

via email: mpelacionespublicas@gmail.com, ngosorto@gmail.com Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras	via email: karlacueva144@gmail.com, karen.lagos@sedh.gob.hn Lica. Karla Eugenia Cueva Aguilar Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs
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July 22, 2020

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are writing to you today demanding justice in the wake of two more murders of journalists in Honduras: **German Gerardo Vallecillo** and **Jorge Posas**.

In the morning hours of July 1, in the city of La Ceiba, Atlántida Department, two employees of TV 45 were shot dead: journalist German Gerardo Vallecillo, age 41, and cameraman/editor Jorge Posas, age 27. According to media reports, they were driving through the residential neighborhood El Naranjal when at least two armed men riddled their automobile with bullets. Their bodies were later discovered inside the automobile.


In addition to his journalism work at TV 45, German Gerardo Vallecillo also did reporting on his Facebook account about topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as information on murders committed in La Ceiba. It is unclear whether he was being threatened. German Gerardo's father, also a journalist, told Honduran National Radio (HRN) that his son had no problems with anyone; he also highlighted the altruistic role that his son played in managing material aid for people in need. Tragically, German Gerardo Vallecillo was killed on his 41st birthday.

The journalist association C-Libre has recorded 82 media workers killed in the last 19 years; more than 92 percent of these crimes remain unpunished. The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression establishes that: "The murder, kidnapping, intimidation of and/or threats to social communicators, as well as the material destruction of communications media, violate the fundamental rights of individuals and strongly restrict freedom of expression. It is the duty of the state to prevent and investigate such occurrences, to punish their perpetrators and to ensure that victims receive due compensation." (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, October 2000)

We therefore strongly urge that you:

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the murders of German Gerardo Vallecillo and Jorge Posas, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators (including the intellectual authors of the crime) to justice
- work with C-Libre and other associations of media workers to prevent future attacks against them
- provide compensation to the families of media workers who are killed while carrying out their legitimate journalistic activities

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: María Dolores Agüero, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail
 Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
 Edison Lanza, Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression ~ via email 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
 CPJ: Committee to Protect Journalists ~ via email
 C-Libre: Comité por la Libre Expresión ~ via email
 Emmanuel Colombié, Reporters San Frontières-Américas Bureau ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, González, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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