

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

April 1, 2020

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are writing to express our concern over the continued escalation of human rights abuses committed under the pretext of emergency measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Evelyn Johana Castillo**, Assistant Coordinator of the Ojojona Women's Network in Ojojona municipality in Francisco Morazán Department, was unjustly arrested and held in detention by two police officers on March 24.

In the mid-afternoon of March 24, Evelyn Castillo and her husband and adult daughter were out buying food when an officer named Ramírez approached them, began to revise her daughter's purse, then told Castillo to "shut up because you are disrespecting me." Ramírez then ordered another officer to take her into custody. Officer Andino (the second police officer) began to aggressively detain Evelyn Castillo by pushing, pulling and shoving her. Upon realizing that the defender's daughter was recording the attack on her cell phone, the two police officers took it away from her. When she refused to give them the password, they formatted the phone to erase the information.


The incident report filed by the police claims that Evelyn Castillo was in violation of the curfew order put in place by President Hernández. That doesn't make sense because the curfew is effective 7:00pm to 6:00am. Evelyn Castillo says that this attack was actually a reprisal against her by Officer Ramírez. She explains that two days beforehand, a conflict arose when she came to the aid of a vendor in the park, defending her against Officer Ramírez who was trying to evict the vendor, even though her sales had been authorized by the municipal police. As Officer Ramírez placed Evelyn Castillo in the jail cell on March 24, she said: "You remember what happened the other day? You don't think that I have forgotten."

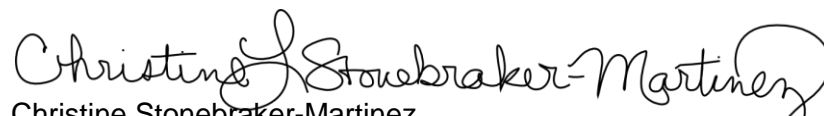
Although Evelyn Castillo was released from detention 14 hours later (at 6:00am the following morning), she fears more harassing reprisals from Officer Ramírez, who is in charge of the police station in the neighborhood where Evelyn Castillo resides with her family. Nubia Casco, Coordinator of the Ojojona Women's Network, reported that they have previously had problems with these particular police officers. "For many days they have been trampling on women's rights without any consequence," she denounced.

### We strongly urge you to:

- investigate the treatment of Evelyn Castillo during her arrest and detention, publish the results, and punish any wrongdoing committed by the police officers
- issue clear guidelines and training on how to enforce the executive decree and local curfews
- stop unnecessary and arbitrary detention of Honduran citizens

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
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  
Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
PasosDeAnimalGrande ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

03/28/20\_PasosDeAnimalGrande\_Honduras

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