

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández President of the Republic of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
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March 14, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are gravely concerned for the safety of **César Omar Silva Rosales**, a journalist, who has faced discrimination and received a death threat from a military officer.

On January 24 he was denied access to the Honduran National Congress in Tegucigalpa while trying to cover a session discussing the constitutional range of the Military Policy. When he asked why his name was not on the list of authorized journalists, a high-ranking military official pointed his finger at him saying: "You cannot come in because I do not want you to and I am the one in charge here. Continue publishing videos of militaries eating dog and you will see... in a ditch, gagged and with yellow legs you will be found."

A formal complaint was filed on January 29 with the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights, but César Omar Silva Rosales has not yet been called to give a statement so that the formal complaint process can begin. We believe the threat is directly connected to his journalistic work. On January 18 a television program for which he works transmitted an investigative report exposing shocking practices in training military members.

César Omar Silva Rosales has faced a number of incidents of intimidation and threats, including the following:

June 2009: He was detained in Guaimaca while doing journalistic work. Villagers interceded with demonstrations for his immediate release.

August 2009: While he was covering a demonstration, police officers beat in his head with batons and broke the camera he had been using to film the aggression.

December 2009: He was kidnapped by armed men, taken to an unknown location, beaten, interrogated, threatened and thrown out of a running car. He was forced to leave the country. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted him precautionary measures, which were never implemented and were suspended in 2014.

February 2013: While covering a report near the Presidential Palace he and his cameraman suffered injury and property damage when they were attacked by people believed to be members of a political party.

In 2013 report, IFEX (formerly known as the International Freedom of Expression Exchange) said that impunity for crimes against journalists was the biggest threat to free expression in the Americas and named Honduras amongst the riskiest countries. The Honduran newspaper La Tribuna reports that 37 documented cases of journalist deaths since 2003 have occurred since 2010.

Therefore we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out a swift and thorough investigation into the threat and discrimination described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide effective protection for the safety of César Omar Silva Rosales;
- guarantee that the right to freedom of expression is respected and that journalists and media workers can carry out their legitimate work without a fear of reprisal.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

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US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: