

Help stop ethnocide and forced displacement of Garifuna people in Honduras

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Take Action

Support U.S. Congress member Bush's Resolution in solidarity with rights of Garifuna people in Honduras

“When I traveled to Honduras earlier this year, I saw firsthand the impact corporate interests and foreign governments have played in destabilizing the region. The indigenous Garifuna community in particular has experienced significant violence, land appropriation, and human rights abuses. Given our own history in the region, the United States must take an active role in ensuring that the rights of the Garifuna are protected—and support full accountability for past human rights abuses.”

(Representatives Cori Bush)



@ Witness for peace solidarity collective

Below

- Press release from U.S. Representative Cori Bush
- Take action – What to do, from Witness for Peace solidarity collective

Afro-Indigenous Garifuna people face violent human rights abuses by the Honduran government and complicit multilateral institutions

Representatives Bush, Omar, García, Schakowsky & Bowman Introduce Resolution to Affirm Rights of Honduras' Garifuna People

Press release, December 14, 2022

<https://bush.house.gov/media/press-releases/representatives-bush-omar-garcia-schakowsky-and-bowman-introduce-resolution-to-affirm-rights-of-honduras-garifuna-people>

Washington, D.C. (Dec. 14, 2022) — Representatives Cori Bush (MO-01), Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Jesus “Chuy” García (IL-04), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), and Jamaal Bowman Ed.D. (NY-16) introduced a resolution that affirms the rights of the Afro-Indigenous Garífuna people in Honduras.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have determined that the Garífuna community’s rights have repeatedly been violated by the Honduran government, yet little has changed regarding their treatment.

This resolution condemns the violence toward the Garífuna people while calling for accountability from the Honduran government and other international institutions for their role in these abuses. The lawmakers worked closely with partner organizations and the Garífuna community to author this resolution following a March 2021 congressional delegation trip to Honduras.

Forced disappearance of four Garifuna community defenders, July 2020

For years, Garífuna community members and leaders have been threatened, arrested, abducted and murdered. Most notably, in July 2020, four Garífuna men were abducted at gunpoint by men wearing uniforms bearing the logo of a Honduran security forces unit. Instead of calling for an investigation into those responsible, the Honduran Attorney General has called for criminal proceedings against leaders of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH).

“When I came to Congress, I made a promise to advocate for the most marginalized communities who face systematic violence and oppression. My commitment is not limited to the confines of our borders,” said Congresswoman Bush. “Earlier this year, I had the honor of visiting with and meeting leaders of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras, including activist Miriam Miranda, and heard directly about the Garífuna peoples’ continued struggle. The Afro-Indigenous Garífuna people have faced, and continue to face, countless human rights abuses at the hands of the Honduran government - including unwarranted arrests, abductions, and even killings – and the United States has been complicit by funding state-sanctioned violence towards their communities. We have an obligation to put an end to this violence and oppression, advance policies that promote their human rights, and speak up for Black and Indigenous communities in the United States and across the world. My colleagues and I proudly introduce this resolution to condemn systemic violence on the Garífuna people and ensure that the Honduran government and other complicit international institutions are held accountable.”

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ensuring that the rights of the Garífuna are protected—and support full accountability for past human rights abuses,” said Congresswoman Omar.

“The Garífuna people have long endured criminalization, forced disappearances, and violations of their centuries-old land rights. Today, international corporations and foreign nations continue to be granted development access to their ancestral land, bringing environmental destruction and displacing Garífuna people,” said Congressman García. “The U.S. must work with the Honduran government, international organizations, and global allies to condemn this violence and affirm the rights of the Garífuna people.”

“The Garífuna people have lived in what is now known as Honduras since the 1600s and have since endured human rights abuses, displacement, and violence. Over the years, Garífuna community leaders have been threatened, arrested, abducted, and even murdered. These abhorrent abuses cannot be tolerated,” said Congresswoman Schakowsky. “Today, threats against their land and people persist. I am proud to co-lead this resolution that not only calls for the implementation of the 2015 Inter-American Court judgment restoring land rights to Garífuna communities, but also calls on the Biden Administration to engage with the Honduran government to safeguard the Garífuna people, their land, and their culture.”

“When I visited the Garífuna territory in Honduras last Spring, I was disturbed to learn about how our country’s policies and business practices are worsening conditions for Indigenous communities in Latin America,” said Congressman Bowman Ed.D. “Corporations and US-funded governments are degrading their environment, displacing Garífuna communities, and stoking violence. This is exploitation at the hands of Afro-Indigenous communities, and it must stop. The United States has an obligation to right these wrongs and support the human rights of the Garífuna people, which is why I am proud to join this resolution.”

Specifically, this resolution:

- Condemns violence against the Garífuna people and the illegal separation from their legitimate land rights, and calls for the implementation of a 2015 Inter-American Court ruling restoring those land rights;
- Calls for the full participation of an independent commission created by Garífuna communities in the investigation of the four Garífuna men abducted in July 2020;
- Calls for a Special Prosecutor for Enforced Disappearances in Honduras;
- Calls for a review of past projects by multilateral development banks that may have contributed to violating the rights of the Garífuna people, and compliance with human rights law before the approval of projects that affect Garífuna communities; and
- Calls on the U.S. government to engage with the Honduran government and international allies and organizations to promote the rights of Garífuna communities and to advocate for reparations for affected communities.

The territory that stretches along the Caribbean coast of Honduras is the ancestral home of the majority of the world’s Garífuna. The presence of vibrant Garífuna immigrant communities in the United States has been recorded by oral history and scholarly research since the early 20th

century. In 2001, UNESCO issued a proclamation declaring the Garífuna language and culture a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.”

This resolution is endorsed by: Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH), Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective (WfP-SC), Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Program, School of the Americas Watch (SOAW), Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), and Honduras Solidarity Network (HSN).

“Concerned about this alarming situation that threatens the future survival of the Garífuna people, we have called for solidarity to the world, allied organizations, individuals, and institutions. Specifically, to the people of the United States, who have expressed their solidarity and their support through letters to government officials, visits to our territory, and, today through a great act of solidarity and advocacy, a significant number of members of Congress of the U.S. House of Representatives, are preparing to circulate, present and discuss a Resolution to take urgent action on the difficult situation where the Garífuna people currently live,” said Miriam Miranda, General Coordinator of OFRANEH.

“The recent violent eviction of the Garífuna community of Punta Gorda by U.S.-backed security forces is a reminder that the United States remains complicit in efforts to violently dispossess Indigenous communities in Honduras. We hope that the United States will demonstrate its solidarity with the Garífuna people by not only passing this Resolution but also by taking concrete steps to implement its recommendations,” said Allison Lira, Director, Honduras Program for the Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective.

“OFRANEH and Garífuna communities have bravely defended their ancestral territories from internationally-financed projects while facing systematic violence and racism, including from U.S.-funded security forces. Most recently on November 7th, 2022, Punta Gorda was violently evicted and six land defenders were arrested. The repression must stop, and international court sentences must be respected,” said Karen Spring, Co-Coordinator, Honduras Solidarity Network.

TAKE ACTION TODAY

Urge your congressional representative to sign on to the Resolution

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/support-rep-bushs-resolution-in-solidarity-with-the-afro-indigenous-garifuna-community-of-honduras>

OR send a THANK YOU, if you live in the district of the original co-sponsors including Rep. Bush (MO-01), Rep. Jesus "Chuy" Garcia (IL-04), Rep. Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), or Rep. Jamaal Bowman (NY-16)

After emailing, be sure to leave a voicemail in their office by calling the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121 (voice) or 202-224-3091 (TTY) and ask to be transferred to your Representative.

Organizationally endorse the OFRANEH Resolution:

<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/organizational-sign-on-ofraneh-resolution>.

Visit our OFRANEH resolution landing page for more information;

<https://www.solidaritycollective.org/ofraneh-resolution>.

We hope you will join us in contacting your congressional representative today! For more information, please contact us.

In solidarity,

Honduras Team, on behalf of Solidarity Collective

www.solidaritycollective.org

<https://twitter.com/WfPSolidCollect>

honduras@solidaritycollective.org

Rights Action background information

Since 1998, Rights Action has been funding and supporting the land and rights defense struggles of the Garifuna people, along Honduras' Caribbean shore, whose land and rights have long been and continue to be under siege by the global tourism and African palm industries, and by corrupt governments and the global drug trafficking business.

More information

<https://rightsaction.org/ofraneh-archives>

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)

To support land and environmental defenders, and human rights and justice struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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