

Via email: cedij@poderjudicial.gob.hn Jorge Alberto Rivera Avilés President of Supreme Court of Honduras	Via fax: 011. 504.221.5667 Sr. Luis Alberto Rubí Attorney General of Honduras
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July 11, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of **Edwin Róbelo Espinal** following his illegal detention and torture by agents of the Preventive National Police on June 30. He was in his neighborhood, *La Flor del Campo*, Tegucigalpa, when policemen stopped him and asked to see his driver's license. He showed his National Identity Card (since he was not driving at the time); the policemen began to beat him, spray him with pepper spray, and apply an electric baton to different parts of his body. He was then forced into the patrol vehicle and driven around the city, during which time the officers threatened him, called him a communist, told him to abandon the *Resistencia* (people's resistance movement) and took him to the Cuarta Police Station. At the station, he was pushed down, again beaten, sprayed with pepper spray, and put in a cell. Using pepper spray on him is particularly cruel since his wife, Wendy Elizabeth Avila, died last September from pulmonary congestion caused by pepper spray used by authorities. Although he does not drink alcohol, he was informed that he was detained for being drunk and disorderly. He was released at 10:30 a.m. on July 1 through the intervention of the Coordinating Body of the Committee of Relatives of Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH).

Edwin Róbelo Espinal has been the subject of multiple captures since the military coup in June 2009, all following the same pattern of abuse. On October 7 he was attacked with rubber bullets while participating in a demonstration outside the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa. On November 14 he was arrested by police during the vehicle convoy of the *Resistencia de Colonia San Miguel de Tegucigalpa*. On this occasion, the police, without reason, began beating and arresting demonstrators who had remained at the end of the convoy. When Edwin Róbelo asked why they were being abused, eight officers took him by the shirt, handcuffed him and put him in the patrol vehicle.

He has also received several threatening calls on his cell phone, usually at night. On February 25 police took photographs of the license plates of his car while he attended a demonstration of the *Resistencia*. In the first week of April, the police threatened motorcyclists of the *Resistencia-Los Patriotas*, of which he is a part.

Clearly this man has suffered unjustly and his human rights are not respected. Therefore **we strongly urge you to:**

- demand that the Honduran authorities guarantee the safety of Edwin Róbelo Espinal;
- carry out a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the acts of intimidation, illegal arrests and torture that violate his fundamental human rights, make public the results of this investigation and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure the safety of all people exercising their right to association and free expression.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: COFADEH ~ via fax: 011 504 220 5280
 Eduardo Enrique Reina, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: (202) 966-9751
 Hugo Llorens, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037
 Rebecca Valerin, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: (202) 647-2597
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email
 COFADEH_7/3/10_Honduras

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: