

**Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández  
Presidente de la República  
Casa Presidencial  
Boulevard Juran Pablo Segundo  
Palacio José Cecilio Del Valle  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras**

Brussels, 3 February 2014

n. réf : 114-PH-hb (à rappeler svp)

**Concerns regarding the killings of lawyers in Honduras over the past three years**

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ordre des barreaux francophones et germanophone de Belgique (AVOCATS.BE), which represents more than 7.500 Belgian lawyers. The O.B.F.G. is member of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (C.C.B.E.).

AVOCATS.BE places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. AVOCATS.BE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

AVOCATS.BE deplores the increasing number of lawyers' killings in Honduras as well as the impunity of the perpetrators of these horrible and unacceptable crimes, which are never or very rarely prosecuted and punished.

The CCBE previously wrote to your country's authorities in 2012 in order to express its deep concern over the killing of almost 70 lawyers in Honduras over the past three years (see our letter of 8 December 2012 attached as an annex). Nevertheless, it seems that the threatening situation is not over yet. According to the information that we received, lawyers in Honduras continue to face attacks in connection with the legitimate exercise of their professional activity. Most recently, in November 2013, Mr Victor Carias, a criminal lawyer, was killed in a shooting in Tegucigalpa.

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AVOCATS.BE is deeply alarmed by this situation and would like to draw your Excellency's attention to the following articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

**Article 16 states that:**

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics*

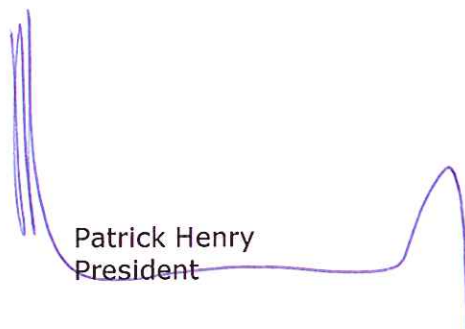
**Moreover Article 17 states that :**

*Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately by the authorities.*

AVOCATS.BE firmly believes that the country's authorities must step up their efforts to protect lawyers and human rights defenders. Therefore we respectfully urge your Excellency to take immediate and effective steps to guarantee that the recent lawyers'killings are properly and impartially investigated and that the persons responsible are promptly identified and prosecuted.

AVOCATS.BE also asks you to take all the necessary measures to ensure that lawyers in Honduras are able to carry out their professional activities, in all circumstances, without fearing for their safety and lives ; the latter being extremely important for the successful functioning of the justice system and the proper application of the rule of law.

Yours sincerely

  
Patrick Henry  
President