

Urgent Action: ‘Canadian tourism mafia’ file trumped up charges against Garifuna leader Miriam Miranda in Honduras’ corrupted legal system

Honduras Solidarity Network and Rights Action alert, November 17, 2017

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(Miriam Miranda, General Coordinator of OFRANEH demanding justice at a large protest outside of the Honduran Supreme Court in Tegucigalpa on the one-year anniversary of the assassination of Lenca indigenous activist, Berta Caceres of COPINH. Photo: Karen Spring)

A member of the ‘Canadian tourism mafia’ along Honduras’ north coast, that includes Patrick Forseth and Randy “the porn king” Jorgensen, filed trumped up charges against indigenous Garifuna leader Miriam Miranda and three other women, in Honduras’ corrupted legal system.

The four must go to court, November 24, to respond to these “charges”. They potentially face up to 2-3 years in jail, and now must spend time and resources (of the few they have) to defend themselves from these manipulative charges.

Canadian tourism investor Patrick Forseth, of the CARIVIDA Villas company, has falsely accused Miriam Miranda, the General Coordinator of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras ([OFRANEH](#)), and three other Garifuna women - Medeline David, Neny Heidi Avila, and Letty Bernardez - of slander and defamation.

Miriam Miranda is a leading Honduran Garifuna activist who has faced numerous threats and direct acts of repression for her courageous, articulate long-time work with OFRANEH and other Honduran groups and movements.

The reasons behind the malicious charges against these four Garifuna women are quite simple. Forseth and CARIVIDA are involved in a major land dispute with the indigenous Garifuna community of Guadalupe in Trujillo Bay, located on the Caribbean coast of Honduras. Forseth has used several very questionable legal maneuvers in the now (since the 2009 military coup) deeply corrupted Honduran legal system, to criminalize any indigenous Garifuna people involved in land, territory and human rights defense work, in order to further claims that CARIVIDA's illegal land purchase in Guadalupe was valid.

One of the local woman being charged, [Medeline David](#) already faces charges of illegal possession of land as a result of her participation in a community-led land reclamation project to recuperate their own land – land in dispute with CARIVIDA.



The land defense project in the Garifuna community of Guadalupe in Trujillo Bay. The area where many community members are camping out, is the land that is claimed to be owned by Patrick Forseth. Forseth plans to build a resort and villa project on the land. (Photo Karen Spring)

[Geovanny Bernardez](#), another OFRANEH leader and other Guadalupe community activists including leader, Celso Guillen, also face charges laid by the Honduran state and CARIVIDA as a result of the same land dispute.

The legal case against Miranda and the 3 women was presented on May 26, 2017 and the first court hearing is scheduled for November 24, 2017. If found guilty, Miriam, Medeline, Neny, and Letty could face up to 2-3 years in prison.

This defamation accusation is a clear example of how wealthy North Americans use and take advantage of the impunity and corruption in Honduras' post 2009 military coup political and legal systems to criminalize people that resist their economic interests and projects.

As the General Coordinator of OFRANEH, Miranda is being directed targeted in an attempt to silence the resistance of Garifuna communities not only in Trujillo Bay, but in other land disputes across the coast of Honduras.

Forseth is the husband of the stepdaughter of Canadian businessman, Randy Jorgensen ("the Porn King") who owns and operates several gated community projects in the same Trujillo Bay region. Some of Jorgensen's tourist projects are adjacent to the land that Forseth claims he owns and "legally purchased."

Forseth, Jorgensen and other North Americas continue to take control of lands that are inside ancestral indigenous Garifuna titles, some of which date as far back as the 1860s. Jorgensen is facing charges of illegal possession of land for his project Campa Vista owned by his company, Life Vision Development.

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Background

OFRANEH members denounced for defamation by Canadian tourism investors Patrick Daniel Forseth (Carivida Villas) and Randy Jorgensen (Life Vision Developments)

<http://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/ofraneh-denounced-for-defamation-by-forseth-and-jorgensen>

Lands To Die For: The Garifuna Struggle In Honduras

December 20, 2016, CCTV Americas

35 minute film about violent and corrupt challenges facing the Garifuna people, lead by the OFRANEH organization, in the context of the violence and repression, impunity and corruption that characterize the Honduran military, economic and political elites and their international partners.

<http://www.cctv-america.com/2016/12/20/lands-to-die-for-the-garifuna-struggle-in-honduras>

Miriam Miranda, OFRANEH leader, detained and threatened by Honduran police

On January 11, 2017, Miriam Miranda and three other members of OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Black and Garifuna Peoples) - Luís Gutiérrez, Oscar Gaboa, Luís Miranda - were

illegally detained and threatened by police at a roadside stop in La Ceiba, along Honduras' north coast.

<http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=6d6627ffdb>

The Canadian porn king and the Caribbean paradise: Is a businessman taking advantage of lawlessness to scoop up land?

November 20, 2016, by Marina Jimenez

<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/11/20/the-canadian-porn-king-and-the-caribbean-paradise.html>

The U.S. and Canada Have Blood on Their Hands in Honduras

October 22, 2016, by Grahame Russell

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/The-US-and-Canada-Have-Blood-on-Their-Hands-in-Honduras-20161022-0010.html>

Names/Addresses

Carivida Villas

www.carivida.com

info@carivida.com

(778) 242-8678

Carivida Club Café

Trujillo, Colón, Honduras

Life Vision Properties (Randy 'porn king' Jorgensen's operation)

<http://lifevisionproperties.com/>

90 Admiral Blvd. Mississauga, ON, Canada, L5T 2W1

1 (416) 900-6098

More information

OFRANEH (Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondureña)

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- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

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