

URGENT ACTION



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6 January 2010

UA 02/10

Fear for safety

HONDURAS

Rafael Cáceres (m)

An academic who ran for parliament has received death threats, days after another activist was abducted and killed. Rafael Cáceres had spoken out against the coup that installed a new government in Honduras in June.

Rafael Cáceres is the Deputy Director of the School of Fine Arts (*Escuela de Bellas Artes*) in the capital, Tegucigalpa. He is an activist and has been outspoken against the coup of 28 June, which ousted President Manuel Zelaya. He had run for a seat in congress for one of the country's several opposition parties, the *Partido Unificación Democrática* (Democratic Unification Party).

He has now received a string of mobile phone text messages, all from the same mobile phone number. He received the first on 11 July, which said, "You are on the list, dog." (*Estas en la lista, perro*) The next, which came on 19 October, at 10pm, said, "You are also on the list of teachers who we will kill." (*Vos tambien estas en la lista de los profesores que vamos a quebrar.*) On 20 December he received two threats in quick succession, which indicated knowledge of his daily routine. The first said, "We are already close to you" and the second, sent three minutes later, said, "We will be waiting for you in El Sitio this Thursday." (*Te esperamos por el sitio el jueves*) Rafael Cáceres has to pass through the neighbourhood of El Sitio every day to go to and from work. On 22 December he reported the threats and provided the details including the telephone number they had come from, to the police National Department of Criminal Investigation (*Dirección Nacional de Investigación Criminal*). On 24 December he received a message saying, "We are waiting for you these days." (*Te esperamos estos días*). He received the latest threat on 30 December at 8.20 pm, which read: "we will be waiting for you these days we have to complete our mission." (*Te estaremos esperando estos dias tenemos que cumplir la mision*).



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The democratically elected president of Honduras, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, was deposed on 28 June by a military-backed group of politicians led by the head of Congress, Roberto Micheletti. There has been widespread unrest in the country since then, with the police and army clashing frequently with protestors. According to local sources, at least 10 people have died in unclear circumstances since 28 June. Human rights defenders have come under increasing pressure since the coup. Human rights activist Walter Tróchez was killed in a drive-by shooting on 13 December while walking home through the center of Tegucigalpa. He was taken to hospital but later died. He may have been targeted because of his human rights work.

Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

Walter Tróchez told Amnesty International on 11 December that he had escaped a kidnapping attempt a week earlier, in which he had undergone several hours of beatings and threats by masked men. They had questioned him about people opposed to the authorities installed by the coup.

For further information see the press statement calling for an investigation into the kidnap and murder of Walter Tróchez:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/honduras-must-launch-full-investigation-death-human-rights-campaigner-20091215>

See also the report *Honduras: Human Rights Crisis Threatens as Repression Increases*:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR37/004/2009/en>

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- urging the president to order a thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Rafael Cáceres;
- urging him to act immediately to give all necessary protection to Rafael Cáceres, in accordance with his wishes;

APPEALS TO:

De facto president

Roberto Micheletti
Casa Presidencial
Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo
Palacio José Cecilio del Valle
Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Fax: 011 504 239 3298 (may not be reliable, please send appeals by post as well)

Salutation: Dear Mr Micheletti /Estimado Sr. Micheletti

COPIES TO:

NGO

Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH)
Barrio La Plazuela
Avenida Cervantes, Casa No. 1301
Apartado Postal 1243
Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Fax: 011 504 220 5280

Mr. Eduardo Enrique Reina
Embassy of Honduras
3007 Tilden St. NW Suite 4M
Washington DC 20008

Fax: 1 202 966 9751

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 17 February 2010.