

To the International Community:

**Grave threats against Jesuit Fr. Ismael Moreno Coto (Padre Melo)
and other defenders of democracy in Honduras**

An anonymous flyer, currently circulating on social media, falsely accuses Father Ismael Moreno Coto and eight other regional leaders, calling them the Axis of Evil in La Perla de Ulúa (El Progreso, Honduras). This is reminiscent of the death threats which circulated in El Salvador before the murder of Jesuit Fr. Rutilio Grande. "Be a patriot - kill a priest," said the flyers in that case. And now we have this.

All of the accusations are lies aimed at counteracting the grassroots organizing and the peaceful and democratic resistance which the accused, along with the people of Honduras, are carrying out at a moment when the popular vote has been disrespected by Juan Orlando Hernández and his allies.

This is an attempt to create terror in the people as a strategy to demobilize them, a strategy that will end up backfiring against its authors, de-legitimizing even more their attempts to dominate.

Hiding in anonymity to libel a person is one of the most cowardly and condemnable acts that a human being can commit. Inciting hatred and division in a polarized society like Honduras is a criminal act.

The charges are an attempt to trivialize the struggle of the accused, and to incite and justify attacks against them by accusing them of crimes which, in fact, they had nothing to do with.

We must defend the accused immediately. For this reason, we declare strongly and firmly:

- We are indignant at this attempt to silence the people of Honduras. Neither Father Melo nor the other accused are violent people. They have no ties with narcotics trafficking, nor have they committed any crime for which they should be persecuted.
- We reject the methods of intimidation which the government of Juan Orlando Hernández is using against the people and institutions who oppose him.
- We declare our solidarity and respect for the work being done by Father Melo and the others who have been falsely accused.
- The people of Honduras are not in agreement with the results of the November 26 election. We encourage them to continue their peaceful struggle until they find democratic solutions for their country.

- We reaffirm our willingness to help build mechanisms which could help the people of Honduras to overcome this political crisis.
- We demand that those responsible for these false accusations immediately halt their actions. They are already responsible before God and his people for the blood that has been shed by more than 30 of their compatriots, and they will have to render accounts for every additional drop of blood that is shed.

Before the entire international community, **we hold Juan Orlando Hernández and his allies responsible for the safety and physical and moral well-being of the nine people falsely accused:**

Katrina Suley Florez
Jorge Díaz
Bartolo Antonio Fuentes
Néstor Alemán Cáceres
Ángel Roberto Rivera

Reinieri Godoy Cáceres
Arminta Pereira Ortega
Reinaldo Arturo Castro
Ismael Moreno Coto (Father Melo)

We hold Jorge Orlando Hernández and his allies entirely responsible for the political and social chaos that the Honduran people are currently immersed in.

Those working for truth, transparency, democracy, participation, and justice are not the ones who are damaging businesses and the country's development.

*"Will these evildoers never learn?
They devour my people like they devour bread"
(Psalm 14.4).*



ROBERTO JARAMILLO B., S.J.
President of CPAL