

Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras	Lica. Karla Eugenia Cueva Aguilar Secretary for Human Rights of Honduras
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August 3, 2021

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre and Secretary Cueva:

We are disturbed to learn that five police officers attacked journalist **Henry Fiallos** in Intibucá on August 1. While he was carrying out news reporting for the TVC Corporation (*Corporación Televicentro*), the officers (one is understood to be named Vásquez) shoved him to the ground and broke his mobile phone. He also lost money while he was in police custody.


Henry Fiallos had been receiving death threats (threatening to kill his children) because of his reporting on the case of Keyla Martínez (cf our letter February 15, 2021), who was killed in police custody in February. Keyla Martínez, a 26-year-old nursing student, was on a weekend visit to her hometown of La Esperanza in Intibucá Department when police arrested her for an alleged violation of a curfew imposed because of COVID-19. It appears she suffered torture, strangulation, and possible sexual abuse at the hands of police in jail. An autopsy found that she had died from “mechanical asphyxiation.” In April, the Public Ministry ordered the arrest of police officer Jarol Rolando Perdomo Sarmiento, of the Police Departmental Unit Number 10 of the National Police of La Esperanza. We are not aware of any other progress in the case.


This is not the first time that police attacked the journalist. It happened in July 2020, while Henry Fiallos was covering an attempted escape of inmates from La Esperanza prison in western Intibucá Department. A news video shows a police officer approaching Henry Fiallos and his cameraman and hitting the cameraman on his right arm to prevent him from recording the unfolding news events.

We urge that you:

- conduct an immediate, thorough and transparent investigation into the attack on Henry Fiallos, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice with immediate disciplinary action
- respond to the demands outlined in the communiqué (press release) from the CPTRT (Center for Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Their Families)
- guarantee that all human rights defenders in Honduras, and in particular journalists who defend freedom of expression, can carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisal and free from all restrictions.

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Oscar Chinchilla Banegas, Attorney General ~ via email
 Luis Fernando Suazo Barahona, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail
 Joel Hernández García, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail
 Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression ~ via email & US mail
 Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, Representative to Honduras of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH) ~ via email
 CPTRT: Centro de Prevención, Tratamiento, y Rehabilitación de las Víctimas de la Tortura y sus Familiares ~ via email
 US Embassy in Honduras: Colleen Hoey, Chargé d’Affaires; Nate Rettenmayer, Political Officer ~ via email
 US State Dept: Honduras Desk ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, 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: