

via email: karlacueva144@gmail.com
Lica. Karla Eugenia Cueva Aguilar
Secretary for Human Rights in Honduras

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

November 12, 2019

Dear Secretary Cueva and Attorney General Chinchilla:

We are horrified at the kidnapping and torture in Tegucigalpa of professor and union leader **Jaime Atilio Rodríguez**.

On October 28 Mr. Rodríguez was on his way to the bus in Tegucigalpa when he was taken in a vehicle, blindfolded, tortured, stabbed in the throat and left for dead after being dumped near the Choluteca River. Fortunately, on October 29, he was able to make a phone call which resulted in his rescue and hospital treatment. His vocal cords may be permanently damaged.


Jaime Atilio Rodríguez is a former president of the College of Teachers of Middle Education of Honduras (COPEMH). He has also been active in the Platform for the Defense of Health and Public Education, of which COPEMH is a member. The Network Against Anti-Union Violence in Honduras, which tracks attacks on worker rights defenders, believes Rodríguez could have been targeted because of his activism as a land rights defender, his stance against electoral fraud, and his recent opposition to proposed government privatization of essential public services. The assault on Rodríguez was meant to send a signal to others engaged in social protests.

Labor rights are routinely abused in Honduras. In 2012, the AFL-CIO and 26 Honduran unions and civil society organizations filed a complaint under the labor chapter of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) alleging that the Honduran government failed to enforce worker rights under its own labor laws. In an October 2018 report, the U.S. Trade and Labor Affairs office said Honduras had made no progress on any of the cases since 2012. In July 2019, 55 members of the US House of Representatives sent a letter to the US Trade Representative and to the US Department of Labor, urging that they send a strong message to the Government of Honduras to enforce its own labor laws, as spelled out in the CAFTA labor provisions. In their letter*, the US congresspersons cited two emblematic cases in the agricultural sector (melons and palm oil), where the Honduran Labor Ministry has aligned itself with the employers in their efforts to bust the union.

In light of this horrific crime against Jaime Atilio Rodríguez, **we strongly urge you** that you

- impartially and thoroughly investigate the kidnapping and torture of Jaime Rodríguez, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take immediate steps to enforce workers' rights under the labor laws of Honduras

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

*Included among the 55 signatories to the letter are US Representatives Kaptur (OH-09) and Ryan (OH-13).

copies: Héctor Leonel Ayala Alvarenga, Minister of Human Rights, Justice, Interior and Decentralization ~ via email
María Dolores Agüero, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via website contact form 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 and on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
Honduras Solidarity Network ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

10/31/19_SolidarityCenter_Honduras

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