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Public Statement

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Honduras: Amnesty International welcomes release of Miranda brothers

Amnesty International welcomes the unconditional release from prison of prisoners of conscience Leonardo and Marcelino Miranda on 15 August and 12 July respectively following a decision by the Supreme Court on 12 July 2006 acquitting them of a 2001 murder. They had been in prison since January 2003.

For many years Amnesty International has been concerned about the use of politically motivated criminal charges to harass, intimidate and deter opposition from human rights defenders and indigenous activists.

On 16 December 2003 Leonardo and Marcelino Miranda were sentenced to 25 years in prison each for murder despite evidence that the case against them was fabricated in reprisal for their role as indigenous leaders of the Civic Council of Indigenous and Popular Organizations (Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Indígenas y Populares, COPINH) trying to secure a communal land title for the Montaña Verde community.

For further information see:

Honduras: Prisoners of conscience Marcelino and Leonardo Miranda acquitted of murder must be released promptly

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR370042006?open&of=ENG-HND>

Honduras: Prisoner of conscience Feliciano Pineda released – a first step towards justice

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR370032006?open&of=ENG-HND>

Honduras: No justice for indigenous leaders. Amnesty International adopts new prisoners of conscience <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR370022006>

Honduras: Montaña Verde Prisoners of Conscience

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR370012006>