

Update by Karen Spring

Edwin Espinal, political prisoner in Honduras for six months

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/edwin-espinal-political-prisoner-in-honduras-for-six-months>

Edwin Espinal, political prisoner in Honduras for six months and counting ...

Update #10, July 19, 2018, <http://freedwinespinallibertad.blogspot.com/>

http://freedwinespinallibertad.blogspot.com/2018/07/edwin-espinal-has-been-political_19.html

Today marks six months since longtime social movement activist and human rights defender Edwin Espinal was arrested on January 19 by the U.S. and Canadian backed regime in Honduras. He and four other political prisoners arrested during the post-election crisis remain incarcerated in jails around the country: Edwin Espinal and Raúl Álvarez in the La Tolva maximum security prison in the El Paraíso department; Edy Gonzalo in the El Pozo maximum security prison in the Santa Bárbara department; and Gustavo Cáceres and José Godínez in El Progreso, Yoro.



In Honduras and around the world, people continue to take action to demand the freedom of Honduran political prisoners. Since our last campaign update, there have

been public statements for political prisoner freedom, a rally in the Honduran capital, a new report and urgent action from Amnesty International, a solidarity delegation and prison visits, and messages, images and videos of support from around Honduras and beyond.

Please take a couple minutes to keep adding your voice to the clamour for the freedom of Honduran political prisoners! Please pass this update to your elected Senators and Congressmembers; your Parliamentarians; your own media. Please post your support on social media; sign on to Amnesty International Canada's e-action for freedom and justice [here](#).

Hondurans take action in the capital and beyond

Relatives of political prisoners, recently released political prisoners, human rights organizations and supporters once again gathered outside the main Public Prosecutor's Office building in Tegucigalpa. On June 21, they brought their placards, banners, chants, and demands to the prosecutors' front steps. Check out some of the [photo](#), [video](#), and [written](#) coverage.

Family members of political prisoners and the recently released prisoners who still face charges also gathered last month to share their experiences, support each other, and continue their involvement in the movement to free all political prisoners and drop all charges. Organizing continues nonstop in Tegucigalpa, El Progreso, Pimienta and beyond.

Grassroots indigenous organizations and nationwide social movement alliances are also involved in the movement to free political prisoners. This past week, members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) expressed their ongoing support and demanded freedom for Honduran political prisoners. Check out their [video](#)!

The much-criticized process to advance a so-called national dialogue continues in response to the ongoing political crisis sparked by the election fraud last November and the repression that followed. Social movements, international solidarity campaigns, and politicians both inside and outside the process have all spoken out to demand that the freedom of the five remaining political prisoners be a prerequisite condition that must be met before any kind of formal dialogue takes place.

Prison visits and solidarity actions from around the world

At the end of May, a US-Canadian delegation came to Honduras to investigate the situation of the Honduran political prisoners, visit with Edwin Espinal, accompany his partner back into the country, and meet with Honduran officials and North American diplomats in the country. Upon the arrival at the airport of the majority of the delegation's members, they were held for questioning by immigration officials for more than three hours. They were eventually allowed in and even managed to pressure authorities enough to enter La Tolva and visit with Edwin. You can read more about the delegation's activities [here](#) and [here](#).

June 28 marked nine years since the 2009 coup d'état in Honduras. Freedom for political prisoners was highlighted in many of the actions and statements around the world to remember the coup and demand justice. Check out photos from an action in New York [here](#), the Honduras Solidarity Network statement [here](#), and a public statement by European organizations in solidarity with Honduras [here](#).

Children and activists in Spain marked the anniversary of the 2009 coup with artwork and a video about the coup, repression, and current political prisoners. They highlighted Edwin's involvement in neighbourhood movements to keep recreational spaces public for local children and youth. Check out their amazing video [here](#).

Activists and supporters elsewhere in Europe and North America also continued to post selfies and group photos holding signs expressing support for Honduran political prisoners and demanding their freedom. Keep them coming!

Amnesty International highlights due process issues

In June, Amnesty International released a report specifically focused on the political prisoners of the post-electoral period, [Protest Prohibited: Use of force and arbitrary detentions to suppress dissent in Honduras](#). Edwin's case was one of three that were particularly highlighted by Amnesty, whose representatives visited him in jail. Honduran authorities continue to violate the human rights of Edwin and others by denying their right to due process and holding them in inhumane conditions, according to the organization.

“Not only did Honduran security forces use excessive force to repress peaceful protesters in the immediate aftermath of last year's contested election; the state then held detainees in deplorable conditions for months on end while denying their rights to due process and an adequate defence,” said Erika Guevara-Rosas, Amnesty International's Americas Director.

On July 11, representatives from the Canadian Embassy and CONAPREV, a Honduran state institution that monitors prison conditions, entered the La Tolva maximum security prison and met with Edwin Espinal and Raúl Álvarez. It was the Embassy's second time there for that purpose. “Honduras must ensure that human rights and due process are guaranteed,” the Embassy wrote in a [tweet](#) about the visit.

Take action now!

Spread the word! Pass along this update, talk to your political representatives, take to social media to call for the freedom of political prisoners in Honduras, keep sending us your photos with solidarity messages, or get creative!

It is not enough for representatives of the Canadian or US governments to visit Edwin Espinal in jail; they must pressure their colleagues and partners in the Honduran regime to release all political prisoners and to have all charges dropped.

Also, if you haven't already, please sign on to Amnesty International Canada's online urgent action. It only takes a minute or two! [Click here](#) to add your name.

Thanks to everyone for all the support! Please stay tuned for upcoming actions and updates.

Keep on writing

United States

Contact directly your elected Senators (<https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>) and Congress members (<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>) and make your demands known to them.

Canada

Directly contact your Member of Parliament and make your demands known to them (<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>) and ask them to write directly to:

- Ambassador James Hill, Embassy of Canada in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua, James.Hill@international.gc.ca, tgipa@international.gc.ca
- Minister Chrystia Freeland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca, chrystia.freeland.c1d@parl.gc.ca, chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca

Honduran Ambassador to Canada

Sofia Cerrato Rodriguez: ambassador@embassyhonduras.hn, 1-613-233-8900

Demands - short term

The U.S. and Canadian governments must:

- Do an about face and rescind their "legitimization" of the Nov. 26, 2017 elections
- Condemn the multiple acts of electoral fraud carried out by government of Juan Orlando Hernandez
- Condemn the repression including the killing of over 40 pro-democracy protesters, and the illegal detentions of dozens of political prisoners, including Edwin Espinal
- Suspend all economic, military and political relations with the government of Honduras, until the political / electoral crisis has been resolved and impartial justice processes are proceeded against the intellectual and material authors of the electoral fraud and stolen elections, and the endemic repression

Demands - medium term

There must be legislative inquiries in the U.S. and Canada into the causes of Honduras' now endemic repression and exploitation, corruption and impunity, with specific focus on the role played by the U.S. and Canadian governments:

- In support of the 2009 military coup

- In support and legitimization of fraudulent and violent elections in 2009, 2013 and 2017
- In support (in the case of Canada) of the promoting and signing of the potentially illegitimate “Free Trade Agreement” with the government of Honduras; In support of the expansion of corporate investments in Honduras (mining, garment “sweatshop” industry, bananas, hydro-electric dams, tourism, African palm, etc.), while turning a blind eye to and – in effect – benefitting from repression, fraud, corruption and impunity.

More information

Karen Spring, Edwin Espinal’s partner & coordinator of Honduras Solidarity Network,
spring.kj@gmail.com

Campaign to free Edwin Espinal and all political prisoners in Honduras:

facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/freeEDWINEESPINALlibertad/>

twitter - <https://twitter.com/EdwinLibertad>

website - <http://freedwinespinallibertad.blogspot.com/>

email - freedwinespinal@gmail.com

Janet Spring, Simcoe Country Honduras Rights Monitor (Elmvale Ontario),

<https://simcoecountyhondurasrightsmonitor.wordpress.com/>

janet.spring@utoronto.ca

Grahame Russell, Rights Action

info@rightsaction.org

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)

To support the work and struggle of our long-term partner groups in Honduras, responding to the human rights and repression crisis, including the political prisoners, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations: <http://rightsaction.org/donate/>

Donations of stock? Write to: info@rightsaction.org

Please re-post and publish this information

More info: info@rightsaction.org

Subscribe to e-Newsletter: www.rightsaction.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RightsAction>, @RightsAction
