

Rights Action
November 5, 2018

Karen Spring writes of her marriage to Edwin in “La Tolva”

Day #293 of illegal detention in Honduras of Edwin Espinal, husband of Canadian Karen Spring, as 1000s flee U.S. & Canadian backed regime

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/day-293-of-illegal-detention-in-honduras-of-edwin-espinal-husband-of-canadian-karen-spring>



Below: Karen Spring writes of her marriage to Edwin in “La Tolva”

On January 19, 2018, the U.S. and Canadian-backed regime of Honduras detained Edwin Espinal (along with arbitrary detention of dozens of political prisoners), even as dozens of Hondurans had recently been shot and killed by regime forces.



Edwin was jailed on trumped up charges due to his participation in protests:

- against the November 2017 violent, fraudulently stolen elections (endorsed by the U.S. and Canada);
- against widespread government corruption, and infiltration of organized crime in most institutions of the State, including the president's office;
- against the corruption, exploitation and human rights violations committed by the government and wealthy economic interests (including international companies and investors) across the country;
- against the highest murder and violence rates in the world;
- against the impunity with which the government and wealthy powerful sectors (including international companies and investors) operate.

Edwin Espinal is a political prisoner for protesting the very reasons why 10s of 1000s of Hondurans flee their country –in refugee caravans, or separately– every year!

Marriage in the “La Tolva” military jail

By Karen Spring,

<https://www.facebook.com/karen.spring.14/posts/10106332385161452>

On October 18, almost 9 months since his arrest, I married my nine-year partner and Honduran political prisoner, Edwin Espinal inside the military-run, maximum-security prison known as ‘La Tolva.’ It was not a wedding that one would expect. Behind all the wedding pictures including those published in the Honduran press (without our consent), is a military coronel whose face is disguised with a black balaclava mask. And behind us throughout the ceremony, are masked guards watching our every move in an ugly and repressive cement room that prison authorities call the ‘chapel.’

All pictures of the ceremony were taken by prison officials and we weren't allowed to take a camera inside. Edwin and I decided against speaking during the ceremony, as

we were too scared to express any emotions in such an environment in front of our uninvited guests.

Edwin ... vos, sweetie ... PITA, I married you inside a prison without knowing when I'll have you at home again, in order to show my commitment to you, our struggle, and the struggle for the freedom of all political prisoners in Honduras. Our bond is deeper than a romantic one. I married you not only because of my deep love, respect and commitment to you over several years but because our bond is intertwined and entangled in building a better, more just world.

We have what a close friend would call a 'north-south' relationship that has complicated so many things in so many ways. Getting married inside a military-run prison is another reminder that our relationship has never been 'normal' or 'usual.' In many ways, this is one of the reasons it continues to survive and grow.

I miss having you at home. I miss the amazing driving directions you give me when I'm lost in Tegucigalpa. I miss the intense political discussions we have and the long hours procrastinating before getting out of bed on Sundays.

After our marriage ceremony, we had two visits together. Now I haven't spoken with Edwin for 10 days (and counting). Many other prisoners and their families in Honduras (and around the world) face the same isolation, disconnect, and lack of communication with their incarcerated loved ones. It does no good for prisoners, families, or society.

I want to thank everyone for their best wishes and congratulations on our wedding. Thank you for your support & love.

Thank you to a dear friend who put together a wedding website for us that generously makes use of our wedding ceremony in a way that advocates for the release of all political prisoners in Honduras and other important timely requests regarding the dire human rights situation in the country.

- Please visit our wedding website. Leave a message so that Edwin can read them when he is free: <https://www.theknot.com/us/karen-spring-and-edwin-espinal-oct-2018/guest-book>
- Take action and sign this petition that sends a letter to Canadian and US authorities: <https://afgj.salsalabs.org/takeactiontofreehonduranpoliticalprisoners/index.html>

Write (and pester) U.S. and Canadian politicians

Keep on sending info to your elected politicians in the U.S. and Canada, holding them to account; Keep on supporting community based groups in Honduras, struggling to defend human rights, restore democracy and to put an end to the undemocratic Canadian- and U.S. backed regime in power – a huge and dangerous struggle.

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, 1-613-992-5234, 1-343-203-1851; 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:

- Rescind their “legitimization” of the Nov. 26, 2017 elections;
- Condemn the multiple acts of electoral fraud carried out by the illegitimate regime headed by Juan Orlando Hernandez;
- Condemn government repression, including the killing of over 40 pro-democracy protesters, and the illegal detentions of dozens of political prisoners, including Edwin Espinal;
- Suspend 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 killings and illegal jailings.

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, Honduras Solidarity Network, spring.kj@gmail.com / <https://www.facebook.com/freeEDWINEESPINALibertad/> / <https://twitter.com/EdwinLibertad> / <http://freedwinespinalibertad.blogspot.com/> / freedwinespinal@gmail.com
- Janet Spring (Karen's mom, Edwin's mom-in-law), Simcoe County Honduras Rights Monitor <https://simcoecountyhondurasrightsmonitor.wordpress.com/> / janet.spring@utoronto.ca
- Grahame Russell, Rights Action, grahame@rightsaction.org

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

To support the work of our partner groups in Honduras, responding to the permanent 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/>

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