



Tilly Metz, Sira Rego and Javi Lopez

European Parliament

tilly.metz@europarl.europa.eu

sira.rego@europarl.europa.eu

javi.lopez@europarl.europa.eu

To the attention of:

Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández, President of the Republic of Honduras

Chancellor Lisandro Rosales, Secretary of State of External Relation and International Cooperation

General Fredy Santiago Díaz Zelaya, Secretary of State of Defence and National Security

Minister Elvis Yovanni Rodas, Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment

Mr. Ebal Díaz Lupian, Secretary of State of the Presidency

Mr. Roberto Herrera Cáceres, National Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. Reinaldo Sánchez, Secretary of State for Development and Social Inclusion

Head Prosecutor Óscar Chinchilla, Public Prosecutor's Office

Director Rommel Martínez, Police Investigation Directorate

Brussels, 27 November 2020

RE: The disappearance of four Garifuna members of the Triunfo de la Cruz community

Dear Excellencies,

We, 57 Members of the European Parliament, are writing you to express our deepest concern about the disappearance of Alberth Snaider Centeno Tomas - president of the Patronato de Triunfo de la Cruz - Milton Joel Martínez Alvarez, Suami Aparicio Mejía and Albert Sentana Thomas.

These four members of the Triunfo de la Cruz community in Tela city, and of OFRANEH, the Afro-Indigenous Garifuna Peoples' organisation of Honduras, were kidnapped on 18 July 2020 from their homes by a group of heavily armed men wearing national police uniforms with a badge of the Police Department of Investigations (DPI).

Since the violent abduction, their families have not received any information on their whereabouts, nor has there been any effective response on the requests by national and international organisations to start an investigation.

The indigenous Garifuna community of Honduras has been suffering systematic attacks for several years now. These attacks are linked to agribusinesses and more recently to housing and tourism companies that are developing real estate on the territories of the Garifuna people.

OFRANEH's longstanding democratic and legitimate commitment to defending the territory, and their ongoing public denunciation of violations of peoples' rights and their own human rights, has resulted in the organisation's members becoming the targets of attacks. They repeatedly face threats, persecution, kidnapping and killings for protesting the commodification of the land and natural resources upon which communities rely.

Garifuna peoples have not been consulted on any of the projects developed by agriculture, housing and tourism companies, as is legally mandated in order to comply with the right of Indigenous Peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, under the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 169, ratified by Honduras in 1995.

The attacks have seen a sharp rise since 2015, when the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACrtHR) ordered the restitution of land and reparation of damages for the Triunfo de la Cruz community. The complaint was filed in 2003 in the IACHR and admitted on 14 March 2006.

On 8 October 2015, the IACrtHR issued a ruling against the State of Honduras for all these acts of violation of the territorial and collective rights of the Triunfo de la Cruz community. This ruling establishes the State's responsibility and its obligation to guarantee the rights of the community, to repair the damages caused, and to ensure adequate mechanisms to prevent the repetition of such acts. Yet so far, almost five years later, the ruling has not been enforced, the community is still being violated and 17 people were murdered last year – eleven men and six women.

We as Members of the European Parliament want to express our deepest concerns with the ongoing human rights violations inflicted on the Garifuna people in Honduras. We want to add our voices to the coalition of national and international organisations that have repeatedly denounced the brutal violence endured by organisations, social movements and communities in Honduras.

With this letter, we want to join forces with the social organisations of Honduras in demanding from the national government:

- The immediate location alive of the four kidnapped Garifuna members of the Triunfo de la Cruz community, including the chairperson of the community's Patronato association and member of OFRANEH.
- The immediate end to the systematic and intentional violence against the Garifuna people.

- The urgent enforcement of the IACrTHR ruling that orders the State –among other actors— to clean up, issue land titles for and demarcate 2840 hectares that are part of the Garifuna ancestral territory, and restore 22 hectares of land in the hands of the Tela municipality Workers Union back to the Triunfo de la Cruz community as the legitimate owner, as well as 98 hectares that are illegally held by the MACERICA and IDETRISA companies who are developing the Marbella and Playa Escondida housing projects.

Yours sincerely,

1. **Tilly Metz**, Member of the European Parliament
2. **Sira Rego**, Member of the European Parliament
3. **Javi Lopez**, Member of the European Parliament
4. **Alexandra Geese**, Member of the European Parliament
5. **Alícia Homs**, Member of the European Parliament
6. **Alviina Alametsä**, Member of the European Parliament
7. **Anna Cavazzini**, Member of the European Parliament
8. **Benoît Biteau**, Member of the European Parliament
9. **Brando Benifei**, Member of the European Parliament
10. **Caroline Roose**, Member of the European Parliament
11. **Clare Daly**, Member of the European Parliament
12. **Claude Gruffat**, Member of the European Parliament
13. **Damien Carême**, Member of the European Parliament
14. **David Cormand**, Member of the European Parliament
15. **Diana Riba i Giner**, Member of the European Parliament
16. **Ernest Urtasun**, Member of the European Parliament
17. **Fabio Massimo Castaldo**, Member of the European Parliament

18. **Francisco Guerreiro**, Member of the European Parliament
19. **François Alfonsi**, Member of the European Parliament
20. **Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield**, Member of the European Parliament
21. **Hannah Neumann**, Member of the European Parliament
22. **Ibán García del Blanco**, Member of the European Parliament
23. **Idoia Villanueva**, Member of the European Parliament
24. **Ignazio Corrao**, Member of the European Parliament
25. **Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero**, Member of the European Parliament
26. **Isabel Santos**, Member of the European Parliament
27. **Ivan Vilibor Sinčić**, Member of the European Parliament
28. **Izaskun Bilbao Barandica**, Member of the European Parliament
29. **Javier Nart**, Member of the European Parliament
30. **Jordi Solé**, Member of the European Parliament
31. **José Gusmao**, Member of the European Parliament
32. **Karima Delli**, Member of the European Parliament
33. **Leila Chaibi**, Member of the European Parliament
34. **Manu Pineda**, Member of the European Parliament
35. **Manuela Ripa**, Member of the European Parliament
36. **Marc Angel**, Member of the European Parliament
37. **María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop**, Member of the European Parliament
38. **Marie Toussaint**, Member of the European Parliament
39. **Marisa Matias**, Member of the European Parliament
40. **Massimiliano Smeriglio**, Member of the European Parliament
41. **Michèle Rivasi**, Member of the European Parliament

42. **Mick Wallace**, Member of the European Parliament
43. **Miguel Urbán**, Member of the European Parliament
44. **Milan Brglez**, Member of the European Parliament
45. **Mónica Silvana González**, Member of the European Parliament
46. **Mounir Satouri**, Member of the European Parliament
47. **Nikolaj Villumsen**, Member of the European Parliament
48. **Özlem Alev Demirel**, Member of the European Parliament
49. **Pascal Durand**, Member of the European Parliament
50. **Pernando Barrena**, Member of the European Parliament
51. **Salima Yenbou**, Member of the European Parliament
52. **Sara Cerdas**, Member of the European Parliament
53. **Saskia Bricmont**, Member of the European Parliament
54. **Stelios Kouloglou**, Member of the European Parliament
55. **Ville Niinistö**, Member of the European Parliament
56. **Viola von Cramon-Taubadel**, Member of the European Parliament
57. **Yannick Jadot**, Member of the European Parliament