



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO HONDURAS

Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., August 3, 2011
LS/arg/2011/D/00394

Dear Sir, Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter of 29 July 2011 in which you draw my attention to the Siria Valley case.

In this context, it does not follow clearly from your letter if the events you describe constitute a violation of human rights. To date, we have not been seized by any local human rights organization on the specific issues of Valle de Siria. I would therefore appreciate receiving any information you might have hinting at the non respect of the legal rights of the persons you mention in your letter. .

You suggest that this Delegation and member States embassies undertake seven actions in relation to this case. I am pleased to inform you that the five European diplomatic missions present in Honduras discussed the case of Valle de Siria at the level of Heads of Mission on Friday 29 July.

Of the seven proposals you mention, actions two to six are covered by our ongoing general political dialogue and cooperation in Honduras in the fields of human rights and the environment:

- The "G16" group of donors holds a permanent dialogue on human rights at the level of Ambassadors and resident representatives. Upcoming meetings include a specific meeting on human rights on 19 September with the UN reporter on human rights and a meeting on justice with the Supreme Court on 17 November.
- As part of its political cooperation agenda, the five EU diplomatic missions represented in Honduras meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues including human rights. Emblematic cases have been identified on which Ambassadors take specific actions. Although the case of Valle de Siria is not one of them, their attention to human rights cases contributes to encouraging competent institutions in Honduras to address human rights properly.
- The EU delegation meets on a regular basis with the Human Rights Platform, a group of six prominent human rights organizations in Honduras. Our dialogue with them includes an update of information on emblematic cases. We will follow with interest anything they might have to say on Valle de Siria.
- The EU supported the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work on human rights violations. Now that the Commission's report has been released, we will help to disseminate and discuss it and will monitor the implementation of recommendations. It is expected that the eighty-eight recommendations of the TRC contribute to strengthening human rights and the rule of law in Honduras.
- The European Commission's bilateral cooperation programme includes a EUR 5-million project to support the ministry of human rights and the special prosecutor for human rights with a view



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to strengthening the ability of State institutions to defend, promote and protect human rights. In addition, Honduras was the first country to implement support measures to human rights defenders under the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Three EUR 10,000 contracts were successfully implemented in 2011 by human right organizations.

- A EUR 42.1 million project is under preparation that will strengthen local authorities in charge of managing water catchment areas throughout the country, thereby contributing to an integrated management of water and other environmental resources. A permanent political dialogue with the government on these issues will be carried out during the implementation of the project.
- Lastly, an ongoing EUR 21 million project supports good governance in the forest sector. In particular, it aims at strengthening the capacities of local governments to manage forest and water resources in their jurisdiction based on empowerment and participation of local communities.

As for actions one (participate as observers in the hearings of 2 and 5 August) and seven (carry out visits to Siria valley), I wish to emphasize that we have indeed, in recent years, observed hearings and carried out field visits in the context of alleged cases of human right violations. However, due to limited resources, we do so for a very limited number of cases, in particular emblematic and well documented cases brought to our attention by both local and international human rights organisations.

I would be grateful if you would keep us informed of developments in the case of Valle de Siria.

Yours sincerely,

Laurent Sillano
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

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