

URGENT ACTION

INDIGENOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS MISSING

Unknown individuals, wearing police-type clothing took four Garifuna activists Alberth Snider Centeno Tomas, President of the Board of Triunfo de la Cruz on behalf of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH), Suami Aparicio Mejía García, Gerardo Mizael Rochez Cáliz and Milton Joel Martínez Álvarez, members of the OFRANEH, and a fifth person, Junior Rafael Juárez Mejía, from their homes on 18 July 2020. They are missing since. The Secretary of Security ordered a search operation, but their whereabouts remain unknown. We demand authorities to determine their whereabouts, ensure an independent, effective and impartial investigation on the case, and to bring those responsible for their disappearance to justice.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Secretary Julián Pacheco Tinoco
Secretary of Security, Honduras
El Ocotal, Comayagua, M.D.C.
antiguo Local de Academia de Policía (ANAPO)
Email: rafael.mayorga@seguridad.gob.hn
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Dear Secretary Julián Pacheco Tinoco,

I am extremely concerned about the disappearance of the four Garifuna activists Alberth Snider Centeno Tomas, Suami Aparicio Mejía García, Gerardo Mizael Rochez Cáliz and Milton Joel Martínez Álvarez, members of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH), and a fifth person, Junior Rafael Juárez Mejía, taken from their homes in the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz by unknown individuals wearing police-type clothing on 18 July 2020.

Despite a search operation carried out by the National police and an investigation started by the Public Prosecutors Office, their whereabouts remain unknown.

I urge you to adopt all the necessary measures to find Alberth Snider Centeno Tomas, Suami Aparicio Mejía García, Gerardo Mizael Rochez Cáliz, Milton Joel Martínez Álvarez, and Junior Rafael Juárez Mejía, and ensure an independent, effective and impartial investigation into their disappearance, bringing those responsible to justice.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Garifuna communities of Triunfo de la Cruz are part of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña, OFRANEH), an organization that works to protect the economic, social, and cultural rights of the Garifuna communities. On 8 October, 2015, [the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz](#), founding the Honduran state guilty of violating the right of the community to collective property. Already on 28 April 2006, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had granted the community of Triunfo de la Cruz with precautionary measures, asking the government of Honduras to adopt the necessary measures to protect the right of the community to ownership of ancestral lands.

Since the start of a total curfew in Honduras on in March 2020, due to COVID-19, Amnesty International has received several reports of serious attacks against human rights defenders, including members of OFRANEH. According to the organization, on 20 April, police officers stifled a protest in Oak Ridge, Roatan island, demanding a boat not to dock at the local port for public health reasons, and on 6 May, police officers threatened a group of young Garifuna people guarding the community of Travesía, Cortés department, with dropping tear gas bombs. OFRANEH also denounced the killing of Edwin Fernández, a member of the organization, on 20 May in the community of Río Tinto, Atlántida department.

The [Civic Council of Popular Indigenous \(COPINH\) also denounced](#) recent attacks against its members. On 12 May, José Trochez, was detained by the Honduran army while he was doing humanitarian work. On 15 June, members of COPINH received information warning them about an imminent attack against its members and facilities. COPINH also reported that on 21 June, a group of around 60 people showed up in its Utopia facility in La Esperanza, Intibucá department, threatening to take over it. One day later, members of the organization received a digital leaflet in which an unknown group threatened the organization with burning the Utopia facility. These attacks occurred after the organization offered its facilities as an isolation center for people in prison infected with COVID-19.

Besides threats, intimidation, harassment, over the last four years, Amnesty International has alerted on numerous death and the killings of activists in Honduras, which is one of the deadliest countries in the world to be a human rights defender, including the case of the renowned defender Berta Cáceres in 2016. This situation has not changed. [Between June and July 2020](#), Scarleth Cáceres, activist and defender of LGBTI rights from the Arcoíris Association; Marvin Damián Castro, defender of the territory of the municipality of Pespire, Choluteca and part of the coordination of the Movimiento Ambientalista Social del Sur por la Vida (MASSVIDA), and Yonis David Castillo Lázaro, from the community of Guapinol, were killed. Previously, on 2 April 2020, Iris Argentina Álvarez, a defender of human rights linked to the land of the campesino group Cerro Escondido in southern Honduras, was killed during a violent eviction.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 3 September 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Snider Centeno, Aparicio Mejía García and Joel Martínez Álvarez (They/them/their).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: N/A

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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