

## **Another Garifuna community defender assassinated**

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/garifuna-community-defender-assassinated>

**A slow, business-driven genocide against the Garifuna indigenous people of northern Honduras continues**

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OFRANEH

Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña

Garifuna Territory, north shore of Honduras, May 28, 2023

**Gama River dumping ground for bodies of Garifuna land defenders**

Today a new act of terror occurred in the Garifuna community of Triunfo de la Cruz. The lifeless body of Martin Morales Martinez was found, after being reported missing by family members since yesterday.

Martin was a member of the Commission for Follow-up and Compliance with the Sentence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) related to Triunfo de la Cruz. Martin was also a member of the Committee for the Defense of Land of the same community.

The body of Martin was found in the Gama River near the recovered territory Secundino Torres (communal property that overlaps with an area of the Punta Izopo National Park), the same place that has become the dumping ground for the bodies of community defenders of the Triunfo de la Cruz territory.

On repeated occasions the community of Triunfo de la Cruz and OFRANEH have denounced, with names and surnames, death threats made against members of the Land Committee and the Commission for Compliance with IACHR sentence in favor of the community. To date, there has been no response from any government authorities.

On the contrary, aggressions against leaders of our communities have intensified as a clear act of intimidation and contempt for the lives of our people.

On February 3, 2022, formally requested Protective Measures and police involvement in five Garifuna areas of risk and threats against the territorial land defenders, including the Rio Gama sector; this is the same place where on January 29 of this year, our fellow defender Ricardo Arnaul Montero was assassinated.

To date, the Honduran authorities have done absolutely nothing.

We condemn this latest murder and the on-going, illegal occupation of Garifuna territories by third parties, who are causing terror, aggressions, assassinations and disappearance of the leaders of our communities.

The non-compliance with the IACHR ruling in favor of the Triunfo de la Cruz community not only demonstrates the Honduran government's unwillingness to

recognize the historical rights of the Garifuna people, but puts community members in permanent danger and contributes to an increase in social conflict in the area.

The Garifuna people are under constant pressures brought by wealthy business interests – linked to the Council of Honduran Private Enterprise (COHEP) and their international business and investment partners - and government authorities to take control of the territories of the Garifuna communities in the Bay of Tela, demonstrating contempt for the lives of the Garifuna people.

We demand that the government assume its legal responsibilities and carry out a proper investigation into this most recent murder, along with all the other violent events that have occurred in our communities that have not only brought pain and mourning, but have become the main avenue of trying to hand our lands and territory over to the mafia of global capital that dominates the country, disguising itself under the guise of 'entrepreneurship'.

*Stop the Assassination of our Garifuna Leaders and Leaders!!!*

*Stop the Genocide against the Garifuna People!!!*

*Stop the delayed of justice, and continuation of impunity!!!*

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#### **Background**

- Afro-Indigenous People in Honduras Are Being Forcibly Displaced. Washington Is Complicit, By Miriam Miranda, OFRANEH, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/garifuna-people-being-forcibly-displaced>
- The Survivors of Cayos Cochinos, By Carlos Martinez, El Faro news, July 31, 2022, <https://elfaro.net/en/202207/centroamerica/26304/The-Survivors-of-Cayos-Cochinos.htm>

**Archives – OFRANEH:** <https://rightsaction.org/ofraneh-archives>

Since 1998, Rights Action has supported OFRANEH that - along with COPINH – is a leading community defense organization struggling in defense of land, the environment, indigenous rights and a fair and just “development” model.

#### **OFRANEH**

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