

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS THREATENED

Four members of a prominent human rights organization in Honduras have recently been attacked, threatened and harassed. Their lives are in danger.

The Committee of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared (Comité de Familiares de los Detenidos y Desaparecidos, COFADEH) is a prominent human rights organization in Honduras. On 20 April, at about 8am, a founding member of COFADEH, **Nohemí Pérez**, arrived at the organization's office in the capital, Tegucigalpa. As she waited outside, she noticed that a car was parked outside the main entrance. The driver threatened Nohemí Pérez and said, "You'll see [what happens] bitches, you'll see." (*Ya van a ver hijas de la gran puta, ya van a ver*) as he threw a piece of wood at her, which hit her on her leg. He drove off shortly afterwards. The previous day, Nohemí Pérez had noticed a young man pointing at her while she was taking part in a demonstration organized by a trade union in protest against the rise in the cost of living.

In March, other COFADEH members were threatened and harassed. On 8 March, the organization's founding member and coordinator, **Bertha Oliva**, received a phone call in which she heard a recording of a call she had made only seconds before being played back to her. On 30 March, another member of COFADEH (name known to Amnesty International) was entering the office at around 8.45am, when a man in a red pickup truck waiting at the traffic lights, called to her, "Tell that Bertha Oliva bitch that she must stop living off the backs of the disappeared" (*Decile a esa hija de la gran puta de Bertha Oliva que ya deje de vivir de los desaparecidos*). On 26 April, **Dina Meza**, another defender who works at COFADEH who has received repeated threats, informed Amnesty International that a car was parked up outside her house for a long period, and at around 6pm she was briefly followed by an unknown man near a park in her neighbourhood.

In November 2009, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) called on the Honduran authorities to protect the members of COFADEH and their immediate families.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against the members of COFADEH, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take immediate steps to fully comply with the IACHR's orders to protect those who work at COFADEH and their families. The form of protection provided to members of COFADEH must be agreed with them and reflect their own wishes;
- Reminding them that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their activities without any unfair restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JUNE 2012 TO:

Attorney General

Sr. Luis Alberto Rubí
Fiscal General de la República
Lomas del Guijarro, Avenida República
Dominicana, Edificio Lomas Plaza II
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 2221 5667

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General/ Dear Attorney General

Minister of Interior

Sr. Pompeyo Bonilla
Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de
Seguridad, Plantel Casamata, subida al
Picacho, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C,
Honduras
Fax: +504 2220 1756

Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimado Sr.Ministro

And copies to:

Comité de Familiares de Detenidos
Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH)
Barrio La Plazuela, Avenida Cervantes
Casa No. 1301
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 2220 5280
(Ask "me da tono de fax, por favor")

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COFADEH is one of Honduras's main human rights organizations, and has been at the forefront of efforts to document and report human rights violations both at the time of the 28 June 2009 coup which deposed President José Manuel Zelaya, and during the administration of President Porfirio Lobo, who took office on 27 January 2010 following elections in November 2009. Recently, COFADEH worked on the issue of a fire at Comayagua prison that is believed to have left 361 prisoners dead and left scores of others with serious burns (See Amnesty International press release at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/honduras-urged-investigate-prison-fire-deaths-2012-02-15>).

Earlier this month Dina Meza, received a series of threats of sexual violence (see UA 106/12, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/006/2012/en>). As part of COFADEH, Dina Meza has worked on the land conflict in the country's Lower Aguán region. The region is at the centre of a series of land disputes between peasant farming communities and various companies and private landowners that have led to violent clashes.

Human rights defenders and journalists in Honduras are at risk: they are threatened, attacked or killed because of their work, often exposing human rights violations. In January 2012, journalist Gilda Silvestrucci received telephone death threats. (UA 28/12, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/002/2012/en>). In February, Wilfredo Paz and Juan Chinchilla, two human rights activists campaigning for land rights of peasant farmers amid ongoing disputes over land ownership in the Lower Aguan region, received a death threat by text message. (UA 66/12, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/003/2012/en>). In March, journalist Mavis Ethel Cruz received a telephone death threat. (UA 78/12, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/004/2012/en>).

Name: Nohemí Pérez, Bertha Oliva, Dina Meza, another COFADEH member (name known to Amnesty International)

Gender m/f: all f

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