

URGENT Action



0617UH0N

Honduras

01.09.2006

Harassment of peasant women who are fighting for land to feed themselves, Atlántida.

For more than five years 60 peasant women have been fighting for access to 69 hectares of idle State land which they need to guarantee their livelihood. Since June 10, 2001, these women have been cultivating the land and have undertaken anything possible to so that the State would finally hand over the land through its National Agrarian Institute in the course of its present Agrarian Reform. At the end of July, however, they suffered harassment and partial destruction of their crops.



Background

In Honduras, about 44% of the peasant population does not have access to sufficient land in order to feed itself. The situation of the poor peasant women is even more difficult. The peasant women have even been discriminated against in the very same Agrarian Reform process in Honduras. Of all persons who had received property titles in the Agrarian Reform framework between 1962 and 1991, only 4 % were women. Even though nowadays the national legislation has formally overcome discrimination, in reality for peasant women it is still very difficult to get land and receive a valid property title for this land.

Since June 2001, the peasant women organised in the "Women's Movement 10th of June" have been occupying an idle piece of State land of 69 hectares, which is situated near the village of San Juan Pueblo, La Masica municipality, Department Atlántida, in Northern Honduras. The struggle of these women is without precedent in the country. It is difficult to understand why the Autonomous University of Honduras through its Northern branch, the Regional University Centre of the Atlantic Coast (CURLA), wishes to impede the handing over of the land to the women. This university branch has not been using the land in question for nine years and has therefore not fulfilled the social function for which the land had been handed over to the university in 1992 by the National Agrarian Institute, as also verified by the Congress of the Republic in a special resolution.

It is even more alarming that the university branch has undertaken repressive measures against the peasant women, in particular a forced eviction on February 6, 2002, burning down the women's humble houses and destroying their possessions. At the end of July 2006, the private security forces employed by CURLA destroyed part of the women's crops and threatened to evict the women once again.

FIAN – With human rights against hunger!

FIAN Mandate

Honduras is a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and has therefore assumed the obligation to fulfil the right to food. One of the most discriminated groups with reference to land property is women peasants. The access to land is one of the indispensable preconditions that they can exercise their right to feed themselves.

Call to Action

It is most important to send at this moment letters to the President of Honduras, in order to speed up the process of getting the land included and adjudicated as submitted by the women. Please send copies of this letter to the Director of the National Agrarian Institute and to FIAN-Honduras.

End of Action:

**October 31,
2006**

Address:

Su Excelencia
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Translation

Dear Mr. President,

With this letter I wish to express my preoccupation about the case of the 60 landless peasant women who are cultivating 69 hectares of land in the village of San Juan Pueblo, La Masica municipality, Atlántida. The peasant women have applied for the inclusion and adjudication of the land which the National Agrarian Institute INA had given to the Autonomous University of Honduras, in particular to the Regional University Centre of the Atlantic Coast (CURLA) for experimental and educational usage. As the Congress of the Republic and INA have verified, CURLA does not comply with the function for which it had received the land and has left it uncultivated for many years. According to recent information, watchmen employed by CURLA have harassed the group of women and have destroyed part of their crops which the women had cultivated in order to safeguard access to food for their families.

Honduras is a State Party to the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ICESCR, and has therefore assumed the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human right to food, as recognised in Art. 11 of the ICESCR.

With this letter I ask you politely to take appropriate and immediate measures to:

protect the peasant women against any kind of harassment or destruction of their crops which will negatively affect their right to food and their integrity proceed with the inclusion and adjudication of this state land in favour of the peasant women organized in the "Women's Movement 10- of June", in order to give them security and control over the land.

Yours sincerely,

***Please inform FIAN
International about any
response you receive
to your faxes and letters.***



FIAN International Secretariat

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FIAN – With human rights against hunger!

Su Excelencia
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Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente:

Con esta carta, quisiera expresarle mi preocupación sobre el caso de las 60 mujeres campesinas sin tierra quienes están trabajando un terreno de 69 hectáreas en la aldea de San Juan Pueblo, municipio La Masica, Atlántida. Las mujeres campesinas han solicitado la afectación y adjudicación de un terreno que el Instituto Nacional Agrario INA había asignado a la Universidad Autónoma de Honduras, particularmente al Centro Universitario Regional del Litoral Atlántico (CURLA) para fines experimentales y educativos. Como lo había constatado el Congreso de la República y el INA, el CURLA no cumplió con la función para la cual le había sido asignado el terreno dejándolo en abandono por muchos años. Según informaciones recientes, vigilantes empleados por el CURLA han hostigado el grupo de las mujeres, y han destruido parte de los cultivos que las mujeres han implementado para garantizar la alimentación de sus familias.

Honduras es Estado parte del Pacto Internacional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales PIDESC, y ha asumido, por tanto, la obligación de respetar, proteger y garantizar el derecho humano a la alimentación, reconocido en el art. 11 del mismo PIDESC.

Por medio de esta carta, le solicito atentamente, tomar las medidas apropiadas e inmediatas para:

- proteger a las mujeres campesinas en contra de cualquier acto de hostigamiento o de destrucción de cultivos que pueda afectar negativamente sus derechos a la alimentación y su integridad.
- proceder a la afectación y adjudicación de estas tierras nacionales a favor de las campesinas organizadas en el “Movimiento de Mujeres 10 de junio”, para garantizarles control y seguridad sobre la tierra.

Atentamente,