

Amnesty International USA
16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence:
Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women
(25 November – 10 December 2013)

Honduras:
Protect Human Rights Defenders in Honduras

The Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras - COFADEH) is one of the main human rights organizations in Honduras. COFADEH was originally set up to work on the issue of enforced disappearance in the early 1980s, when around 200 people were “disappeared” while in the custody of the Honduran security forces.

COFADEH staff members have been the target of threats and harassment in the past, but since 2011 the number and severity of threats and incidents against COFADEH staff has intensified.

COFADEH works on a wide range of human rights issues in the country, including impunity for past human rights abuses; threats and harassment of human rights defenders; excessive use of force by police and security forces; land rights issues; and prison conditions.

In 2011, a number of COFADEH staff members reported being followed or having their homes placed under surveillance by unknown men. In recent years, the harassment has continued. COFADEH staff members have been subjected to intimidation, surveillance, and threats, in the context of a generalised increase in attacks on human rights defenders and journalists since the beginning of 2012.

Between February and April 2012, Dina Meza, COFADEH staff member and director of COFADEH’s online news website, defensoresenlinea.com, **received a series of threats of sexual violence**. She has also reported being followed by unknown individuals on several occasions this year, including once while she was walking in a street near her home with her teenage children, when two unknown men took photos of Dina and her family.

In March 2012 Bertha Oliva, founding member of COFADEH and the coordinator of the organisation, received a phone call in which she heard a recording of a call she had made only seconds before being played back to her. In April 2012 Nohemí Pérez, another founding member of the organisation, was threatened and attacked by an unknown man as she arrived at the COFADEH office. The man 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.



Despite the danger, COFADEH continues its crucial work. Their emblem of a white dove symbolizes their commitment to peace and human rights and their determination to never give up. Director Bertha Oliva says: “Even though they want to cut off our wings, they won't be able to.”

Take Action Now!

Write to the President-Elect to publicly recognize and endorse the important and legitimate work carried out by COFADEH and other human rights defenders in Honduras, pledge to support them, and condemn all attacks against them. Mail your letters via the Amnesty office in London:

President-elect of Honduras
c/o Central America Team
Amnesty International
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW
United Kingdom

For more information, please contact the Central America and Human Rights Defenders Teams at equipoca@amnesty.org and defensoresamerica@amnesty.org

TAKE ACTION – TWEET TO EDUCATE: In addition to letter writing, tweet more information about COFADEH. Here are some sample tweets:

- Honduran govt should defend #humanrights defenders like #COFADEH. #16days
<http://bit.ly/Amnesty16days>
- #COFADEH stood up for #humanrights in Honduras. Join me and stand in solidarity with #COFADEH <http://bit.ly/Amnesty16days>
- Protect #humanrights defenders like #COFADEH in #Honduras! #16days
<http://bit.ly/Amnesty16days>

TAKE ACTION – PHOTO PETITION: Create a sign and ask people to participate in a photo action after explaining the situation in Honduras and the COFADEH case. Once you gather all of the photos, please share your photo album/collection to whr@aiusa.org. Sample slogans include:

- HONDURAN GOVERNMENT, SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS!
- PROTECT COFADEH IN HONDURAS
- STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH COFADEH

Questions? Please email us at whr@aiusa.org!

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