

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland

28 February 2019

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6  
chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca

Dear Minister Freeland,

I am writing to you about an urgent situation in Honduras requesting your immediate attention.

I have been informed by our Jesuit partners in Honduras that on Saturday, February 23, thirteen Honduran human rights defenders were imprisoned because of their legitimate defense of the drinking water in fourteen communities. Community leaders and organizations who have demanded that the Municipal Government carry out the legally mandated consultation of projects that impact the protected area have been the target of threats, violence, defamation, hate campaigns and now, false imprisonment.

A hearing scheduled to start today, **Thursday, February 28 will determine if the environmental defenders will be forced to remain in prison for up to 2.5 years** as they await trial for unsubstantiated and politically motivated charges.

Among the people imprisoned are a number of parishioners who are actively involved in our Jesuit parish. Our fellow Jesuit Fr. Ismael Moreno SJ has appealed to us to contact you and the Canadian Ambassador James Hill. They are deeply concerned about due process and the lack of impartiality in the case and ask the following:

1. that Canadian Embassy officials be present at the hearing this week to guarantee that due process is followed.
2. That the Canadian government express its concern in writing to the Honduran government asking that due process be followed in this case and that they comply with national and international norms regulating the non-criminalization of human rights defenders and express concern for the wrongful use of the "Illicit Association" charge.

The Catholic Diocese of Trujillo also made a public statement on February 27, denouncing this alarming situation, asking for due process and for international solidarity.

Canada needs to speak out strongly and unequivocally against all violations of human rights in Honduras. Thank you for your attention to this urgent situation.

Sincerely,



P. Erik Oland SJ  
Provincial

Cc: *The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau*, Prime Minister of Canada

Ambassador James Hill, Canadian Ambassador to Honduras (James.Hill@international.gc.ca)