

Blanca Saraí Izaguirre Lozano  
National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH)  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

May 22, 2026

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We are writing to express our profound concern and condemnation regarding the **excessive use of force by Honduran National Police against students** from the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) who were participating in a peaceful demonstration outside the National Congress in Tegucigalpa on April 21, 2026.

According to reports from human rights organizations and news sources, approximately 300 students gathered to protest proposed reductions to the university budget and to demand compliance with the constitutional mandate guaranteeing funding for public higher education. During the protest, police forces deployed tear gas, armored vehicles, and rubber bullets against demonstrators. At least one student suffered severe injuries, including the loss of an eye.


The actions of the National Police represent a deeply troubling violation of the rights to peaceful assembly, free expression, and access to education. Particularly alarming is the subsequent statement issued by the Ministry of Security, which appeared to justify the repression while threatening possible legal action against demonstrators rather than ensuring accountability for abuses committed by security forces. Human rights defenders have also raised concerns regarding media narratives that sought to delegitimize the students' actions and stigmatize those participating in the protest.

This incident cannot be viewed in isolation. Honduras has a long and painful history of repression by state security forces against social movements, students, journalists, and human rights defenders, characterized by excessive force, impunity, and criminalization of protest.

The right to education and the right to peaceful protest are fundamental pillars of any democratic society. Any attempts to silence students through force undermine both democratic participation and public trust in state institutions. We therefore strongly urge Honduran authorities to:

- (1) conduct an impartial and transparent investigation into the actions of the National Police during the April 21 demonstration, including the use of tear gas, rubber bullets, and other forms of force against protesters.
- (2) ensure accountability for all officials responsible for authorizing or carrying out acts of excessive violence.
- (3) guarantee medical attention, protection, and justice for injured students and affected demonstrators.
- (4) respect and protect the constitutional rights to peaceful assembly, free expression, and public education by refraining from further repression against students and by safeguarding legally mandated funding for UNAH.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinator

copies: Roberto Flores Bermúdez, Embassy of Honduras in Washington, DC ~ via email and US mail  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR): Andrea Pochak (Rapporteur for Honduras) ~ via email  
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH): Juan Carlos Monge (Representative to Honduras)  
UN Team in Honduras: Alejandro Alvarez (Resident Coordinator) ~ via email  
US State Department: Honduras Desk Officer (Washington, DC) ~ via email  
US Embassy in Tegucigalpa: Colleen Hoey (Chargé d'Affaires) and Human Rights Officer ~ via email  
US Senators from Ohio (Husted and Moreno) and US Representatives from Ohio (Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes) ~ via email

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