

Rights Action  
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**Honduras post-election killings: families wait in vain for justice**

By Jennifer Ávila, Jeff Ernst and Catty Calderon, The Guardian, 17 Aug 2018

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/killers-walking-free-in-honduras-not-a-single-indictment>

**Killers walk free in Honduras, not a single indictment: Open letter to the U.S. and Canadian governments**

*"UN confirms at least 16 people were killed by security forces, but six months on not a single indictment has been filed"*

*"Canadians have always expected our government to speak strongly, firmly, clearly and politely about the need to respect human rights at home and around the world. We will continue to do that; we will continue to stand up for Canadian values and indeed for universal values and human rights at any occasion." (Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau)*

How do the U.S. and Canadian governments justify 'business-and-politics-as-usual' with the Honduran government, while political prisoners suffer in military jails on trumped up charges and killers walk free with not a single indictment?

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**Honduras post-election killings: families wait in vain for justice**

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/17/honduras-post-election-killings-families-wait-in-vain-for-justice>



Soldiers and police launch teargas at demonstrators in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in January. Photograph: Eduardo Verdugo/AP. UN confirms at least 16 people were killed by security forces, but six months on not a single indictment has been filed

More than six months after [security forces in Honduras killed numerous protesters](#) during a violent post-election crackdown, not a single indictment has been filed against the perpetrators of what the UN high commission for human rights has described as extrajudicial executions. Meanwhile victims' families have been targeted with death threats and harassment, and hold out little hope for justice.

The government of Juan Orlando Hernández – the incumbent president who extended his rule in December's disputed vote – said that a multi-disciplinary group began investigating the deaths as soon as they happened. But the group is overseen by the public prosecutor's office, which activists say has dragged its feet in the investigation.

“How are they going to deliver justice if it's the same government?” asked the father of Kimberly Dayana Fonseca, 19, who [witnesses said was shot dead by members of the military police](#). Fonseca's father requested that his name not be used out of fear of reprisal.



The violence broke out days after the 26 November election when the crash of an electoral server three days into the count was followed by a marked shift in voting trends that overturned what had appeared an insurmountable lead for opposition candidate Salvador Nasralla.

Tensions that had been building since a 2009 coup ousted then-president Manuel Zelaya erupted in demonstrations and road blockades across the country.

Security forces repressed protesters, in several cases firing live rounds into crowds and hitting innocent bystanders. Local human rights groups maintain that more than 30 people died during the post-electoral crisis. The UN confirmed that at least 16 of the victims were killed by security forces.

Fonseca, a student, was among the first to die. In the evening of 1 December, she left her home to tell her brother, who was participating in a nearby protest, that a military curfew had just been announced.

Soon after, military police arrived at the scene, she was shot in the head, and died instantly. But the terror didn't end there for her family. Within days men dressed in civilian clothes turned up, asking about bullet shells that had been left by the military. Months later, a man on a motorcycle arrived in Fonseca's neighbourhood on three separate occasions and threatened to kill the family.

Evidence suggests that the majority of the deaths attributable to security forces involved the Military Police for Public Order (PMOP), a unit of soldiers with little training in policing, who were originally deployed to combat the country's high murder rates.

Mariela Hernández says she and her husband saw a soldier shoot and kill her brother Cristian outside the factory where he worked in San Pedro Sula. Yet prosecutors have claimed the shooter was a private security guard, not the military. “My husband confronted the soldier,” said Hernandez. “We saw his face.”

Human rights activists say the lack of results is symptomatic of a justice system that protects those involved in cases that are damaging to the government while applying the full force of the law to others.

Protesters accused of vandalism have been jailed for over six months and [denied their due process rights](#).

Human rights groups have called for an independent investigation. Carolina Jiménez, deputy director of research in the [Americas](#) for Amnesty International, suggested that a special truth commission could be beneficial. Although such a commission might not be able to deliver justice, she said, it could at least “guarantee some access to truth”.

For Fonseca’s father, the truth would be better than nothing. “I just want to know who it was,” he said. “Even if nothing is done.”

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**Keep on calling / Keep on writing**  
**(ask for responses, then call and write again)**

### **United States**

Contact your Senators (<https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>) and Congressmembers (<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>).

### **Canada**

Contact your Member of Parliament (<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](mailto:James.Hill@international.gc.ca), [tglpa@international.gc.ca](mailto:tglpa@international.gc.ca)

- Minister Chrystia Freeland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, 1-613-992-5234, 1-343-203-1851; [chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca](mailto:chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca), [chrystia.freeland.c1d@parl.gc.ca](mailto:chrystia.freeland.c1d@parl.gc.ca), [chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca](mailto:chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca)

### **Honduran Ambassador to Canada**

Sofia Cerrato Rodriguez: [ambassador@embassyhonduras.hn](mailto: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 business and military-police-security 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.

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### **More information**

Karen Spring, partner of political prisoner Edwin Espinal, coordinator of Honduras Solidarity Network, [spring.kj@gmail.com](mailto:spring.kj@gmail.com)

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

[facebook](https://www.facebook.com/freeEDWINESPINALlibertad/) - <https://www.facebook.com/freeEDWINESPINALlibertad/>

[twitter](https://twitter.com/EdwinLibertad) - <https://twitter.com/EdwinLibertad>

[website](http://freedwinespinallibertad.blogspot.com/) - <http://freedwinespinallibertad.blogspot.com/>

email - [freedwinespinal@gmail.com](mailto:freedwinespinal@gmail.com)

Janet Spring, mother-in-law of Edwin Espinal,

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

[janet.spring@utoronto.ca](mailto:janet.spring@utoronto.ca)

Grahame Russell, Rights Action, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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### **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](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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