Honduras

3. Help ASJ create a virtual mural against Impunity!

Email photos, drawings, poems and messages of support to dinameza@revistazo.com.

Find out more

- Watch an interview with Dina Meza at:
<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/hrd-index-eng>
- Watch an interview with Carlos Hernández:
<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/videos.asp?id=173>

