



Canadian Ecumenical
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Le fonds du Primat pour le secours
et le développement mondial

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February-05-18

Minister Chrystia Freeland
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Freeland,

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiative is an organization of ten national churches and church organizations with a long history of working on issues of human rights and ecological justice in Latin America. We are writing to you at this time to express grave concern about the political and human rights crisis currently unfolding in Honduras and about the number of political prisoners who have been illegally and unjustly detained since the presidential elections on November 26, 2017. In particular, we are writing about Edwin Espinal who has been detained since January 19, 2018 on trumped up charges and is currently being held virtually incommunicado in a military jail.

This particular case has come to our attention through our network in Canada. On February 1 we were contacted by Meg Jordan, Minister of St John's United in Elmvale, ON. She explained that Edwin Espinal is the long-term partner of Karen Spring whose family is a member of her congregation. The church and community of Elmvale are mobilizing in support of Edwin Espinal and they have asked for KAIROS' support. Ms Jordan spoke powerfully about how this particular case has brought the human rights crisis and terrible situation of political prisoners in Honduras to her rural town in Southern Ontario.

We see Edwin Espinal's case as emblematic of the dozens of political prisoners who are being detained unjustly in Honduran jail at this time. As such, we call on the Canadian government:

- To address the issue of the political prisoners with Honduran authorities, calling for the immediate release of Edwin Espinal, as well as that of the more than 40 political prisoners throughout the country.

To ensure safety and access to justice for Edwin Espinal, we are calling for his immediate release. However, in the meantime, we ask you to pressure Honduran authorities to :

- Transfer Edwin Espinal to a detention center as determined by COFADEH (the Committee of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras), which has provided long-term legal and human rights support for him since 2009.
- Remove Edwin Espinal's case from the "national jurisdiction" courts and into the regular court system.

The Americas Policy Group (APG), of which KAIROS is a member, wrote [a letter](#) to you on December 2, expressing grave concern about the human rights crisis



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unfolding in Honduras and calling on the Canadian government to support democracy and human rights. In recent meetings with Global Affairs Canada, members of the Americas Policy Group have also expressed concerns about Canada's tacit support for the current undemocratic and repressive government in Honduras.

Our call for the release of Edwin Espinal and all political prisoners in Honduras is made in the context of Canada's expressed commitment to act in support of human rights and democracy.

We are counting on your support and action on this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Warden

Latin American Partnerships and Gender Justice program coordinator
KAIROS

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