

EDWARD J. MARKEY
MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEES:

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

FOREIGN RELATIONS

RANKING MEMBER:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA, THE PACIFIC,
AND INTERNATIONAL CYBERSECURITY POLICY

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

RANKING MEMBER:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SPACE, SCIENCE, AND COMPETITIVENESS

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CHAIRMAN:

U.S. SENATE CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE

United States Senate

SUITE SD-255
DIRKSEN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2107
202-224-2742

975 JFK FEDERAL BUILDING
15 NEW SUDBURY STREET
BOSTON, MA 02203
617-565-8519

222 MILLIKEN BOULEVARD, SUITE 312
FALL RIVER, MA 02721
508-677-0523

1550 MAIN STREET, 4TH FLOOR
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01103
413-785-4610

March 29, 2018

The Honorable Francisco Palmieri
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Palmieri:

I write to express my concerns about reports of alleged human rights abuses by security forces in Honduras following November's disputed presidential election and to request an update on U.S. government efforts to address this issue with the Honduran government.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently released a report detailing alleged human rights violations that occurred between voting day on November 26, 2017 and January 27, 2018.¹ This report documents that elements of the security forces — especially the military police and the army — used excessive force, including lethal force to control and disperse protesters. Press reporting has also suggested that U.S.-trained police have participated in the post-election raids of protesters.²

International observers, including the Organization of American States, have stated that they could not certify the presidential election of Juan Orlando Hernandez as free and fair, and called for a new election. Although, it is ultimately up to the people of Honduras to decide whether to accept the election result, it is important for the United States to support free and fair elections and the rights of individuals to protest election results that they feel have been corrupted.

In its 2016 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Honduras, the State Department cited “multiple reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.”³ From the public reports, statements from the United Nations, and accounts

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human rights violations in the context of the 2017 elections in Honduras*,

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/HN/2017ReportElectionsHRViolations_Honduras_EN.pdf.

² Sandra Cuffe, *U.S.-Trained Police Are Hunting Down and Arresting Protesters Amid Post-Election Crisis in Honduras*, *The Intercept* (Feb. 20, 2018), <https://theintercept.com/2018/02/20/honduras-election-protest-tigres/>.

³ *Honduras 2016 Human Rights Report*, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265808.pdf> at 2.

The Honorable Francisco Palmieri
March 29, 2018
Page 2

from Massachusetts residents who have traveled to Honduras, the human rights situation appears to continue to deteriorate. These alleged abuses are inconsistent with the principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

The ongoing and oppressive situation in Honduras is an important issue for my Massachusetts constituents and all those who care about human rights. Accordingly, I respectfully request a briefing no later than April 20, 2018 on U.S. government efforts to ensure that U.S.-trained police have not used U.S. training, equipment, or other assistance to oppress the Honduran people. In your briefing, please also include an update on U.S. government efforts to urge the government of Honduras to uphold the fundamental human rights of all its citizens, including those who protest.

I value your hard work and commitment to ensuring stability and promoting peace in the region and look forward to hearing from you on this important issue. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator