

Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa
Presidente de la República
Casa Presidencial
Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo
Palacio José Cecilio Del Valle
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Brussels, 2 October 2012

RE: Dismay over the killing of human rights lawyer Antonio Trejo Cabrera

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE deplores the death of prominent human rights lawyer Antonio Trejo Cabrera, who was shot five times in the vicinity of Toncontín airport in Tegucigalpa on 22 September and died shortly after from his injuries. The recent killing comes amidst a deteriorating situation for the security of human rights defenders in the country, especially vis-à-vis lawyers.

We have been informed that Mr Trejo Cabrera was very active in the media denouncing alleged abuses by landowners and politicians. He was also the lead lawyer for Movimiento Auténtico Reivindicador Campesino del Aguán Region and represented several agrarian cooperatives in the Lower Aguán Region in legal disputes with powerful landowners. Hours before his killing, he had participated in a televised debate in which he accused political leaders of using private city projects to raise campaign funds.

Recalling our previous letter dated 8 February 2012 regarding the mass killings of lawyers in Honduras, the CCBE reiterates its strong criticism of the menacing climate of insecurity and violence and strenuously condemns the continuous killing of lawyers over the past three years. We are now convinced that these deplorable killings are far from isolated cases, but reflect the "chronic insecurity" that lawyers are subject to in your country.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

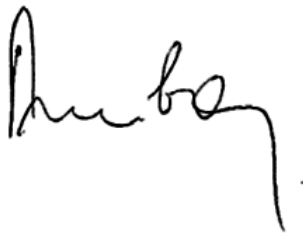
Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or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

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.

In view of the above, the CCBE calls upon the authorities of Honduras to thoroughly, promptly and impartially investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Antonio Trejo Cabrera and to hold all persons responsible to account. We urge you, finally, to take urgent steps to combat impunity for crimes against lawyers and effectively stop all threats and acts of harassment, physical assault and murder against lawyers for the legitimate exercise of their professional duties.

Yours sincerely,



Marcella PRUNBAUER-GLASER

CCBE President