

HONDURAS political prisoners -- calls and emails needed

September 1, 2004

[ENGLISH VERSION]

Call for International Solidarity: FREEDOM FOR MARCELINO AND LEONARDO MIRANDA

Greetings from Honduras. Below you will find the translation of a call to action by COPINH, asking for international solidarity on SEPTEMBER 2, to denounce the continuing systematic repression and abuse against Marcelino and Leonardo Miranda, political prisoners from Montaña Verde.

On September 2, there will be simultaneous actions in several different countries - protests in front of Embassies, letter and phone call campaigns, awareness-raising activities. COPINH asks you to join in the effort, and to contact them (IN SPANISH: copinhonduras@yahoo.es, IN ENGLISH: la_vagabunda@hotmail.com) to connect with others or to let them know what you're planning.

For those who don't live in the area of an Embassy or Consulate, please consider getting a group together to phone the embassies. Phone calls to diplomatic officials, expressing your concern about the case, and asking for a response (get the name and position of whoever you talk to, make a note of their comments, and ask them when you can call back to get a response), is often a more effective way of exerting pressure on the Honduras authorities than contacting them directly. Please let the organization know about your actions, and any responses you received.

The main embassies in North America:

Honduran Embassy in Canada:

T: 613-233-8900

F: 613-232-0193

E: embhonca@magma.ca

Canadian Ambassador to Honduras:

T: 504-232-4551

F: 504-239-7767

E: tglpa@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Mario M. Canahuati, Honduran Ambassador to the US:

T: 202-966-7702

F: 202-966-9751

E: embassy@hondurasemb.org

Larry Palmer, US Ambassador to Honduras:

T: 504-236-9320 or 238-5114

F: 504-236-9027

For more information about the case, or to \$ support the political prisoners, their families, and defense, please contact: COPINH (copinhonduras@yahoo.es), Rights Action (info@rightsaction.org), or me (la_vagabunda@hotmail.com).

Thanks, and Solidarity! Sandra Cuffe

COPINH – Civic Council of Grassroots and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras

°FREEDOM FOR MARCELINO AND LEONARDO MIRANDA! °INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY!

Compañeros and compañeras:

As many of you are aware, the situation for the indigenous communities in Honduras is one of repression and human rights violations. An urgent case illustrating these conditions is that of Marcelino Miranda and Leonardo Miranda, who were captured, tortured, jailed and sentenced to 29 years for defending their community territory, their culture, and for being active members of COPINH. They have been accused of 6 different charges, all common criminal charges.

AT WHAT STAGE ARE THE LEGAL CASES?

Marcelino and Leonardo Miranda were both sentenced to 25 years for murder (asesinato) and 4 years for battery (lesiones) in court in Gracias, Lempira:

¶; The Santa Rosa de Copán Appeals Court, instead of reorienting the case to respect due process, has upheld and thus officialized the arbitrary decision of the Departmental Court of Gracias, confirming events that are not substantiated by evidence, in contradiction of various professional reports.

¶; The Appeals Court decision continues to violate due process, validating as evidence the declaration of witnesses whose testimonies were obtained without summons, without the knowledge of the defense, and outside of the evidence hearing period, contrary to the process established by law.

¶; The formalities, rights and guarantees established in the Constitution of the Republic for the proposal and evacuation of evidence have not been observed, although they are mandatory without exception.

¶; The battery (lesiones) sentence against the indigenous brothers is under appeal.

In the cases described above, ridden with manipulation, racism, lies and illegalities, COPINH presented an appeal to the Supreme Court of Justice to revoke the guilty verdicts and sentences. We are currently waiting for the Supreme Court decision, which is the last remaining legal recourse available in the country.

¶; In the case of supposed battery and attempt against Public Security agents of the National Preventative Police (lesiones y atentado contra Seguridad Pública de la Policía Nacional Preventiva), of which Leonardo Miranda had been accused but subsequently acquitted for lack of evidence: The debate and acquittal in this case, which we had won, was recently annulled by the Supreme Court, which means that we must once again confront the prosecution to repeat the debate and defense in this case.

For all of the above, we are calling on all of you for solidarity, asking

that you support us with actions, to denounce the case and demand immediate freedom for Marcelino and Leonardo Miranda.

Our concrete request is that you consider organizing an emergency urgent action Thursday, September 2, at 9:30am in front of the Honduran Embassies or Consulates in your respective countries. This will be a synchronized international action, respecting the autonomy and creativity of each place to determine the manner in which the protest is expressed. It does not matter if there are few participants (although if there are more, great!) – it could be a symbolic action that has impact, publishing communiqués and denouncements, promoting solidarity actions with other organizations and individuals. News of these actions and public pronouncements will immediately arrive to the Government of Honduras and will be a huge support in the struggle for the freedom of our compañeros. We hope you understand the urgency of this case and excuse the short notice.

Hoping to hear from you,
In solidarity,
Bertha C.ceres Flores
Coordinator of Organization
General Coordination
COPINH

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