



Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras
COFADEH

URGENT ACTION

Honduran State Discriminates Against Victims of the DEA

The Committee of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared of Honduras, COFADEH, expresses its total repudiation and extreme concern for the abandonment on the part of the state of Honduras, of the victims of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Honduran security agents' antidrug operation carried out on May 11, 2012 in the community of Paptalaya, Ahuas, Department of Gracias a Dios.

The attack was directed at unarmed people traveling on the Patuca River, impacting 16 families: four people dead including two pregnant women and a 14 year old boy; four wounded, one of whom is also a 14 year old boy; three homes searched; three victims of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; and 10 children orphaned.

The operation was carried out by a multinational force, which according to the Honduran Minister of Defense Marlon Pascua, did not include members of the national Armed Forces¹, and resulted in a very high cost for the population of Ahuas and for Honduran society.

Cofadeh calls on the international Human Rights community and the democratic world, to take vigorous action to prevent the rights of the victims from being violated again.

The indifference and cowardliness of state authorities to confront the consequences of their actions outside of the law has resulted in the lack of adequate medical attention for the wounded and the criminalization of their family members for denouncing this.

The child **WILMER LUCAS WALTER (14)** and youth **LUCIO ADAN NELSON QUEEN (22)**, who were traveling in the boat that was fired on by the DEA and Honduran agents, have been hospitalized since May 11 in regional hospital centers and to date have not received the surgical attention required to treat their serious injuries.

Wilmer is at risk of losing his left hand due to negligence and lack of attention and Lucio is weakened by infection as he waits for orthopedic intervention in his right arm.

In the midst of the so called "war against drugs" the principal victims are the indigenous, Misquito villagers including children and women; the principal actor responsible for these serious actions is the State.

However the executive of the current regime, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, has not provided an official report on what happened on May 11, on the contrary he demonstrated ignorance of the events during a press conference at the Presidential headquarters on Friday, June 1 and made discriminatory comments against the Indigenous, Misquito population. Lobo not only cast doubt

¹ "this is not an operation of the Armed Forces, it is not coordinated by the Armed Forces, I believe it is important that this be understood once and for all on the part of everyone, this is not something that we have directed or coordinated." (procesodigital.hn, 03/06/2012)

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on what happened and the fatal results, but also insinuated in an irresponsible manner, that the attacked villagers were drug traffickers because they were on the Patuca River at early hours of the morning when this zone lacks public transport, its population travels by water at these hours to avoid the sun and lack bridges and roads in a territory abandoned by the State.

The United States, the second state involved, also evades responsibility. Lisa Kubiske², the U.S. Ambassador in Tegucigalpa, has declared that the DEA team acting in the Mosquitia did so in self defense and because it was their duty in the war against drugs. Even though neither her government nor Porfirio Lobo have carried out a serious and deep investigation into the events on May 11, she prejudged.

Ahuas is militarized, the population and its families are in pain and intimidated. The racism and discrimination towards the victims of May 11th is intentional and in this case clearly registers rejection on the part of the State towards indigenous peoples as a way to deny their capacity and rights which has resulted in social exclusion historically.

As a result, Cofadeh calls on the international and national community to:

- Demand that the State of Honduras take the necessary measures to protect and guarantee the lives of the survivors.
- Demand that **Wilmer Lucas Walter (14)** and the youth **Lucio Adan Nelson Queen** receive swift and adequate treatment required in the State hospitals. Their case is very serious due to the level of invisibility; it requires political will to resolve it.
- Insist that both governments conduct impartial and exhaustive investigations into the acts of May 11, 2012 resulting in the sanction of those responsible; national, foreign, material and intellectual, according to the law as well as full reparation for damages.
- An expedited, efficient, independent and impartial investigation into the violation of the human rights of the people detained and especially regarding torture inflicted which should include:
 - Who was in charge of the operation?
 - What was the chain of command?
 - What were the guidelines for the Honduran and United States agents regarding use of force and in particular on the use of combat weapons?
 - Who gave the order to open fire and based on what criteria?
- Remind the State of Honduras of its obligation to promote and uphold the respect for the rights and obligations contained in the international instruments it has ratified including first and second generation rights. In addition, the special rights of indigenous people.

² "it is a tragedy but in this case, according to what I understand, they were acting in self-defense and this is their duty because the war against drugs is important".

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