

via email: oaseguridad@hotmail.com, sedsdespachohn@gmail.com
Sr. Julián Pacheco Tinoco
 Minister of Security of Honduras

via email: mprelacionespublicas@gmail.com
Sr. Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas
 Attorney General of Honduras

January 25, 2018

Dear Minister Pacheco and Attorney General Chinchilla:

We are outraged that journalists continue being attacked and killed. On January 17, Honduran television reporter **Igor Abisaí Padilla Chávez** was shot and killed by four unidentified assailants in the Suyapa neighborhood of San Pedro Sula, Cortés Department. Only a few days ago we wrote of the recent violent crackdown by the Honduran military against journalists who were covering a demonstration by members of the Opposition Alliance in Tegucigalpa on January 12 (cf our letter of Jan 22).

Honduran news reports said that Padilla received a call from a woman who asked him to step outside while he was filming a commercial at a local store. When Padilla went outside, four armed assailants shot him repeatedly. He was rushed to a local private clinic, where doctors pronounced him dead.

Padilla, 38, covered general news and crime for the television station HCH (*Hable como Habla*, or "Speak as You Speak"). The daily newspaper *La Tribuna* characterized Padilla as being highly critical of the government and of local authorities. Ricardo Castro, the director of the Technical Agency for Criminal Investigation called the assassination "very planned." The newspaper *La Prensa* cited friends of the slain journalist as saying that the reporter had received a written death threat before the attack.

It is reported that police have arrested 18 suspects they alleged were part of the criminal gang Barrio 18 on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Igor Abisaí Padilla Chávez, but offered no possible motive.

The assassination of **Igor Abisaí Padilla Chávez**, and the attacks on journalists on January 12, are violations of the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and also of the American Convention on Human Rights, which states that "...the murder, kidnapping, intimidation, threats to social communicators...restricts the freedom of expression. It is the duty of the [member] States to prevent and investigate these facts, to punish their perpetrators and to assure the victims an adequate reparation."

Please work to end impunity for crimes targeting journalists. **We strongly urge you to:**

- credibly investigate the assassination of Igor Abisaí Padilla Chávez, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- protect the safety and journalistic freedom of members of the press covering the political situation in Honduras

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Marlon R. Tábor Muñoz, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via website or fax and US mail
 Heide B. Fulton, Chargé d'Affaires, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email
 Jason Smith, Human Rights and Labor Representative, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email
 Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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