

URGENT ACTION

PEASANT FARMERS FACE DEATH CLAIMING LAND

Several members of a peasant farmers' organization in northern Honduras have been attacked over a dispute with a local company which claims it owns the land. Three have been killed and two injured. The others are in grave danger.

The peasant farmers' organization **Campesino Movement of San Manuel, Cortes (Movimiento Campesino de San Manuel, Cortés, MOCSAN)** is based in the Sula Valley, Cortes department, northern Honduras. It works on land rights for peasant farmers, and has laid claim to a plot of land in El Coowle, near the town of San Manuel.

MOCSAN spokesperson **Nahum Ricardo Domínguez** has said he was in the town square of El Progreso on 22 May, at about 9.15am, when a white car with no licence plate drove towards him. He saw three men in the car. Two of them got out and made eye contact with him, while brandishing a pistol. Nahum Ricardo Domínguez managed to run into a shopping mall. He had recently told press conferences and interviews about the land dispute.

MOCSAN member **Marilú Miranda Orellana** had left an encampment in the disputed plot in El Coowle on 20 May early in the morning. Four men were seen following her: as she neared her house in El Progreso they shot her several times in the back, killing her.

Some 500 peasant farmer members of MOCSAN had staged a demonstration on 17 May to reclaim an area of land. Security guards working for a local company opened fire on the demonstrators, killing **Valentín Caravantes** and **Celso Ruiz**, and gravely injuring **Adolfo Melgar** and **Santos Aníbal Melgar**. One of them is still in the hospital and the other has to return for further treatment.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to provide appropriate protection immediately to Nahum Ricardo Domínguez and all members of MOCSAM according to their wishes;
- Calling on them to order a thorough, independent investigation into the killings, attacks and harassment of MOCSAM members, in particular the claims that police did not intervene when security guards fired on the demonstration on 17 May;
- Calling on them to provide Adolfo Melgar and Santos Aníbal Melgar with any medical attention they may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JULY 2013 TO:

Special Prosecutor for Human Rights

René David Díaz

Fiscalía Regional del Ministerio Público

Bo. Lempira, 10 y 11 calle,

5ta y 6ta Ave., Edificio Fernández

Guzmán, San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Fax: +504 2553 6314 (ask "tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal Especial/

Dear Special Prosecutor

Minister of Interior

Sr. Arturo Corrales

Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de

Seguridad

Plantel Casamata, subida al Picacho

Tegucigalpa, M.D.C.

Honduras

Fax: +504 2220 1756

Salutation: Señor Ministro del Interior/

Dear Minister of Interior

And copies to:

Health Minister

Dra. Roxana Aurajo

Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de Salud

2 Calle, Avenida Cervantes,

Tegucigalpa, M.D.C.

Honduras

Email:comunicacionessalud@yahoo.com

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

MOCSAN asserts that the land at the centre of the dispute is not owned by the company, since the National Agrarian Institute (Instuto Nacional Agrario – INA) seized it from the company in 2012. MOCSAN also claims that police did not intervene when security guards fired on the demonstration on 17 May.

In the last few years human rights defenders in Honduras have been harassed and attacked, and some have been killed in reprisal for their work. Their situation was recently highlighted in Amnesty International's Annual Report and in the report *Transforming Pain into Hope: Human Rights Defenders in the Americas* (<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR01/006/2012/en>). Included in these reports is the situation of *campesino* (peasant farmers) community leaders and human rights defenders involved in representing *campesino* communities in land disputes in Bajo Aguán, in northern Honduras, who have been threatened and attacked.

Human rights lawyer Antonio Trejo Cabrera was shot dead in the capital, Tegucigalpa, in September 2012. He had been representing three peasant co-operatives and had helped farmers to regain legal rights to land.

Names: Nahum Ricardo Domínguez (m), Marilú Miranda Orellana (f), Valentín Caravantes (m), Celso Ruiz, Adolfo Melgar (m), Santos Aníbal Melgar (m) and other members of MOCSAN

Gender m/f: both

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