

## Reports Received by CCR of Human Rights Violations in Honduras in April and May 2012

Since the June 2009 *coup d'état* Honduras has been experiencing a human rights crisis. The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and its international partners have received and compiled an alarming number of reports of human rights violations. This summary of human rights violations in April and May 2012 follows monthly reports CCR has compiled since December 2011. In some of the incidents listed below, it is clear that the Honduran military and/or police were directly involved in abuses. This list is not comprehensive, as numerous human rights violations go undocumented, unreported or uncollected. We have included incidents that were widely reported in the press as well as some incidents that were reported to CCR or other organizations but require further investigation.

The U.S. Congress has placed conditions on the State Department's police and military aid to Honduras.<sup>1</sup> As a result, prior to disbursing twenty percent of the allocated funds, the State Department will be required to report to Congress on actions Honduras is taking to protect and promote human rights. We urge the State Department to uphold this obligation in earnest and to consider the incidents reported herein.

### April-May 2012

In April 2012, human rights organizations based in Honduras reported intensified threats to human rights defenders. On April 24, 2012, the Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), a prominent human rights organization in Honduras, held a press conference to report intensified threats, surveillance, harassment and even physical attacks toward COFADEH staff and members. On April 30, 2012, the United States-based Honduras Accompaniment Project (PROAH) denounced death threats received via text message by two international members of their accompaniment team, representing the first reported threats against international human rights observers in Honduras since the *coup d'état*.<sup>2</sup> Protective accompaniment through programs such as PROAH for individuals whose lives are at risk has proven critically important to defending the rights and protections accorded to human rights defenders per the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Members and leaders of Civic Counsel of Popular Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) held a press conference to report increased death threats during April 2012. COPINH member José Saldivar Gámez received a phone call in which he was warned he'd be assassinated if he continued to participate in COPINH activities. COPINH leaders Sotero Chavarría, Juan Vásquez, Rolando Gutiérrez and Berta Cáceres also threats via phone calls and text messages. COPINH Director Berta Cáceres also received threats to her children and other relatives. Another leader, Salvador Zúniga, received death threats on various occasions, including against his family and visitors. Members of the community San Francisco

<sup>1</sup> Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012, Pub. L. no. 112-74 (2011).

<sup>2</sup> Joint Statement by COFADEH and PROAH, "En Honduras Amenazan de Muerte a Acompañantes Internacionales," *Defensores en Línea*, April 30, 2012, available at:

[http://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1979:en-honduras-amenazan-de-muerte-a-acompanantes-internacionales&catid=54:den&Itemid=171](http://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1979:en-honduras-amenazan-de-muerte-a-acompanantes-internacionales&catid=54:den&Itemid=171). See also "Documento—Honduras: Amenazas Contra Grupo de Protección en Honduras," *Amnesty International*, May 12, 2012, available at:

<http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/asset/AMR37/008/2012/es/11930e4f-2155-423f-a8dd-f5d9bc654401/amr370082012es.html>. See also "Honduras: Amenazas de Muerte contra Miembros de PROAH," *FIDH*, May 3,

2012, available at: <http://www.fidh.org/Honduras-Amenazas-de-muerte-contra>.

Opalaca, which is resisting plans to build at least four dams, also reported threats, along with the Santa Elena community. COPINH leaders Juan Bautista, Asunción Martínez and Julio German were threatened with judicial processes by groups allied with Gladys Aurora, the Congressional Secretary and shareholder of hydroelectricity companies.<sup>3</sup>

On April 17, 2012 thousands of landless farmers occupied 30,000 acres of land in a culmination of efforts to enforce review of land title claims promised to them under ousted President Manuel Zelaya and reclaim state lands held for agrarian reform but expropriated by large sugar plantations.<sup>4</sup> Confrontations between private guards and military officials against organized farmers in the Lower Aguán region of Honduras have resulted in at least 47 peasant deaths in the last two and half years.<sup>5</sup>

In April 2012 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights released its 2011 Annual Report, highlighting the human rights situation in Honduras and reaffirming its previous conclusions<sup>6</sup> that “since the 2009 *coup d’état* there have been human rights violations, which seriously affected the Honduran people, and the effects or repercussions have persisted.”<sup>7</sup> In May 2012, Amnesty International released their annual report for 2011 which, regarding Honduras, noted impunity for human rights violations by the military and police, killings in ongoing land disputes in Lower Aguán, forced evictions of hundreds of campesino families and intimidation of human rights defenders.<sup>8</sup>

State authorities have been accused of participating in a large number of human rights violations. The National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH) compiled a report finding that of 10,449 complaints it received of human rights violations, almost half (4,904) were against state authorities,<sup>9</sup> and of that number 2,837 were against police.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, investigations into violations remain rare and the Honduran government has met the rising tide of violence with the appointment of a national police chief accused of operating death squads and participating in myriad human rights abuses. On May 21, Juan Carlos Bonilla Valladres, nicknamed “El Tigre” or “The Tiger,” was appointed new national police chief. Bonilla has been accused by internal affairs investigators of operating a death squad and has been linked to at least three assassinations and disappearances between 1998 and 2002, as well as 11 other cases.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Statement by COPINH, “Denuncia el COPINH Graves Violaciones de los Derechos Individuales y Colectivos del Pueblo Lenca,” April 25, 2012, available at: <http://www.copinh.org/articulo/denuncia-el-copinh-graves-violaciones-a-los-derechos>.

<sup>4</sup> Lauren Carisik, “Honduran Campesinos in the Crosshairs,” *Al Jazeera*, April 6, 2012, available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/04/201242111850554190.html>.

<sup>5</sup> “47 Campesinos Asesinados en los Últimos dos Años y Medio,” *Alba TV*, May 19, 2012, available at: <http://albatv.org/47-campesinos-asesinados-en-dos.html>.

<sup>6</sup> “Honduras: Human Rights and the *Coup D’État*,” *Organization of American States: Inter-American Commission of Human Rights*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II., Doc. 50, December 30, 2009, pp. 146, available at: <http://www.cidh.org/countryrep/honduras09eng/toc.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> “Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2011: Chapter 4, Honduras,” *Organization of American States: Inter-American Commission of Human Rights*, April 2012, pp. 1, available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/docs/annual/2011/TOC.asp>.

<sup>8</sup> “Annual Report 2012: Honduras,” *Amnesty International*, 2012 available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/honduras/report-2012#section-23-3>

<sup>9</sup> This includes police, judges, prosecutors, education and health officials, prisons, councils, etc.

<sup>10</sup> “Policías y Jueces, los Mas Denunciados,” *La Prensa*, April 11, 2012, available at: <http://www.laprensa.hn/Secciones-Principales/Honduras/Tegucigalpa/Policias-y-jueces-los-mas-denunciados>.

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Corcoran & Martha Mendoza, “Juan Carlos Bonilla Valladres, Honduras Police Chief, Investigated in Killings,” *The Huffington Post*, June 1, 2012, available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/01/juan-carlos-bonilla-valla\\_n\\_1562328.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/01/juan-carlos-bonilla-valla_n_1562328.html). See also “El Temor es Para Aquellos Que no Han Hecho las Cosas Bien,” *La Prensa*, May 27, 2012, available at: <http://www.laprensa.hn/Secciones-Principales/Honduras/Apertura/El-temor-es-para-aquellos-que-no-han-hecho-las-cosas-bien#.T-Dq8IKuXT0>.

In April 2012 two UN Independent Experts called on the Government of Honduras to take concrete measures to stop the killing of lawyers in the country. Gabriela Knuul, Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Magistrates and Attorneys, and Christof Heyns, Special Rapporteur on Arbitrary Executions, made the following joint statement: “In addition to the frequency of the killings and the death threats against lawyers, we are worried about the impunity of these crimes in Honduras,” adding “Governments have the obligation of guaranteeing that attorneys can carry out all their professional duties without intimidation and without risking their safety and that of their relatives.”<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, in May, European Union Ambassadors condemned threats against human rights defenders and journalists in Honduras.<sup>13</sup> In particular, opposition party members, LGBTI activists and women’s rights defenders have been targeted in a pattern of assassinations, including the 15 murders of LGBTI activists such as journalist, LIBRE party candidate and LGBTI activist Eric Martínez Ávila.<sup>14</sup> Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, specifically called for an investigation into Ávila’s killing.<sup>15</sup>

### **DEA Involvement in Massacre**

CCR and allied organizations are particularly concerned about the involvement of DEA agents in a massacre that occurred in May in the Moskitia region. On May 11, 2011 a DEA Foreign-Deployed Advisory Team (FAST) accompanied Honduran National Police forces in State Department helicopters launched from a U.S. forward-operating base on a joint narcotics operation in the Moskitia region.<sup>16</sup> The operation was conducted under the umbrella of “Operation Anvil,” a joint Central American drug interdiction program tracking flights of potential drug planes passing through Honduras, including the use of non-U.S. contract pilots who may sidestep military rules of engagement.<sup>17</sup> Gunners on board the helicopter opened fire on a *pipante*, a small dugout canoe, travelling on the Rio Patuca near Ahuás, a small municipality in the Moskitia region. The attack resulted in the killing of four civilians, including two pregnant women, as well as both a 14 year-old and 21-year-old. Four other local residents were seriously injured, including one injured and bleeding woman who clung to weeds in the river for up to three hours before receiving medical assistance.<sup>18</sup>

Recent interviews collected by a human rights delegation to Ahuás reveal that just following the massacre, English-speaking security forces landed in Ahuás and aimed guns at, threatened to kill and handcuffed local residents who attempted to assist those wounded in the massacre.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “UN Independent Experts Call on Honduras to Adopt Measures to Stop Killing of Lawyers,” *UN News Centre*, April 11, 2012, available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41745&Cr=latin+america&Cr1=>.

<sup>13</sup> European External Action Service, “Press Conference: Human Rights Defenders in Honduras Still Receiving Serious Threats,” May 15, 2012 available at: [http://eeas.europa.eu/honduras/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/honduras/index_en.htm)

<sup>14</sup> “Ultiman Periodista Gay y Aspirante a Diputado,” *Tiempo*, May 7, 2012, available at:

<http://www.tiempo.hn/index.php/sucesos/10334-ultiman-periodista-gay-y-aspirante-a-diputado->.

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO, “Press Release: Director-General Deplores Murder of Honduran Journalist and Rights Activist Eric Martínez Ávila,” May 15, 2012, available at: [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/director\\_general\\_deplores\\_murder\\_of\\_honduran\\_journalist\\_and\\_rights\\_activist\\_eric\\_martinez\\_avila/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/director_general_deplores_murder_of_honduran_journalist_and_rights_activist_eric_martinez_avila/).

<sup>16</sup> Rights Action, “Initial Findings: Human Rights Delegation Finds Disturbing Evidence of U.S. Involvement in Killings of Mosquito People in Ahuás,” June 27, 2012, p.1., on file with CCR.

<sup>17</sup> Alberto Arce, “DEA Honduras Raid Part of Aggressive Drug Strategy,” *Associated Press*, June 26, 2012,

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5j6m0pyR96OEopFKWfAIsOV232upA?docId=0b23c55266c44a8cad6d2ee64044e2ad>.

<sup>18</sup> Rights Action, “Initial Findings: Human Rights Delegation Finds Disturbing Evidence of U.S. Involvement in Killings of Mosquito People in Ahuás,” June 27, 2012, p. 1., on file with CCR.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

The massacre has met with widespread public outcry,<sup>20</sup> yet the State Department has not opened an investigation into the presence of U.S. agents and the use of a U.S. forward operating base and State Department equipment in the perpetration of the massacre, referring instead to ongoing investigations by the DEA and the Honduran Attorney General's office.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Ahuás villagers report that neither U.S. nor Honduran government officials have interviewed eyewitnesses or secured evidence at the crime scene.<sup>22</sup>

#### Incidents with police and/or military involvement:

- April 12 [*forced evictions*]: An eviction was carried out by police and military against the farmers' settlement at El Coroso in Catacamas, Olancho. Approximately 100 families' homes and belongings within were destroyed by tractors, leaving them homeless. Farmers reported that livestock and grains were robbed.<sup>23</sup> The community had been living on that land for over seven years.<sup>24</sup>
- April 17 [*forced evictions*]: Military and police agents, accompanied by private security guards, carried out an eviction without eviction orders. Approximately 1,500 families had been occupying land they claimed was rightfully theirs in a coordinated action by the San Manuel Cortes farmers' movement MOCSAN. MOCSAN members were detained and fingerprinted.<sup>25</sup>
- April 19 [*harassment, detentions*]: Several police officers forced resistance and teachers union leaders Arnold Leiva, Manuel Toro, Roger Leiva and Alex Paz into their patrol vehicle and detained them without justification for over an hour in a police cell in Santa Barbara. Their phones were confiscated.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Damien Cave, "Anger Rises After Killings in U.S.-Honduras Drug Sweep," *New York Times*, May 17, 2012; "Editorial: In Honduras, U.S. Should Tread Lightly," *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 2012, <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-honduras-drugs-dea-20120522,0,206961.story>; Alberto Arce, "Hunt for Trafficker Terrorizes Honduran Villagers," *Associated Press*, May 22, 2012; Dana Frank, "Honduras: Which Side is the U.S. On?," *The Nation*, May 22, 2012, <http://www.thenation.com/article/167994/honduras-which-side-us>; Laura Carlsen, "U.S. Hand in Honduran Massacre," *Foreign Policy In Focus*, June 20, 2012, available at [http://www.fpif.org/articles/us\\_hand\\_in\\_honduran\\_massacre](http://www.fpif.org/articles/us_hand_in_honduran_massacre); "Is the U.S. Covering Up a Drug War Massacre?," *The Fix*, June 14, 2012, [http://www.thefix.com/content/massacre-honduras-dea-drug-war-cover-up8925#.T-Cozpv\\_M1o.twitter](http://www.thefix.com/content/massacre-honduras-dea-drug-war-cover-up8925#.T-Cozpv_M1o.twitter); Rights Action, "D.E.A. Action Leads to Massacre in Honduras: Indigenous Communities Once Again the Target of 'Counterinsurgency' in Central America," May 30, 2012, <http://www.rightsaction.org/action-content/dea-action-leads-massacre-honduras-indigenous-communities-once-again-target>.

<sup>21</sup> State Department Office of the Spokesperson, "Drug Enforcement Administration Investigation Honduras," June 6, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/06/191857.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Rights Action, "Initial Findings: Human Rights Delegation Finds Disturbing Evidence of U.S. Involvement in Killings of Mosquito People in Ahuás," June 27, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Statement by Movimiento Juvenil Campesino Centroamericano, April 14, 2012, available at: [http://valencia.isf.es/menu\\_otros/noticias.php?\\$sesion\\_idioma=1&\\$codigo=19640](http://valencia.isf.es/menu_otros/noticias.php?$sesion_idioma=1&$codigo=19640). See also, "Carta de Solidaridad con el Movimiento Campesino Hondureño," *Campaña Mesoamericana de Justicia Climática*, April 23, 2012, available at: [http://www.justiciaclimatica.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=245:carta-de-solidaridad-con-el-movimiento-campesino-hondureno&catid=2:categoria-noticias-slide&Itemid=5](http://www.justiciaclimatica.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=245:carta-de-solidaridad-con-el-movimiento-campesino-hondureno&catid=2:categoria-noticias-slide&Itemid=5).

<sup>24</sup> La Central Nacional de Trabajadores del Campo (CNTC).

<sup>25</sup> "Desalojan y Capturan Cerca de 120 Campesinos Invasores," *La Tribuna*, April 26, 2012, available at: <http://www.latribuna.hn/2012/04/26/al-menos-30-campesinos-detenido-tras-nuevo-desalojo-en-san-manuel/>.

<sup>26</sup> Dina Meza, "Represión Policial contra Dirigencia de la Resistencia de Santa Barbara," *Defensores en Línea*, April 20, 2012, available at: [http://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?view=article&catid=71%3Adef&id=1965%3Arepresion-policial-contra-dirigencia-de-la-resistencia-en-santa-barbara&tmpl=component&print=1&page=&option=com\\_content&Itemid=166](http://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?view=article&catid=71%3Adef&id=1965%3Arepresion-policial-contra-dirigencia-de-la-resistencia-en-santa-barbara&tmpl=component&print=1&page=&option=com_content&Itemid=166).

- May 1 [*assassination*]: In the indigenous Lenca community of San Bartolo, Intibucá police entered María de Los Santos Domínguez Benítez’s home without permission, searching for her son. When police could not find him, and her other son and active COPINH member and anti-hydroelectric dam activist Santos Alberto Rodríguez protested, police shot him in the head, killing him instantly.<sup>27</sup> One month after the killing, Benedicto Galo Peña, the policeman responsible for the killing, has yet to be arrested and there is no report of an investigation.<sup>28</sup>
- May 11 [*massacre*]: Four indigenous Miskito people, including two pregnant women, a 14-year-old boy and a 21-year-old man, were killed and four more were injured when four U.S. State Department helicopters launched from a U.S. base—and which the U.S. government confirms carried DEA personnel—opened fire on a dugout canoe carrying fishermen, women and children on the Patuca River in Ahuás. Villagers report that security forces appearing to be U.S. military personnel landed after the massacre, detained villagers, made death threats and prevented medical assistance to victims of the massacre.<sup>29</sup>
- May 15 [*violence, intimidation*]: Police and lumber workers attacked Tolupan indigenous people of the Lavanderos community in the Montaña de la Flor.<sup>30</sup>
- May 17 [*detention*]: Eight peasant farmers, including Celeo Rodríguez, President of the Settlement Trust, were detained without charge in Tocoa by police and military members of the Xatruch II operation and released only after the intervention of human rights defenders.<sup>31</sup>
- May 21 [*repression, student evictions*]: Five students were detained during a protest by students of the Pedagogical University Francisco Morazón (UPNFM), conducted in solidarity with fellow students suspended for participating in political protests. The police reportedly brutalized several students in the process.<sup>32</sup>
- May 24 [*illegal detention*]: 17 MUCA leaders participating in negotiations with INA Minister César Ham in El Progreso were detained at a military checkpoint.<sup>33</sup>
- May 24 [*detention*]: La Paz police detained 16 labourers, including 3 members of COPINH and three minors as young as thirteen on their way to their workplaces which are under a Buenos Aires community title, on the basis that they were undocumented despite that the labourers were in their own community.<sup>34</sup>

#### Incidents in which level of police and/or military involvement is unknown:

<sup>27</sup> Statement by COPINH, “Policía Hondureña Asesina a Santos Domínguez Benítez, Joven Indígena Lenca Miembro de COPINH,” May 2, 2012, <http://www.acodehu.com/?p=1708&lang=es>.

<sup>28</sup> Statement by COPINH, “Denuncia Urgente Policia del Departamento de la Paz Detiene de Manera Injustificada a 3 Miembros del COPINH y 13 Labriegos Más,” May 24, 2012, <http://www.copin.hk.org/articulo/denuncia-urgente-policia-del-departamento-de-la-pa/>.

<sup>29</sup> Rights Action, “Initial Findings: Human Rights Delegation Finds Disturbing Evidence of U.S. Involvement in Killings of Mosquito People in Ahuás,” June 27, 2012, on file with CCR.

<sup>30</sup> Statement by COPINH, “Urgente! COPINH Denuncia Mas Represión en Este Momento Contra el COPINH y los Pueblos Indígenas en Honduras!,” May 15, 2012, available at: <http://honduraseyewitness.tumblr.com/post/23169177889/copin-denunciacion-us-dea-and-honduran-military>.

<sup>31</sup> Statement by Costa Rican Association for Human Rights (ACODEHU), “Campaña de Exterminio en el Aguán Deja 2 Campesinos Muertos en Los Últimos Días,” May 21, 2012, <http://www.acodehu.com/?p=1798&lang=es>.

<sup>32</sup> “Policía Desaloja a Estudiantes que se Manifestaban Frente a la UPNFM,” *El Tiempo*, May 21, 2012, available at: 11116-policia-desaloja-a-estudiantes-que-se-manifestaban-frente-a-la-upnfm. See also, “Policía Desaloja a Estudiantes que se Manifestaban Frente a la UPNFM,” *Honduras Tierra Libre*, May 21, 2012, available at: <http://www.hondurastierralibre.com/2012/05/honduras-policia-desaloja-estudiantes.html>.

<sup>33</sup> May 24, 2012 email on file with CCR.

<sup>34</sup> Statement by COPINH, “¡Denuncia Urgente! Policia del Departamento de la Paz Detiene de Manera Injustificada a 3 Miembros del COPINH y 13 Labriegos Más,” May 24, 2012, <http://www.copin.hk.org/articulo/denuncia-urgente-policia-del-departamento-de-la-pa/>.

- April 6 and 14 [*death threats, intimidation*] Journalist and human rights defender Dina Meza of COFADEH received new threats of rape, torture and death. Ms. Meza, who reports on human rights issues for *Defensores en Linea*, was previously granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHCR) as early as 2006 and again in 2009; however, to date the Honduran government has not implemented the measures to ensure her security.<sup>35</sup>
- April 11 [*assassination*] MUCA farmer of the Camarones cooperative and father of five Doninely López Alvarado (46) was assassinated with at least six high caliber gunshots in an ambush by at least two hooded unknown persons who were hiding near the Salamá extraction plant while Doninely was driving his motorcycle toward the La Confianza palm plantation. An underage youth who was riding with Doninely was injured from falling from the motorcycle.<sup>36</sup>
- April 12 [*threats, intimidation, unlawful conduct*] Indigenous and human rights organization COPINH reported that two unknown individuals entered the COPINH offices saying “enough criticism by these radios” and proceeded to cut the electricity to the indigenous community radios La Voz Lenca and Radio Guarajambala. The radios have been an important part of the local communities’ struggle, especially in campaigning against the building of a dam to produce privatized electricity.<sup>37</sup>
- April 20 [*threats, bodily harm, harassment*] Noemí Pérez, human rights defender and a founder of COFADEH, was attacked by someone waiting for her in a parked car at COFADEH’s entrance. This person yelled insults at her and hit her right leg with a wooden stick. Noemí has been a human rights defender for over 22 years, her brother Samuel Pérez was disappeared by death squads in 1982.<sup>38</sup>
- April 23 [*violence*] Neftalí Zuniga of MOCSAN was wounded during a MOCSAN march after being shot in the abdomen by hidden snipers using high caliber firearms allegedly belonging to guards of Empresas Azucareras.<sup>39</sup>
- April 23 [*assassinations*] Journalist and television presenter Noel Alexander Valladares and two companions were assassinated as they were leaving local TV channel Maya TV in Tegucigalpa. When driving away together they were shot by hooded men on a Toyota Prado. Noel’s spouse

<sup>35</sup> Statement by ACODEHU, “Acción Urgente: Amenazas de Muerte a Dina Meza del COFADEH en Honduras,” April 19, 2012, available at: <http://www.acodehu.com/?p=1604&lang=es>.

<sup>36</sup> Statement by Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular, Giorgio Trucchi, “Bajo Aguán: Hasta Cuando?,” April 16, 2012, available at: [http://resistenciahonduras.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4526:bajo-aguan-ihasta-cuando&catid=54:agrarias&Itemid=238](http://resistenciahonduras.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4526:bajo-aguan-ihasta-cuando&catid=54:agrarias&Itemid=238).

<sup>37</sup> “Desconocidos Sabotean Senal de Radios Comunitarias,” *IFEX*, April 16, 2012, available at: [http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/04/16/radio\\_comunitaria\\_sabotaje/es/](http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/04/16/radio_comunitaria_sabotaje/es/). See also, “Honduras: Dos radios COPINH Fueron Silenciadas por Denunciar y Rechazar la Privatizacion de la Energia Electrica,” *America Indigena en Red*, available at: <http://air.aler.org/index.php/7-noticias-de-pueblos-indigenas/28-honduras-siguen-silenciandonos-dos-radios-de-copinh-arteramente-fueron-silenciadas-por-denunciar-y-rechazar-la-privatizacion-de-la-energia-electrica>.

<sup>38</sup> “Miembros de Cofadeh Denuncian Agresiones,” *La Tribuna*, April 24, 2012, available at: <http://www.latribuna.hn/2012/04/24/investigaran-a-culpables-de-amenazas-a-activistas-de-ddhh-en-honduras/>. See also Marvin Palacios, “Bertha Oliva: Exigir Justicia Ahora es Motivo para Ser Perseguida y Enfrentar Campanas de Odio,” *Defensores en Linea*, April 23, 2012, available at: [http://defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1970:bertha-oliva-exigir-justicia-ahora-es-motivo-para-ser-perseguida-y-enfrentar-campanas-de-odio&catid=71:def&Itemid=166](http://defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1970:bertha-oliva-exigir-justicia-ahora-es-motivo-para-ser-perseguida-y-enfrentar-campanas-de-odio&catid=71:def&Itemid=166).

<sup>39</sup> Juan Almendares, “Campesino Herido en San Manuel. Urge Dialogo para Solucion de Conflicto Agrario,” *Honduras Tierra Libre*, April 23, 2012, available at: <http://www.hondurastierrelibre.com/2012/04/ministerio-publico-anuncia.html>. See also “Campesinos Madrugan y Vuelven a ‘Invasión’ Tierras en San Manuel,” *La Tribuna*, April 23, 2012, available at: <http://www.latribuna.hn/2012/04/23/un-campesino-herido-en-invasion-de-tierras-en-honduras/>.

and co-presenter Nelly Yorleny Pavón survived but was hospitalized with gunshot wounds in the legs requiring surgery.<sup>40</sup>

- April 26 [*threats, intimidation*] Channel 6 journalist Santiago Cerna received death threats and was followed by several cars without numbered plates in a suspicious manner. Santiago received death threats by text messages from unknown numbers. Close friends also received threats by phone and text with references to him and with insults.<sup>41</sup>
- April 27 [*shootings, intimidation*] Unidentified men armed with AK-47s repeatedly shot at the car of the Channel 6 journalist Elder Joel Aguilar on a highway in Copán. Elder and his partner escaped unharmed.<sup>42</sup>
- April 30 [*threats, intimidation*] United States-based Honduras Accompaniment Project (PROAH) denounced death threats received via text message by two international members of their accompaniment team. The death threats received by PROAH team members were signed from CAM, a pseudonym that has been used in numerous threats against human rights defenders and journalists in Honduras since the *coup d'état*.<sup>43</sup>
- May 1 [*death threats*]: Edgardo Castro, journalist and director of the program “El Látigo Contra la Corrupción” of Globo TV, received hundreds of threatening text messages of which approximately 100 were death threats during his May 1<sup>st</sup> broadcast. He has received previous threats and a beating since the coup.<sup>44</sup>
- May 2 [*intimidation*]: 16 gunshots were fired at the home of JBN National TV correspondent Selvin Martínez while children played outside.<sup>45</sup>
- May 3 [*assassination*]: Sitraunah Autonomous University Workers’ Union lecturer in pedagogy Miguel Ángel Barahona Fiallos was assassinated outside his home in Colonia San Miguel, El Progreso. Miguel was a coordinator of the M.A. program of the UNAH-VS and had worked there 35 years.<sup>46</sup>
- May 5-7 [*assassination*]: A leader of the LGBTI community, human rights and anti-coup activist, LIBRE party candidate and journalist Erick Alexander Martínez Ávila went missing on May 5, and was found dead by asphyxiation resulting from strangulation, lying face up in a sewer two days later.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Scott Griffen, “Honduras Television Presenter Assassinated,” *International Press Institute*, April 25, 2012, available at: <http://www.freemedia.at/home/singleview/article/honduras-television-presenter-assassinated.html>.

<sup>41</sup> “Periodista Santiago Cerna Denuncia Amenazas a Muerte,” *Tiempo*, April 27, 2012, available at: <http://www.tiempo.hn/index.php/portada/9777-periodista-santiago-terna-denuncia-amenazas-a-muerte>.

<sup>42</sup> “Atentan Contra Otro Comunicador,” *El Heraldo*, April 28, 2012, available at: <http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Sucesos/Atentan-contra-otro-comunicador>.

<sup>43</sup> “Documento—Honduras: Amenazas Contra Grupo de Protección en Honduras,” *Amnesty International*, May 12, 2012, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/asset/AMR37/008/2012/es/11930e4f-2155-423f-a8dd-f5d9bc654401/amr370082012es.html>. See also “Honduras: Amenazas de Muerte contra Miembros de PROAH,” *FIDH*, May 3, 2012, available at: <http://www.fidh.org/Honduras-Amenazas-de-muerte-contra>.

<sup>44</sup> “TV Programme Director Gets Hundreds of Threatening Text Messages,” *IFEX*, May 7, 2012, [http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/05/09/castro\\_amenazas/](http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/05/09/castro_amenazas/).

<sup>45</sup> “Shots Fired at Journalist’s Home,” *IFEX*, April 30, 2012, [http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/05/02/martinez\\_shooting/](http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/05/02/martinez_shooting/); “Tirotean Casa de Comunicador,” *Puerto Cortes*, May 3, 2012, available at: <http://puertocorteshn.com/2012/05/03/tirotean-casa-de-comunicador-rural/>.

<sup>46</sup> “Miguel Ángel Barahona Fiallos: Un Maestro que Dio Una Cátedra de Vida,” *Tiempo*, May 4, 2012, <http://tiempo.hn/index.php/portada/10198-el-servicio-blackberry-se-vuelve-a-caer>.

<sup>47</sup> “Missing Honduran Journalist Erick Martinez Found Dead,” *BBC News*, May 8, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-17990638>; “Acaban con la Vida de Otro Periodista en Honduras; ya son 22,” *La Prensa*, May 8, 2012, <http://www.laprensa.hn/Publicaciones/Especiales/Asesinato-de-Alfredo-Villatoro/Notas/Acaban-con-la-vida-de-otro-periodista-en-Honduras-ya-son-22#.T-DW71KuXtp>.



- May 8 [*assassination*]: Choloma Cortés community leader and Secretary General of the Socialist Morazánico Party, Edilberto Solano, was assassinated by two men on a motorcycle.<sup>48</sup>
- May 10 [*verbal threats*]: LGBTI and women's rights activist Fanny Gevawer received threatening messages on her phone related to her political activities just three days after the body of her colleague Erick Alexander Martínez Ávila was found.<sup>49</sup>
- May 9-15 [*kidnapping and assassination*]: HRN news director Ángel Alfredo Villatoro was kidnapped while commuting to work in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. On May 15, his corpse was found in Las Uvas in Tegucigalpa.<sup>50</sup>
- May 16 [*assassination*]: Farmer Juan José Peralta Escoto, of the Marañones MUCA settlement was assassinated by landowner Miguel Facussé's private security guards. His son Juan Peralta de Rigores and son-in-law Antonio Vélez of Marañones were critically wounded. The three men were attacked while driving corn and wood toward the National Agrarian Department office and the La Confianza farm.<sup>51</sup>
- May 18 [*assassination*]: Farmer José Efraín Del Cid of the Nueva Panamá farmers cooperative of MUCA Marañones in the left bank of Aguán river was shot in the face and killed by unidentified persons when traveling in Sonaguera.<sup>52</sup>
- May 19 [*gun attack*]: Julio Lino of the Garifuna Cristales community in Trujillo was shot in the chest by Julio Crespo—member of the Crespo family who claims vast tracks of land under dispute—who shot wildly into a crowd during an occupation to reclaim Garifuna ancestral community titles dating to 1901.<sup>53</sup> Julio Crespo was freed by authorities without investigation.<sup>54</sup>
- May 20 [*assassination*]: FNRP activist Jesús Octavio Pineda was shot dead by unknown persons with five gunshots to the head in a drive-by shooting near his home in the La Pradera neighbourhood of San Pedro Sula.<sup>55</sup>
- May 28 [*death threats*]: Antonio Cabrera, a Tela, Atlántida department radio journalist who issues critical reports of the local government, received death threats by text message from unknown persons during his morning broadcast.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup> "Honduras: Matan a Conocido Dirigente Comunal de Choloma," *La Prensa*, May 9, 2012, <http://www.laprensa.hn/Secciones-Principales/Sucesos/Honduras-matan-a-conocido-dirigente-comunal-de-Choloma>.

<sup>49</sup> Marvin Palacios, "Arrecia la Persecución Política en Contra de Candidatos y Candidatas a Diputadas de la Organización Política Los Necios," *Defensores en la Línea*, May 10, 2012, available at: [http://defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2002:arrecia-la-persecucion-politica-en-contra-de-candidatos-y-candidatas-a-diputadas-de-la-organizacion-politica-los-necios-&catid=42:seg-y-jus&Itemid=159](http://defensoresenlinea.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2002:arrecia-la-persecucion-politica-en-contra-de-candidatos-y-candidatas-a-diputadas-de-la-organizacion-politica-los-necios-&catid=42:seg-y-jus&Itemid=159).

<sup>50</sup> "Abducted Honduras Reporter Alfredo Villatoro Found Dead," *BBC News*, May 16, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-18083550>.

<sup>51</sup> Statement by ACODEHU, "Campaña de Exterminio en el Aguán Deja 2 Campesinos Muertos en los Últimos Días," May 21, 2012, available at: <http://www.acodehu.com/?p=1798&lang=es>; Rights Action, "Two More Killings in the Aguán: Jose Efraín Del Cid and Juan Jose Peralta Escoto," May 23, 2012, <http://www.rightsaction.org/action-content/two-more-killings-aguan-jose-efrain-del-cid-and-juan-jose-peralta-escoto>; See also Statement of Wilfredo Paz, Spokesman for the Permanent Observatorio Internacional Human Rights in the Aguán, available at: <http://ecaminos.org/leer.php/7563>.

<sup>52</sup> Statement by ACODEHU, "Campaña de Exterminio en el Aguán Deja 2 Campesinos Muertos en los Últimos Días," May 21, 2012, available at: <http://www.acodehu.com/?p=1798&lang=es>; Rights Action, "Two More Killings in the Aguán: Jose Efraín Del Cid and Juan Jose Peralta Escoto," May 23, 2012, <http://www.rightsaction.org/action-content/two-more-killings-aguan-jose-efrain-del-cid-and-juan-jose-peralta-escoto>.

<sup>53</sup> Statement by Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH), "Honduras: Miembro de la Comunidad Garifuna de Trujillo es Herido de Bala en Recuperación de Tierras Comunitarias!," May 19, 2012, <http://www.hondurastierralibre.com/2012/05/honduras-miembro-de-la-comunidad.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Statement by OFRANEH, "Más de lo Mismo: Libre Agresor que Disparó a Garifuna en la Recuperación en Trujillo," May 22, 2012, <http://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2012/05/22/mas-de-lo-mismo-libre-agresor-que-disparo-a-garifuna-en-la-recuperacion-en-trujillo/>.

<sup>55</sup> Statement by Comunicación Comunitaria (COMUN), "Asesinan a Dirigente Político de la Izquierda en San Pedro Sula," May 21, 2012, <http://www.honduraslaboral.org/article/asesinan-a-dirigente-politico-de-la-izquierda-en-s/>.



- May 31 [*assassination*]: Former leader of Marañones MUCA Erick Federico Rivera Ochoa was assassinated by unknown persons as he left a supermarket in San Juan Pueblo, Atlántida.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “Periodista de la Radio Frescura Denuncia Amenazas de Muerte,” *IFEX*, Junio 1, 2012, available at: [http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/06/01/cabrera\\_amenazas/es/](http://www.ifex.org/honduras/2012/06/01/cabrera_amenazas/es/).

<sup>57</sup> “Matan a Dirigente Campesino,” *Tiempo*, June 1, 2012, <http://tiempo.hn/index.php/sucesos/11910-matan-a-dirigente-campesino>.