

“A tiny step in the right direction”, by Karen Spring, partner-wife of Honduran political prisoner Edwin Espinal

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/honduran-political-prisoner-edwin-espinal-a-tiny-step-forward>

Pressure needed, again and again, on Canadian & U.S. politicians and government officials

- **Below:** “A tiny step in the right direction”, by Karen Spring, human rights expert and activist, and partner-wife of Edwin Espinal

It has been over a year since Edwin was illegally detained while protesting –along with 10s of 1000s of Hondurans– the fraudulently stolen presidential elections of November 2017, and sent to the ‘La Tolva’ maximum security military jail. Since Edwin’s jailing, Edwin’s partner and wife, Karen Spring, and their family in Elmvale, Ontario, Canada, have been relentlessly in discussions with Canadian and U.S. embassy and government officials, to have them take action to secure the release of Edwin.



Even hardened human rights advocates have been surprised that the U.S. and Canadian governments have done virtually nothing to secure Edwin’s release from this obviously unjust and punitive detention, jailed by the anti-democratic, corrupt and repressive Honduran government that is - it bears repetition - fully backed politically, militarily and economically by the U.S. and Canada.

A tiny step in the right direction

Honduran court confirms lack of due process in case of political prisoners Edwin Espinal and Raul Alvarez

By Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network, February 20, 2019

On February 18, political prisoners Edwin Espinal and Raul Alvarez had a hearing in the national jurisdiction sentencing court in Tegucigalpa. The hearing is part of the lead-up to the trial (that still has not been scheduled) and served the following purpose: To argue the lack of due process, from the beginning, of the entire case, since Edwin's illegal detention, while protesting.

In the hearing, Edwin's lawyers argued that the case & charges against Edwin should be annulled because the national jurisdiction court system created to try organized criminal networks and structures, does not have jurisdiction to hear the case given that Edwin isn't part of a criminal group & none of the charges he is accused of are related to organized crime. Raul's lawyers requested that the case be sent to the normal court system making similar arguments.

Following these arguments, the court ruled that they would not annul the process arguing that they did not have jurisdiction to hear any petitions or arguments about the case. This is also the reason that we could not proceed to a bail hearing the same day - the court simply would not rule on any petitions given their lack of jurisdiction (confirming the arguments that Edwin and Raul's lawyers made).

The recent ruling is considered a small victory for Edwin, Raul and their supporters because the court's ruling tells us that from the beginning, Edwin and Raul's constitutional rights have been violated because the judges that have ruled on their case & sent them to prison previously, had no jurisdiction or legal authority to do so.

Next steps: Wait until the case is admitted by the correct normal court then a bail hearing will be requested. This could happen as early as next week.

- To watch an interview in Spanish from Edwin's lawyer, Omar Menjivar following the hearing: <https://criterio.hn/2019/02/18/edwin-espinal-y-raul-alvarez-han-estado-presos-por-orden-dictada-por-autoridad-incompetente-video/>

The hearing was attended by a few embassies, international accompaniment organizations, Honduran human rights organizations, members of the National Committee for the Freedom of Political prisoners, and Edwin and Raul's families.

While the hearing took place, there was a gathering outside the Supreme Court in solidarity with Edwin and Raul, although both were not brought from La Tolva prison to their hearing. The gathering was attended by: various member organizations of the National Committee for the Freedom of Political Prisoners; the LIBRE party including President Manuel Zelaya who was ousted in the 2009 U.S. and Canadian backed military coup; COPINH; student movement groups; amongst other members of the Honduran resistance.

Background

Supporting political prisoners: One year in U.S.-style torture centres in Honduras

By Karen Spring, Feb.2, 2019, <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/2/2/one-year-in-us-style-torture-centres-in-honduras-espaol-abajo-1>

This is a heart-breaking description of the punitive and tortuous conditions in which Edwin is being detained, “awaiting trial” on trumped up charges related to protesting.

Is Honduran political prisoner Edwin Espinal victim of a Canada-U.S.-Honduras backroom deal?

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/is-honduran-political-prisoner-edwin-espinal-victim-of-a-canada-us-honduras-backroom-deal>

Grahame Russell (Rights Action) asks whether Edwin Espinal is still stuck in a Honduran military jail in exchange for Honduran support of the U.S. and Canada coup attempt in Venezuela?

Act now, again and again, to hold U.S. and Canadian governments accountable

Keep on sending this information to your elected politicians in the U.S. and Canada holding them to account for their support for the Honduran regime, turning a blind eye to the systematic human rights violations, killings, corruption and impunity ... including the illegal detention of political prisoners.

Media silence? Send this information to your media contacts, urging them to start reporting on U.S. and Canadian complicity with the repressive, corrupt regime in Honduras.

- United States: Contact your Senators (<https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>) and Congress members (<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>).
- Canada: Contact your Member of Parliament and make your demands known to them (<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>).
- 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

More information

- Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network, spring.kj@gmail.com / <https://www.facebook.com/freeEDWINESPINALlibertad/> / <https://twitter.com/EdwinLibertad> / <http://freedwinespinallibertad.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

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- Your funds at work in 2018: <http://rightsaction.org/your-donations-at-work/>

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:

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

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