

URGENT ACTION

The Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) expresses its concern, to the national and international public, regarding a series of events that have occurred systematically in recent weeks; events that occurred immediately after COFADEH registered formal complaints.

Since February 2014, various types of surveillance have been documented including stationed vehicles without license plates, vehicles circulating in front of COFADEH's facilities at night and presence of vehicles that coincide with the departure of employees. These vehicles move slowly even when there is no heavy traffic, making several laps around the perimeter. Some of these vehicles park in the vicinity of the building and others pass by, making it clear that they are observing movements. Unknown persons are strategically located on corners opposite the building in order to monitor the office's movements.

As of May 13, 2014, a private vehicle, red Toyota Corolla sedan with a black stripe and dark, tinted windows, has been observed parking daily at 7:00 A.M. in a suspicious manner (no one exits nor enters the vehicle). This vehicle parks at the same time and in the same place, usually located to the left of the entrance of the building coinciding with the hour that COFADEH personnel enter work.

On May 29, 2014 at 10:00 A.M., a tall stocky man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a t-shirt and jeans, took photographs of the COFADEH facilities. When he realized that he was being watched, he left the perimeter walking unhurriedly.

Also, at the end of May 2014, the General Coordinator of this institution observed during morning hours, a suspicious man carrying a firearm suspiciously located on a sidewalk near COFADEH, exactly opposite the Building of Women in the Arts.

On Tuesday, June 3 of this year at about 8:00 A.M., Mr. José Ricardo Castillo Molina was murdered just 100 meters from the offices of COFADEH, as he emerged from his vehicle to go to his business: La Casa de las Velas (The House of Candles). Two armed men driving a motorcycle shot him at close range. According to information provided by the family, the businessman had no personal enemies and his family was not aware that he had received any threats or was the object of extortion.

Events on Thursday June 5 of this year also alarm us. At about 7:40 A.M., immediately after the aforementioned red car left, a blue car with no plates parked in the same place, stayed until 8:45 A.M., and no one left the vehicle. However, it was apparent that there was a person inside of the vehicle with a cell phone in hand, apparently filming.

On June 4, 2014, at 3:00 P.M. one team member was temporarily kidnapped in a taxi in which there were four people: the driver, two women and a man, supposedly passengers, who detained her for two hours during which time the vehicle circulated throughout different zones of the city, including secure neighborhoods. During this time she was assaulted, beaten severely in the face, suffered a strangulation attempt, and injuries from a pen stabbing her in the legs, neck and left hand. This incident happened after leaving an event on “Forced Displacement due to Violence” which was held in the capital.

COFADEH is a beneficiary of protective measures issued by the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), however the state has not adopted effective measures to dissuade insecurity.

In May, this institution presented a report on findings regarding the Human Rights situation prepared by the Delegation of Spanish Parliamentarians that visited Honduras at the beginning of April, 2014. The General Coordinator also spoke in Canada during April and in May, participated in the IEDDH 2014 Forum, speaking on the issue of “Arbitrary and Summary Executions and Forced Disappearance” at the invitation of the European Union in Brussels, Belgium. Her interviews were reproduced in the international news media.

Recently, 108 U.S. Congress members sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry to express their concern about the current human rights situation in Honduras. The letter which referenced COFADEH as a source of information, expressed concern that the human rights situation has worsened under the government of Juan Orlando Hernández, asked the State Department to demand that the government of Honduras protect the fundamental rights of citizens, end the use of military forces for public policing, investigate and prosecute abuses and restore the rule of law.

In Honduras, human rights defenders continue to be intimidated, persecuted, criminalized, censured, threatened and stigmatized.

REQUEST:

We request that the national and international community communicate with the State of Honduras to ask that it take necessary measures to guarantee and protect the lives and integrity of the staff of COFADEH.

That it guarantee the universally recognized right to defend human rights, as established in the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights Defenders approved in 1998 and the OAS Resolutions of 1999 and 2000.

Remind the State of its obligation to conduct effective investigation and make public the results, to identify those responsible for the acts described above.

Request the State to effectively carry out the protective measures issued to COFADEH by the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

Please call the following authorities.

Attorney

OSCAR FERNANDO CHINCHILLA

Fiscal General de la República/Attorney General.

Fax [\(504\) 2221-5667](tel:(504)2221-5667)

Tel (504) [2221-5670](tel:(504)2221-5670) [2221-3099](tel:(504)2221-3099)

Señor

ARTURO CORRALES ALVAREZ

Secretario de Estado en los Despachos de Seguridad/Secretary of State

Teléfono: (504) 2229-0003

E-mail: medidgeovanny@yahoo.com

Attorney

KARLA EUGENIA CUEVA

SUB-SECRETARIA JUSTICIA Y DERECHOS HUMANOS/Sub Secretary Justice and Human Rights

Tel: (504) 2231-1542; 2232-0231

Fax: (504) 2232-0226

E-mail: karlacueva144@gmail.com

Señor

ROBERTO HERRERA CACERES

COMISIONADO NACIONAL DE DERECHOS HUMANOS/National Human Rights Commission

Tel: (504) 2220-7648; 2232-0433

Fax:

E-mail:

Tegucigalpa, MDC., June 9, 2014.