

URGENT ACTION

LAND DEFENDERS IN RÍO BLANCO STILL AT RISK

On 16 July, the Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) reported new attacks that affected at least 25 families of the community of Río Blanco, Intibucá, Honduras, that saw their food crop intentionally destroyed next to the where Rosalina Dominguez, her four sons and two other members of the community of Río Blanco were threatened last 30 April and 1 May 2019. We urge the Minister of Human Rights to immediately guarantee the safety of members of Río Blanco and COPINH, and to further the investigations of any attacks against them.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Karla Eugenia Cueva Aguilar
Ministerio de Derechos Humanos
Palmira, Edificio Torre Futura, Ave. República de Panamá,
Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras
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Dear Minister Cueva,

I am concerned about recent attacks affecting at least 25 families of the community of Río Blanco, Intibucá. According to the Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), their food crop feeding 25 families was intentionally destroyed on 16 July. The attack occurred in the same area where Rosalina Dominguez, her four sons and two other members of the community were threatened last 30 April and 1 May 2019.

Given the history of attacks against Río Blanco community, that have been fighting for their rights around the construction of Agua Zarca dam in the Gualcarque River, I am worried for the risks of further attacks, including physical, against this community.

Therefore, I urge you to guarantee the safety of members of the community of Río Blanco and COPINH, in agreement with them, and to further the investigations of any attacks against them.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Lenca Indigenous community of Río Blanco, Intibucá, Honduras, has been demonstrating against a hydro-electric power project on the land the community has been living on for centuries, alleging lack of free, prior and informed consultation. The community belong to the Civic Council of the Indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras (Consejo Civico de Organizaciones Populares e Indigenas de Honduras, COPINH). COPINH has been fighting for over 20 years for better standards of living of its community in Río Blanco. Since 2011, COPINH members have been campaigning for their right to free, prior and informed. Its members have been targeted with threats and harassment for years in connection with their work.

Berta Cáceres, leader and co-founder of COPINH, was shot dead on 3 March in her home in the town of La Esperanza, in the province of Intibucá. On 7 March 2016 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued a new precautionary measure of protection in favour of all COPINH members and Berta Cáceres' family on the grounds of the risks posed by their work defending human rights, environment and natural resources and their increased vulnerability situation after Berta Cáceres' killing.

On 30 April and 1 May 2019 Rosalina Domínguez, finance coordinator for the Indigenous Council of Río Blanco, her four sons (aged between 16 and 30), and two other members of her community faced verbal death threats on their way to work by a group of at least seven people, one of them armed. The COPINH reported the attack the Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office and asked the Honduras National Protection System to protect Rosalina Domínguez. Investigations into these attacks remain pending. The Protection System for human rights defenders must also enforce security measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission (Precautionary Measure 112/16) to ensure members of COPINH can develop their activities as human rights defenders without being objects of violence and harassment.

Over the last three years Amnesty International has alerted on numerous death and other types of threats, intimidation, harassment and the killings of activists in Honduras which is one of the deadliest countries in the world to be a human rights defender.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 2 September 2019
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Community of Río Blanco AND the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) (they/them/theirs it/its)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr37/0337/2019/en/>