

## Death threats against Honduran political prisoners (Edwin Espinal, Raul Alvarez, Rommel Herrera) illegally held in max-security military jail

Updates by Karen & Janet Spring

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/death-threats-against-honduran-political-prisoners-edwin-espinal-raul-alvarez-rommel-herrera>

Rights Action holds the U.S. and Canadian governments responsible for any further violence and suffering that may occur against Edwin Espinal, Raul Alvarez and Rommel Herrera

### Below:

- Call to action by Karen Spring, Edwin Espinal's partner and spouse
- Update by Janet Spring, Edwin Espinal's mother-in-law from Elmvale Ontario



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### URGENT UPDATE – Free Edwin Espinal By Karen Spring (Honduras Solidarity Network), July 13, 2019

Death threats against Honduran political prisoners Edwin Espinal, Raul Alvarez and Rommel Herrera, inside maximum security military jail where they are illegally detained by the Honduran regime since early 2018.

Honduran political prisoners Edwin, Raúl and Rommel were removed from the general prison population on July 7th and are now being held together in a small cell inside the maximum security, military run “La Tolva” prison.

As a result of death threats received from other inmates, all three told prison authorities on July

7th that they refused to return to their cellblock and would withstand being beaten or punished for not obeying. All feared for their lives. Edwin, Raul and Rommel have denounced threats against their life since at least June 6th and penitentiary authorities have done nothing to implement security measures to protect them.

Edwin, Raúl and Rommel have still not been given any drinking water as of Thursday, July 11th, 4 days after being put into the small cell. The cell has no windows, air circulation or running water. They are forced to urinate in plastic bottles and bang on the door for at least an hour when they need to use the bathroom.

As of July 11th (the last communication with them), all three report being sick. Rommel and Raúl have a harsh cough and Edwin complains about constant ringing and thumping in his ear as a result of an ear infection that has never been adequately treated since December 2018.

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## **Death Threats in La Tolva Prison: Political Prisoners in Extreme Danger**

**In Canada, Growing Resentment over Minister Freeland's Latin American Policies**

By Janet Spring

For the past three weeks, Edwin Espinal and Raul Alvarez have received death threats in maximum security "La Tolva" military prison, where Edwin, Raul and other political prisoners are illegally detained.

Since these threats were first made, international human rights organizations, my daughter Karen and Edwin and Raul's lawyers, have done all they can to demand that Edwin and Raul, as well as a new young teacher and political prisoner – Romel Portillo – have protective measures inside the prison.

They have submitted written requests to the courts, the National Penitentiary Institute yet with no results. Karen appeared on the Honduran National Television Network UNETV Friday July 5 on a talk show sponsored by the National Committee for the Freedom of Political Prisoners to denounce this lack of movement on safety measures by the government as well as the disregard for prison violence and due legal process.

As tensions mount around the country due to the intense repression by special military forces, military police and local law enforcement, so is the tension inside the prison.

It was revealed earlier this week that inmates in the two maximum-security prisons of La Tolva and El Pozo announced a strike to protest recent transfers of prisoners and the severe living conditions they are enduring.

As many prisoners await trial on trumped up criminal charges, with no hope in sight of legal resolution, arbitrary transfers (families are not informed of these and must travel to the prison to find out) and severe conditions regarding food, water, heat, lack of fresh air and very restricted sunlight, violence can erupt at any moment; since Edwin and Raul have death threats against them, they are at great risk as are others.

In addition, Honduran human rights defenders and their family members are at great risk for they are targeted by the Juan Orlando Hernandez government for speaking against human

rights violations occurring across the country. This past weekend, the 11-year-old daughter of human rights defender and government opposition leader Gabriel Quiroz was shot and killed while she was traveling by car in her home city of Choluteca. There is fear in the streets and in the homes of all Honduras for they are scared.

### **'Canada and U.S. First Foreign Policy'**

Minister Chrystia Freeland held an event for Canada Day in her federal riding of University-Rosedale at Christie Pits in Toronto. She was met with a crowd of protesters who are very concerned about her "hard-line hawk" Canadian foreign policy regarding Central and South America.

In a recent article by Information Clearing House ([www.informationclearinghouse.info/51874.htm](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/51874.htm)), Freeland has been accused of promoting the United States "America First Foreign Policy." She has strengthened ties with US allies of Saudi Arabia and Israel, and followed the US bidding through the Lima Group to back coup attempts in Venezuela against the Maduro government.

Following US foreign policy leads, the Canadian government, through hardline tactics initiated by Freeland, has become a bully bystander of the human rights violations occurring in Central America, in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, hence forcing ever more families to flee in forced migration caravans seeking asylum in the north.

This disregard of ongoing human rights abuses makes Canadians seem to be the enemy of the Honduran people.

To further advocate for Edwin and other political prisoners' release, the Simcoe County Honduras Rights Monitor has erected two more 'Free Edwin Espinal' signs/billboards in our community, one on County Rd 92 on our farm property and the other on Mosley Street, Wasaga Beach. Thank you to Datamax Outdoor Advertising for the sign donation and Wasaga Veterinary Clinic for allowing us the advertising space.

We thank the Springwater, greater Simcoe County residents, and those from afar for their continued support and ask all of you to spread the word about the atrocities occurring in Honduras.

### **Hold politicians accountable for Canadian policies and actions in other countries**

2019 is an important election year, so we are asking fellow Canadians to demand that all political candidates bring Canada's sometimes negative impacts on human rights around the world into the political discussion. Very serious decisions are being made by our government that do not reflect Canada's role of the past as a 'peacekeeping nation' and one that cares for fellow human beings. We must force our politicians to take note of our demands and to act accordingly.

Leader of the Green Party of Canada, Elizabeth May, has sponsored a paper petition to demand Edwin and others' release. If you can help us out by circulating the petition, please email [simcoecountyhondurasright@gmail.com](mailto:simcoecountyhondurasright@gmail.com) for a copy.

Janet Spring, Simcoe County Honduras Rights Monitor

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## **Demands**

Our basic position is that these men are political prisoners, illegally jailed on trumped up charges, and should be immediately released, and all charges dropped. In this immediate situation, we demand:

- THAT THE POLITICAL PRISONERS BE TRANSFERRED TO THE “SECOND BATTALLION” DETENTION CENTER NEAR THE CAPITAL CITY!
- THEY RECEIVE ADEQUATE MEDICAL ATTENTION AND DRINKING WATER!

## **TAKE ACTION**

Call or email the International Red Cross in Washington, D.C. Demand that the Red Cross visit and speak with Edwin, Raúl, and Rommel in La Tolva to verify their conditions and take them drinking water. International Red Cross, 1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 500, Washington DC 20036, T: +1 202 587 46 00, e: [nyc\\_newyork@icrc.org](mailto:nyc_newyork@icrc.org).

For Spanish speakers: Call the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) in Tegucigalpa and demand that the Director Rosa Gudiel transfer Edwin, Raúl and Rommel to the Second Battalion, the detention site requested by Edwin, Raúl and Rommel’s attorneys. On June 26, Gudiel received a formal request in writing and still has not responded.

Instituto Nacional Penitenciario, calling from the U.S./Canada: 011-504-2236-6434; 011-504-2236-6007; 011-504-2236-9020.

Contact your U.S. or Canadian representatives and pressure them to contact the U.S. State Department, Canadian Global Affairs and demand: 1) In the short-term, transfer Edwin, Raul and Rommel to the detention site requested by their families, 2) Release all political prisoners in Honduras

THANK YOU!

## **HAMMER and CHIP away at each and every Senator, Member of Parliament and Congress member (U.S. and Canada)**

What the Honduran regime is doing, and has been doing since the 2009 U.S. and Canadian backed coup, is enabled and made possible by over 10 years of U.S. and Canadian policies and directly military, economic and political support.

- Senators: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>
- House of representatives: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- Parliament members: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

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## **MORE INFORMATION**

- “Honduran Presidents linked to drug-trafficking & money laundering, since U.S. & Canadian-backed coup ousted Honduras’ last democratic government”, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/honduran-presidents-linked-to-drug-trafficking-money-laundering>
- “Whistleblowers, politicians & journalists needed in Ottawa: End 10 years of Canadian support for corrupt, repressive, anti-democratic regimes in Honduras”, by Rights Action, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/whistleblowers-politicians-journalists-needed-in-ottawa>

- “Karen Spring strip-searched while visiting husband Edwin Espinal, a political prisoner in Honduras: Letter to PM Trudeau & Minister Freeland”, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/karen-spring-strip-searched-while-visiting-husband-edwin-espinal-a-political-prisoner-in-honduras>
- “Request meeting between Spring family, PM Trudeau & Minister Freeland”, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/request-for-meeting-between-spring-family-prime-minister-trudeau-minister-chrystia-freeland>

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## CONTACT

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- Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network, [spring.kj@gmail.com](mailto:spring.kj@gmail.com), [www.hondurassolidarity.org](http://www.hondurassolidarity.org)
- Grahame Russell, Rights Action, [grahame@rightsaction.org](mailto:grahame@rightsaction.org)

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## TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS TO RIGHTS ACTION

Your donations and grants will help Rights Action continue to fund community and human rights defenders groups in Honduras and Guatemala at the forefront of land, environmental, human rights and justice struggles, including work to free political prisoners and ‘criminalized’ community defenders. 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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