

URGENT ACTION

DEFENDERS DENOUNCING VIOLENT REPRESSION AT RISK
Honduran human rights organizations and independent media are monitoring and denouncing the violent repression of protests in the aftermath of the presidential election and have reported a series of security incidents, including threats and persecution of their members, illegal raids and damaged facilities.

Protesters around the country who took the streets due to the lack of transparency in processing and counting votes from the presidential election held on 26 November were met with violence and repression by Honduran security forces. Human rights defenders and organizations have been monitoring, documenting and publicly denouncing the human rights violations perpetrated in this context and under the curfew imposed on 1 December.

The Broad Movement for Justice and Dignity (Movimiento Amplio por la Dignidad y la Justicia, **MADJ**) reported that security forces raided the house of MADJ members **Silvia Maribel Flores Chacón** and **Oscar Alexi Guillén Paz** on 6 December, and the MADJ center in the department of Atlántida on 8 December, asking for MADJ's general coordinator, **Martín Fernández Guzman**. According to local residents, security forces had already asked about his whereabouts in previous days, and threats against him and MADJ member **Selvin Eduardo Merlo Linares** were also posted on social media and heard during protests. Previously, MADJ reported their headquarters in San Pedro Sula were surrounded by security forces after the organization held a press conference to denounce the repression of protests on 4 December. On 6 December MADJ shut down their radio station in San Juan Pueblo, **Radio Dignidad**, as a precaution after military police surrounded it and two military helicopters were reportedly seen overhead.

The **LGBT Rainbow Association** denounced several break-in attempts into their office in Tegucigalpa between 28 November and 4 December by unknown individuals who wrote a death threat to Arcoiris' director **Donny Reyes**.

Father Ismael Moreno Coto, director of the independent radio station **Radio Progreso**, told Amnesty International that their transmission in Tegucigalpa was interrupted starting on the evening of 9 December. A preliminary inspection carried out on 11 December concluded the radio antenna in Tegucigalpa was voluntarily damaged.

On 12 December, military forces in Siguatepeque, Comayagua Department, stopped, registered and harassed approximately 30 members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (**COPINH**), including its general coordinator **Bertha Zuniga**, in an attempt to prevent them from attending a demonstration.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Calling on the authorities to initiate a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the illegal raids, persecution, threats and damaged facilities reported by human rights defenders and organizations, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take all appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders at risk, in accordance with their wishes, in order to fulfil their obligation to protect them as set out in the precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- Calling on them to publicly recognize the legitimate human rights work of human rights defenders in the country.

Contact these two officials by 23 January, 2018:

Attorney General

Señor Oscar Fernando Chinchilla
 Ministerio Público
 Lomas del Guijarro Tegucigalpa, Honduras
 Email: mprelacionespublicas@gmail.com (with walleskaz@gmail.com
 in copy)

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Ambassador Marlon R. Tabora, Embassy of Honduras

3007 Tilden St. NW Suite 4M, Washington DC 20008
 Phone: 202 966 2604 | Fax: 202 966 9751
 Contact Form: goo.gl/9yuqCw
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 26 November 2017 presidential elections were held in Honduras. In the early morning of 27 November, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral, TSE) published an initial indication of results, based on the revision of 57 percent of the votes, which indicated that the opposition candidate Salvador Nasralla had a five-point lead against the current president of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández. Both candidates declared themselves winners.

According to the preliminary report from the Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States in Honduras, published following the elections, "the system of publication of the results, available to the public online, was not updated [following the first announcement from the TSE] on 27 November. Upon review, the Mission observed how the difference between the candidates narrowed down". In the afternoon of 29 November, the TSE announced a different result, pointing to the victory of Juan Orlando Hernández.

This announcement gave rise to multiple and massive protests, which were violently repressed. At least 14 people have reportedly been killed, scores of people detained and others injured. Honduran human rights organizations and radio stations have been monitoring and denouncing the excessive use of force and human rights violations perpetrated in the aftermath of the presidential election.

Honduras is one of the most dangerous countries for human rights defenders, especially those working on territory, land and environmental rights issues.

In 2016, MADJ reported several security incidents to the authorities, including surveillance, threats and harassment, in particular against its General Coordinator Martín Fernández. MADJ provides legal representation on several paradigmatic and grave cases of attacks against territory, land and environmental rights defenders in Honduras. Due to the high profile of these cases and the related risks, the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR) issued precautionary measures for MADJ members in 2013, including Martín Fernández and Selvin Merlo.

Radio Progreso has been covering the elections and the repression that followed from their headquarters located in El Progreso. Several members of Radio Progreso are beneficiaries of protection measures ordered by the IACHR, as a consequence of the harassment and threats and they had received after the coup in Honduras in 2009.

COPINH members also registered several security incidents in 2016 and 2017, which are directly connected to COPINH's fight for Lenca Indigenous peoples' rights, including their right to free, prior and informed consent in relation to a proposal for a hydroelectric plant that might force them out of their ancestral lands. Several COPINH members are beneficiaries of protection measures ordered by the IACHR due to the threats, attacks and harassment they are targeted with. Berta Cáceres, leader and co-founder of COPINH, was shot dead on 2 March 2016. COPINH members have been attending protests in several departments in the aftermath of the presidential election.

Donny Reyes, director of the LGBT Rainbow Association of Honduras, was granted precautionary measures from the IACHR in 2009.

Name: Silvia Maribel Flores Chacón (f), Oscar Alexi Guillén Paz (m), Martín Fernández Guzman (m), Selvin Eduardo Merlo Linares (m), Father Ismael Moreno Coto (m), Donny Reyes (m), Berta Zuniga (f) and members of MADJ, Radio Dignidad, Radio Progreso, COPINH and the LGBT Rainbow Association.
Gender m/f: all