

via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 <b>Oscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas</b> Attorney General of Honduras	via email: karlacueva144@gmail.com <b>Lica. Karla Cueva</b> Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs
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July 14, 2019

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are outraged at the death threats directed at **Edwin Espinal, Raul Alvarez, and Romel Portillo**, human rights defenders imprisoned in the maximum security, military run “La Tolva” military prison, where they and other political prisoners have been detained since 2018 (cf our letters of February 11 and March 21, 2018).

Since July 6 Edwin, Raúl, and Rommel have been denouncing the death threats they have been receiving from other prisoners, but prison authorities have done nothing to implement security measures to protect them. On July 7 the three political prisoners refused to return to their cellblock and told prison authorities that they were willing to withstand being beaten or punished for not obeying. They were removed from the general prison population and are being held together in a small cell which has no windows, air circulation or running water. As of July 11 they had not been given any drinking water. They are forced to urinate in plastic bottles and bang on the door for at least an hour when they need to use the bathroom. All three report being sick. Rommel and Raúl have a harsh cough and Edwin complains about constant ringing in his ear as a result of an ear infection that has never been adequately treated since December 2018.

Since the threats began, international human rights organizations, the men’s families and lawyers have demanded protective measures inside the prison. Written requests to the courts and to the National Penitentiary Institute have brought no results.

In addition to the death threats to Edwin, Raúl, and Rommel, they and many prisoners are also facing: awaiting trial for false criminal charges, arbitrary transfers to other detention locations without notification to their families, and severe conditions regarding food, water, heat, lack of fresh air and very restricted sunlight. Conditions are so volatile that violence can erupt at any moment. We believe these conditions, added to the death threats against Edwin, Raul and Romel, place them at great risk.

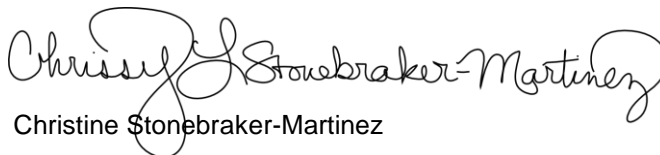
We **strongly urge** that you

- for their own safety, transfer Edwin, Raúl and Romel to the “Second Battalion” detention center near Tegucigalpa
- expedite the process to drop the false charges against them and release them immediately
- guarantee that they and all prisoners receive adequate medical attention and safe drinking water

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai and



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: International Red Cross in Washington, DC ~ 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  
 David Tagle, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
 Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras and on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
 Rights Action ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman  
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

07/13/19\_RightsAction\_Honduras

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