

Honduras, April 29, 2007

BELOW:

- urgent action from OFRANEH ñ more repression against Garifuna people
- ìDeclaration from DURUGUBUTIî, by Garifuna, Lenca and Vïa Campesina
representatives from the Foro de Biodiversidad: Territorio y Cultura
(Forum on Biodiversity: Lands and Culture)

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OFRANEH REPORTS:

AMBUSH OF GARIFUNA YOUTH FROM COMMUNITY OF SAN JUAN TELA

This past April 14 in the entry to the community of San Juan Tela, Durugubuti, young women, Keydi Jorleny Marin, Yerli Isolina Ellis, Yanaira Briyed Lambert, Eusebia Guillen, Joselyn Lizet Rivas were ambushed. The last mentioned is the daughter Jessica Garcia, President of the Patronata (development committee) of the community of Durugubuti, who has been constantly threatened for her position in the defense of her communityís territory.

According to the Preventative Police report relating to the incident, the situation was classified as an attempted homicide, in which various hit men who fired on the vehicle (taxi) in which the five young women traveled to their community.

TOURISM DOLLARS versus INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

The community of San Juan Tela has been struggling during the last decade to protect their ancestral territory. Their territory is desired by members of the powerful national elite (backed by international tourism investors) who have used tactics from divisionism to direct threats and attacks, to the degree that the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) has granted protective measures registered (case 624-06), with the objective of protecting the lives and integrity of members of the Patronato and the Committee in Defense of Land, in addition to protection and respect for the property rights of the ancestral lands of the community.

In spite of these measures, the repression against community leaders has continued.

Last Saturday a group of minors were attacked. This attack occurred two days alter the ãfestivitiesí commemorating the arrival of our

people in 1798 to the coast of Central America, reinforcing the attacks and insecurity that our people survive, and the pretensions of members of the national oligarchy connected to the actual government of Manuel Zelaya.

For OFRANEH, the lamentable events demonstrate the insecurity that affects the country, where an abhorrent politicization of the judicial power and a tremendous inoperability of the justice providers who submit themselves to the designs of the groups of economically powerful who impose their projects over the wellbeing of the Honduran people.

OFRANEH urges the exhaustive investigation of the attack that occurred last Saturday against Garifuna youth, at the same time we request the application of the law to the military involved in the assassinations of the two youth from San Juan Tela, (Epson Andr s Castillo y Gino Eligio L pez), massacred on February 26, 2006 near Laguna Negra. In this case liberty was granted to the officials involved in the executions using a mechanism in which the end is no more than a mockery of justice and of the Garifuna people.

The acts that occurred last Saturday are another sign of how our people, after 210 years in Honduras, continue to be considered foreigners without rights. It is a warning of the contempt that exists against us despite the fact that some Garifuna continue to dance to the beat of the music imposed by the powerful elite and the international financing agencies.

Lilian Carol Rivas
Coordinator of Communication, OFRANEH
La Ceiba, Atl ntida
April 16, 2007

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DECLARATION FROM DURUGUBUTI
[translated for RA by Rosalind Gil]

Garifuna, Lenca and V a Campesina representatives have come together as part of the Foro de Biodiversidad: Territorio y Cultura (Forum on Biodiversity: Lands and Culture) to declare that we honour the spirits of our ancestors who were massacred seventy years ago during the dictatorship of Tiburcio Cr as and we declare that:

Faced with the offensive of the neo-liberal Plan Puebla-Panam , a plan to reinforce neocolonialism amongst our peoples and to spread the powerful neo-liberal transport and maquila network, we raise our voices once again against the sacking of our lands and the breaking up of our social and political organizations; all of which is designed to

expand the domination of the industrialized countries and their multinational companies in Central America.

Destructive projects for so-called "integration and development" implemented by international financial organizations such as the FMI, BM, BID, USAID, UE, etc. are endangering the life and the cultures of our peoples. The "development" they put forth is based on economic profits that cause an imbalance to nature, which is an intimate part of our cosmology and from which many of us sustain ourselves.

The grave food shortage crisis in our country stems from a policy of agricultural production that is for export only. There is no existing plan for agricultural reform that guarantees a right to the land and to Food Sovereignty for Honduran campesinos.

The appropriation of biodiversity by the trans-nationals seriously endangers our survival. Biodiversity includes water, flora, and fauna, as well as our people's traditional knowledge concerning conservation and rational use of resources.

The colonial policies put forth by Plan Puebla-Panamá are causing social conflicts that have led to repressive actions on the part of state security forces. These forces have adopted terror as a social-control strategy. The only ones who benefit from this strategy are the powerful elite, the transnational companies and financial organizations that put together the plan for economic domination.

Global warming and the need to satisfy the ferocious appetite of industry have grave consequences for the planet. Industry is responsible for climate change and is affecting us negatively in many ways.

Faced with the large number of totally asymmetrical Free Trade Agreements favouring a system based on exploitation and out of control consumerism that has caused the destruction of the planet:

WE DEMAND:

- * Suspension of mega-projects in highly fragile ecological areas such as the Tigre and Patuca Dams (The MesoAmerican Biological Corridor), the Bahia de Tela where tourism is being developed and plans are in place to fill in the Laguna de Micos (RAMSAR 722). As well, efforts should be made to stop the destruction of many rivers and streams throughout the country.

- * Immediate suspension of the existing Mining and Forestry law and of attempts to reform the law by trans-nationals and by members of the Congress who are being paid off. Immediate cancellation of the 300 mining concessions that have been granted (the equivalent of 30,000 square kilometers of the country). This will allow us to regain our

national sovereignty, environmental balance, as well as respect for the land and cultural rights of the indigenous, black and campesino peoples of Honduras.

* Comprehensive agricultural reform, as well as a strategy for ensuring food supplies for the whole country. This strategy should respond to the needs of the people and not be designed to suit the needs of international financial organizations or the up and downs of the market.

* An indefinite moratorium on exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

As well, a strategy should be developed and put in place to preserve energy.

The litigation process must, in the end, ensure that commitments to the Honduran people are kept. Our sovereignty and dignity must be put ahead of those of the trans-nationals and of the US Proconsul.

* Immediate ratification of the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol to stop the loss of our native seeds, especially corn seeds. Measures must be taken to save our native corn by identifying products made from genetically modified food. And in this way, with the reactivation of corn production, we will stop the massive importation of genetically modified seeds and cereals, and stop the importation and production of genetically modified varieties.

* Faced with global warming and the situation we have had to endure in Honduras since Hurricane Mitch, an increase in the intensity and number of storms, an increase in temperature and long periods of drought, we demand that a strategy be put in place for dealing with global warming and its effects on highly vulnerable areas such as the Caribbean coast, the southern area of the country, and in fact, the whole country.

* Rejection of the Ley Indigena (Indigenous Law) which was put together for the PAPIN-BID consortium and was created behind the backs of the indigenous peoples, violating OIT 169, which, we insist, must be enforced, beginning with the amendment of the Property Law which tries to do away with communal property.

* Faced with the systematic repression that we have had to endure, we, the indigenous peoples, black people, campesinos and environmental activists demand total respect for the human rights of the Honduran people and we demand that criminals be brought to justice.

Despite the on-going aggressions against our people, we are committed to intensifying our resistance. We will continue organizing, spreading information and training, as well as seeking ways of constructing a just and equitable society.

With the spirit of those who were massacred in Durgubuti, Talanquera, Astillero, Horcones and the spirits of Lempira, Etempica, Iselaca, Mota, Barauda and Satuye, we will continue our struggle with dignity.

San Juan Tela, Durugubuti
March 18, 2007.

OFRANEH (Honduran Black Peopleís Fraternal Organization) COPINH (The Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras)

Vía Campesina

Grito de los Excluidos ñ Honduras

Brothers and Sisters, we invite you to join us by signing up at
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