

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2007

The Honorable Elías Antonio Saca González
President of El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
Avda. Dr. Manuel Enrique Araujo 5500
San Salvador, El Salvador

Dear President Saca:

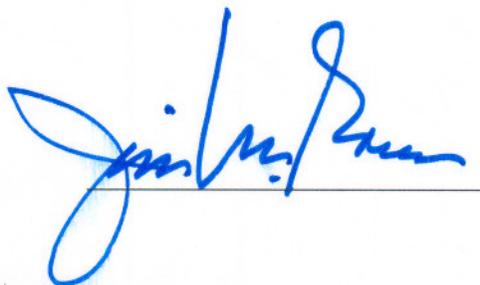
We write to express our concern and that of our constituents with regard to the recent arrests of fourteen protesters at and near a demonstration in Suchitoto. We understand that ten of those arrested engaged in a protest legal under the laws of El Salvador, while another four – Marta Lorena Araujo, Rosa Valle Centeno, María Haydee Chicas, and Manuel Antonio Rodríguez, all CRIPDES members – were arrested as they were driving on the road to Suchitoto. According to all available information, these four were en route to the protest but were stopped and detained before being able to participate at all in the demonstration. Despite the fact that charges against one of those arrested, Facundo Dolores García, have been dropped, the other thirteen remain charged under anti-terrorism laws.

We want, above all, to make clear our commitment to human rights and the rule of law, and, in particular, our support for the efforts of Human Rights Ombudsman Oscar Luna, whose important responsibilities are set forth in the 1992 peace agreements.

As Members of Congress, we were encouraged to learn that elected officials were able to visit the protesters while they remained in detention. We are also greatly pleased to hear of the protesters' release, though we understand they continue to face trial for acts of terrorism. We fully support the right to non-violent protest and peaceful dissent and expect that your government does as well. In a rule of law society, it is difficult to imagine how such acts could constitute terrorism.

The arrest of those associated with the Suchitoto protest is a matter of great concern to many of our communities and constituents. We will continue to monitor this situation and we look forward to its just resolution.

Sincerely,



William L. Benn

Stephen J. Spahr

Peter Stark

Howard D. Dignit

Not a Brady

Mark Udall

Rush Holt

Liane E. Watson

Jan Stark
Sven Inose

Tom Allen

Raul M. Lrijalva

Peter Welch

Hilda L. Stis

Chris Van Hollen

Devin Me

Michael H. Michael

Buffy M. Allen

Emanuel D. H.

Sam Fane

James Greene

Edward G. Mackay

David Price

Errol L. Engel

Robert Walsh

Bary Tok

Jose E. Serrano

Michael R. McKinley

Earl Blumenauer

Lynn Woolsey

Jim Oberstar

Stu N. Little

Wally White

Gene DeLoach

Maureen Ruckey

Barbara Lee

Dennis Kucinich

Ray B. ...

Chaka Fattah

Danny K. Davis