

via email: mprelacionespublicas@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
--	---

August 16, 2020

Dear Attorney General Chinchilla and Secretary Cueva:

We are deeply alarmed at the disappearance of **José Miguel Hernández Tejada**, age 16, of the El Carreto community in Santa Bárbara Department. At 9:00am on August 3 he left his home on his black and orange Yamaha motorcycle with bread in his backpack to deliver to his uncle's house in Las Vegas municipality. He was last seen by a neighbor in Las Vegas at 9:30am, but he never made it to his destination.

When he had not returned home by evening, his mother Lizeth Tejada sent him a text but received no reply. Worried, she sent texts to her nephew and his girlfriend; neither had heard from José Miguel all day. By 11:00 pm, Lizeth Tejada contacted the police to see if he had been detained for some reason. The police told her that no one by his name or description had been arrested, and they did not know what to advise her to do next.

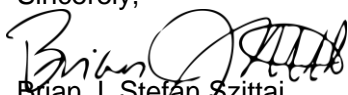
At 9:00am the following morning, after José Miguel had been missing a full 24 hours, Lizeth Tejada filed a missing persons report with the Las Vegas police department. On August 7, she filed another complaint with the Santa Bárbara Police Investigations Directorate (DPI) and one with the Children's Prosecutor's Office. She was dismayed to discover that the original missing persons report had never been entered into the computer system.

On August 12, Lizeth Tejada, went to the regional office of the Public Ministry to present a formal complaint about her son's disappearance. Prosecutor Héctor Gómez told her that he could not receive the complaint because forced disappearance was not a crime. Taken aback by this unexpected statement, Lizeth Tejada, accompanied by a representative of COFADEH (Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras) went to the regional office of CONADEH (National Commissioner for Human Rights) and filed a complaint against Prosecutor Héctor Gómez.

We strongly urge you to:

- heed the petition sent to your government on August 7 by the Office of the United Nations Committee Against Enforced Disappearance calling on you to adopt all necessary measures to search for José Miguel Hernández Tejada, in accordance with Article 30 of the U.N. Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- identify the perpetrators of the presumed forced disappearance of José Miguel Hernández Tejada and look for any political motivation behind the crime, since Lizeth Tejada comes from a well-known political opposition family in Las Vegas
- investigate and punish any activity or intervention by any authorities that have the objective of hindering the effectiveness of the investigation and search processes

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators


 Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Dr. Roberto Herrera Cáceres, National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH) ~ via email
 María Dolores Agüero, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail
 Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, Representante de País a la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Honduras ~ via email
 Joel Hernández, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
 COFADEH: Committee of the Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras ~ via email
 HSN: Honduras Solidarity Network ~ via email
 US Embassy in Honduras: Colleen Hoey, Chargé d'Affaires; Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer ~ via email
 David Tagle, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and 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: