

via email: mprelacionespublicas@gmail.com ngosorto@gmail.com
Oscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas
Attorney General of Honduras

via email: karlacueva144@gmail.com
Lica. Karla Cueva
Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs

September 22, 2019

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are outraged at the murder of journalist **Edgar Joel Aguilar**, age 39, in the town of La Entrada in Copán Department. He covered general news, including local crime and violence, for *Cablemar TV* and worked as a regional correspondent for *Channel 6*, a national news channel.

On August 31 two unidentified men shot Aguilar in a barbershop he visited every Saturday. He had requested protection the day before because he feared for his life due to threats in response to the way in which he covered crime and for his confrontational reporting style. This assassination was preceded by threats, attack, and intimidation. In 2017 he had received death threats through the WhatsApp messaging network. In 2012 unidentified persons shot at a vehicle in which he was traveling.

Aguilar is the third journalist murdered this year in Honduras.

On March 17, journalist **Leonardo Gabriel** was shot six times and killed while walking home from the university. On his TV program *El Pueblo Habla (The People Speak)*, he discussed social issues and local politics and was known to speak out critically against the municipal government in Nacaome, Valle Department (cf our letter of March 24).

On July 5, **Santiago "Santi" Carbajal**, a transgender television host and producer, was shot by unknown persons in Puerto Cortes and later died at Mario Catarino Rivas Hospital in San Pedro Sula. Carbajal produced and hosted the television show *La Galaxia de Santi*, where he shared stories of life in the Honduran LGBTQ community. The show also openly criticized local authorities.

We **strongly urge** that you:

- take swift action to investigate the killing of **Edgar Joel Aguilar**, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- make increased efforts to guarantee the safety of all journalists.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai and



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Marlon Ramsses Tábora Muñoz, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via website or fax, and US mail
Lawrence J. Gumbiner, Chargé d'Affaires, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email
David Tagle, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
Edison Lanza, Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
Flávia Piovesan Rapporteur on the Rights of LGBTI Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
Committee to Protect Journalist ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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