

<p>via fax: 011 504 2290 5088  <b>Excmo. Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa</b>          President of Honduras</p>	<p>via fax 011 504 2221 5667  <b>Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas</b>          Attorney General of Honduras</p>
<p>via fax: 011+504 2235 8379  <b>Sra. Ana Alejandra Pineda Hernández</b>          Minister for Justice and Human Rights of Honduras</p>	<p>via fax: 011 504 2220 1756 or 011 504 2232-0226  <b>Sr. Arturo Corrales</b>          Minister of Security of Honduras</p>

November 25, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our outrage at the murder of photojournalist **Manuel de Jesús Murillo Varela**, age 32, in Tegucigalpa. On October 24 the father of two children, ages 7 and 9, was found dead, shot in the head.

Manuel Murillo was a cameraman, well known for filming the militarized scene immediately following the 2009 coup d'état. Before he was killed, Manuel was working for one of the Congressional candidates for LIBRE, the political party formed out of the Honduran resistance movement to the coup.

In 2010 Manuel Murillo and a fellow cameraman were abducted by masked gunmen who placed a sharp machete down Manuel Murillo's throat and later put him in a plastic body bag, in which they threatened to bury him alive. Throughout the ordeal they continuously threatened his family's safety. As a result, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights urged "precautionary measures" to protect his life.

The murder of Manuel Murillo is one of many incidents of violence preceding the presidential elections. On October 10 the newly created Military Police raided the house of union leader and LIBRE member Marco Antonio Rodríguez, pointed guns at his head and that of his young son, forcibly removed them from the house, forced them to lay face down in the street, and handcuffed them. When asked for a search warrant, the Military Police responded, "what search warrant? here we can do whatever we want."

On October 23, the Military Police invaded the house of long-time resistance activist Edwin Espinal, broke down over 15 doors and blocked off the entrance, with the intent of searching for "weapons and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher."

On the days immediately preceding the elections on November 24, more than 30 Military Police wearing ski masks attempted to forcibly enter a LIBRE party office in Tegucigalpa. On multiple occasions, agents identifying themselves as workers of the Honduran Immigration Service harassed international election observers.

In the light of the events described above, **we strongly urge you to:**

- investigate the murder of Manuel Murillo and bring the perpetrators of that crime to justice;
- fully investigate reports of intimidation, irregularities and threats by authorities related to the elections.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Amabassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751  
 Lisa Kubiske, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via email [RanzinoGf@state.gov](mailto:RanzinoGf@state.gov)  
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 Kelsey Cambronne, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax 202.647.2597  
 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

SOAW\_Honduras

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