

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the increasing number of human rights violations taking place in Honduras and the failure of state authorities to prosecute violators and protect the rights of victims and their families. In particular, we are deeply troubled by credible reports of killings and violent attacks that allegedly involve police and military agents. Though Honduran president Porfirio Lobo has stated that responding to human rights abuses is among his "highest priorities," to date almost none of the perpetrators of these crimes have been brought to justice.

Over the last few years, international and Honduran human rights organizations have documented a sustained pattern of violence and threats against journalists, human rights defenders, members of the clergy, union leaders, opposition figures, students, small farmers, LGBT activists, and other vulnerable sectors. It appears that many abuses are linked to state security forces. Honduran human rights groups have reported that over 300 people have been killed by state security forces since President Lobo took office. More and more Hondurans, including former and current government officials, are coming forward to denounce the widespread corruption of the Honduran police and their involvement in drug trafficking and assassinations

Along with having the highest murder rate in the world, Honduras also bears the dubious distinction of being the deadliest country for journalists. Thirteen journalists have been murdered since President Lobo's inauguration in February of 2010. The Committee to Protect Journalists has issued a public letter calling on the President to correct the failure of Honduran authorities to investigate these crimes and the Administration's unwillingness to take action.

This unwillingness to address crime in Honduras extends to the land conflict in the northeastern Bajo Aguan Valley, which has resulted in over 50 deaths, many of them small farmers. Human rights groups have also reported dozens of murders of members of the gay, lesbian, and transsexual community over the last few years. There appears to be little progress in achieving judicial redress for victims and families of victims of violence in Honduras. More worrying still is the growing evidence that the country's security forces--rather than effectively countering the surge in violence--appear to be a significant part of the problem.

rights abuses, especially those that allegedly involve state security forces, must be addressed swiftly and efficiently. The perpetrators of violent attacks need to be held to account and vulnerable groups must be offered genuine protection, including from rogue elements with the police and military.

As you are aware, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 requires that, before allocating 20% of funds designated for Honduras, the State Department report to the Committee on Appropriations that the Honduran military "is implementing policies to protect freedom of expression and association, and due process of law; and is investigating and prosecuting in the civilian justice system, in accordance with Honduran and international law, military and police personnel who are credibly alleged to have violated human rights, and the Honduran police and military are cooperating with civilian authorities in such cases." In accordance with these requirements, we respectfully request that the State Department keep us updated with detailed information regarding whether Honduran authorities are adequately complying with provisions of the FY 2012 Appropriations Act.

We thank you in advance for taking our concerns into consideration.

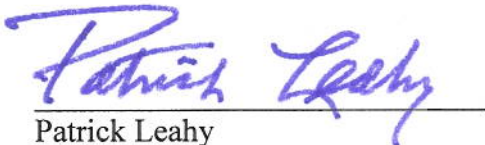
Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



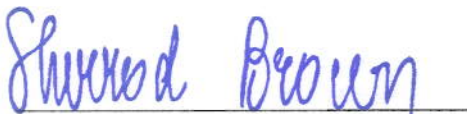
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



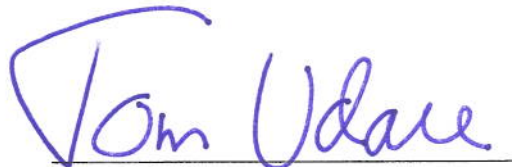
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Daniel Akaka
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator