

## More 'legal system' persecution against Miriam Miranda, a Garifuna land defender, linked to Canadian tourism operators & World Bank-funded African palm producers in Honduras

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/more-legal-system-persecution-in-honduras-against-miriam-miranda-garifuna-land-defender>

- Below: "Another Trial against Miriam Miranda: Prosecutors' Endless Persecution of Land Defenders", March 6, 2019, by German Reyes
- Support Miriam Miranda and OFRANEH (go to bottom). Two supporters will match donations to Rights Action made by April 20, 2019



Miriam Miranda, coordinator of OFRANEH, leading land, environmental, human rights defense organization of Garifuna people in Honduras

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## "Another Trial against Miriam Miranda: Prosecutors' Endless Persecution of Land Defenders"

March 6, 2019, by German Reyes, [http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/es/contexto/item/2420-ahora-otro-juicio-contra-miriam-miranda-inesante-la-caceria-del-ministerio-publico-contra-defensores-y-defensoras-de-los-territorios?fbclid=IwAR15zFuVKWekZ-NwNXh8hbrgUE8qtg3uHy85lms7x7ZRKhS\\_RfXAqdOCY](http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/es/contexto/item/2420-ahora-otro-juicio-contra-miriam-miranda-inesante-la-caceria-del-ministerio-publico-contra-defensores-y-defensoras-de-los-territorios?fbclid=IwAR15zFuVKWekZ-NwNXh8hbrgUE8qtg3uHy85lms7x7ZRKhS_RfXAqdOCY)

No respite for human rights defenders in Honduras - before they're done working on one case, Honduran authorities stage another attack. Now the Attorney General (AG) is focusing again on Miriam Miranda, Coordinator of OFRANEH (Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras / Organizacion Fraternal Negra de Honduras) who was summoned to appear at the AG offices in Trujillo, Colon, March 7, 2019.

While leading OFRANEH for many years, Miriam Miranda hasn't just been threatened, harassed and illegally imprisoned; she has been persecuted and criminalized for defending ancestral Garifuna territories on the Honduran Caribbean coast - lands that businesspeople (Honduran, Canadian, and beyond) from the tourism industry and agro-export sector want to control.

As part of this persecution, the AG summoned Miriam to their offices Thursday, March 7, without specifying what the summons was about: "What does the AG's office seek to achieve with this citation whose purpose is not even clear", Miriam wrote on social media. "I am a defender of nature's rights. I defend life. I am not a criminal, I have never plundered public funds, while this same dictatorship that criminalizes us, ransacks our country" Miranda continued on OFRANEH's Facebook page.

In response to the AG's citation, OFRANEH issued a statement expressing concern for the criminalization and persecution against human rights defenders in the country. OFRANEH explained that in February Miriam was warned about a possible attack against her by people tied to organized crime who want to seize lands in Vallecito. Vallecito is a Garifuna community that possesses a community land title. It was established in 1804 with 1,600 Hectares of land in the municipality of Limon, department of Colon. The community has been the object of threats made by businesspeople working in the African Palm sector.

In reiterated occasions, this community has faced difficult situations because of land owners interested in expanding their plantations. This occurred with the Dinant Corporation (with World Bank investments) of Miguel Facussé, which invaded 100 hectares of the land that borders the Finca "Los Farallones". The Garifuna people recovered these lands in 2004 because of community struggles and a Supreme Court ruling.

**Illegal detention and beating:** On March 28, 2011, Miriam was detained and savagely beaten by police officers and members of the military when protesting the 2009 U.S. and Canadian-backed coup. She was taken to a police station in Tela, Atlántida, but was able to gain her freedom due to national and international pressure.

**Kidnapping:** In the early morning hours of July 17, 2014, a group of heavily armed men kidnapped Miranda in Vallecito, Colón, along with several other members of the organization. This happened despite the precautionary measures that the Inter American Commission of Human Rights, CIDH, issued in her favor.

**Legal persecution by Canadian tourism operator:** Due to land defense work, in May 2017 Miriam was sued by Canadian businessman Patrick Daniel Forseth, who accused her and three other defenders of the crime of defamation and slander. Patrick Daniel Forseth is the general manager and legal representative of the CARIVIDA (<http://www.carivida.com/>) tourism complex.

Through OFRANEH's struggles, Miriam Miranda has worked against the plans of the Juan Orlando Hernandez government, to build foreign owned "model cities."

OFRANEH was founded in 1978 to defend the cultural and territorial rights of the Garifuna population that lives in the northern part of Honduras, under the threats, corruption and violence of tourism and agro-export industries that seek to take them away.

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**OFRANEH (Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondureña)**

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## Background

- **“Urgent Action: ‘Canadian tourism mafia’ file trumped up charges against Garifuna leader Miriam Miranda in Honduras’ corrupted legal system”**, Honduras Solidarity Network and Rights Action, November 17, 2017, <http://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/urgent-action-canadian-tourism-mafia-file-trumped-up-charges-against-miriam>
- **“Little Canada” Honduras Neocolonists Denounce Garifuna Defenders”**, WilderUtopia, <https://www.wilderutopia.com/international/humanity/little-canada-honduras-neocolonists-denounce-garifuna-defenders/>
- **“Last Resort: More Than Two Centuries After Settling In Honduras, The Garifuna People Are Still Fighting For A Place To Raise Their Families”**, Photos: Susan Meiselas, by Sarah Kinosian, <http://contestedlands.psmag.com/honduras>
- **“Lands To Die For: The Garifuna Struggle In Honduras”**, December 20, 2016, CCTV Americas, 35 minute film about violent and corrupt challenges facing the Garifuna people, lead by the OFRANEH organization, in the context of the violence and repression, impunity and corruption that characterize the Honduran military, economic and political elites and their international partners. View: <http://www.cctv-america.com/2016/12/20/lands-to-die-for-the-garifuna-struggle-in-honduras>
- **“Canadian Porn King on Trial for Tourism Projects in Honduras”**, 8 minute report by Lazar Konforti (Nov.13, 2015), documents how Randy Jorgensen, the ‘porn king’, appeared in court on charges of illegally appropriating ancestral Garifuna lands. View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWqoB5GTfm8>

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- Honduras Solidarity Network: [www.hondurassolidarity.org](http://www.hondurassolidarity.org)
- Witness for Peace: [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org)
- School of Americas Watch: [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org)
- Common Frontiers Canada: [www.commonfrontiers.ca](http://www.commonfrontiers.ca)
- Breaking the Silence: [www.breakingthesilenceblog.com](http://www.breakingthesilenceblog.com)
- NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with People of Guatemala): [www.nisgua.org](http://www.nisgua.org)
- Mining Watch: [www.miningwatch.ca](http://www.miningwatch.ca)
- CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with People of El Salvador), [www.cispes.org](http://www.cispes.org)

- Alliance for Global Justice: [www.afgj.org](http://www.afgj.org)
- GHRC (Guatemalan Human Rights Commission): [www.ghrc-usa.org](http://www.ghrc-usa.org)

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