

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 26, 2019

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are deeply concerned about police attacks on human rights observers **Elizabeth Medina**, Human Rights Coordinator for Without Borders, and **Katherin Cruz Cerrato**, a member of the National Network of Human Rights Defenders in Honduras.

On September 17, Elizabeth Medina and Katherin Cruz Cerrato were documenting repression against peaceful protests organized in various parts of Tegucigalpa by village communities that oppose the Santa María housing project, which threatens the water resources of La Tigra National Park. The police used firearms and tear gas indiscriminately and excessively; consequently, at least two people were injured by gunshot and dozens affected by the tear gas.

A tear gas canister was intentionally thrown at the feet of Elizabeth Medina. She heard shouts calling her "false defender of bums and gang members." Another colleague from the same organization was threatened with a firearm by a police officer.

Katherin Cruz was temporarily detained in an arbitrary manner by the police along with Ever Trinidad, the driver of the vehicle in which she was traveling; police confiscated her personal documents and vehicle registration documents. Police forced them out of the vehicle and threatened to confiscate it; they lied, claiming that they had seen the car blocking the road. Police also made derogatory comments about their work.

It appears that these acts of intimidation were intended to obstruct the documentation work of serious human rights violations committed by state security forces. We therefore **strongly urge** that you:

- take swift action to investigate the attack on Elizabeth Medina and arbitrary detention of Katherin Cruz and her driver Ever Trinidad, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- make increased efforts that human rights defenders and observers are able to carry out their legitimate work in defense of human rights without fear of reprisal or obstruction by state actors

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

and



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: María Dolores Agüero, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via website or fax, and US mail  
Colleen Hoey, Chargé d'Affaires, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via email  
Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer at the 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  
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

09/18/19\_Im-Defensoras\_Honduras

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