

<p>via email: diseloalpresidente@presidencia.gob.hn, info@presidencia.gob.hn Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández President of Honduras</p>	<p>via email: mprelacionespublicas@gmail.com oscarfernando@protonmail.ch Sr. Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras</p>
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March 21, 2018

Dear President Hernández and Attorney General Chinchilla:

We are writing to express our outrage over the continued detention of human rights defender **Edwin Robelo Espinal** in La Tolva prison, located in Morocelí, El Paraíso Department, and the horrific conditions that exist in this military-run maximum security prison. Arrested January 19, he is one of more than 20 political prisoners being detained in prisons throughout Honduras (cf our letter of February 11).


Since February 28, Edwin Espinal and other prisoners, including **Raúl Eduardo Álvarez**, have been refused medical attention for a flu-like virus circulating in the prison. Prisoners are forced to limit bathroom use because toilets are located inside the shared, enclosed cells. Moreover, there is an extreme water shortage inside the prison. Prisoners cannot adequately save drinking water for daily consumption because plastic bottles are not permitted. On March 4, all 1000 prisoners had access to water for just five minutes; they had to use the toilets, obtain drinking water, and shower—all in the mere five minutes that water was available. When the water was turned off, inmates throughout the prison began to bang on the walls and make noise in any way possible. Prison guards retaliated by shooting tear gas canisters into common areas that are shared by approximately 200 people.

For five days early this month, Edwin Espinal went on a hunger strike to demand that he and other prisoners be taken to see a physician. We are concerned that Edwin Espinal may suffer further persecution and repression by prison authorities for taking this dignified stance on the conditions inside the prison, which are of no secret to the Honduran and foreign governments. It is imperative that national and international human rights organizations be allowed to enter and inspect the prison.

On March 19, the National Committee for the Freedom of Political Prisoners held a demonstration outside the Public Prosecutor's Office in Tegucigalpa. We join with them in demanding that you:

- ensure humane treatment for prisoners, especially concerning their right to adequate access to water, adequate food, and medical treatment;
- allow members of the International Red Cross immediate access to La Tolva prison to get first-hand information about the health and living conditions of the prisoners.
- transfer Edwin Espinal to a detention center as determined by COFADEH (the Committee of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras), which has provided long-term legal and human rights support for him since 2009.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Honduras Solidarity Network ~via email
COFADEH ~via email
Marlon R. Tábora 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
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: