

<p>Rodolfo Delgado Fiscal General de la República de El Salvador Attorney General of El Salvador via email and US mail</p>	<p>José Apolonio Tobar Serrano Procurador para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos Human Rights Ombudsman of El Salvador via email</p>
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October 26, 2022

Dear Attorney General and Human Rights Ombudsman:

We were shocked and saddened to hear about the detention and resulting death of **Henry Eleazar Joya** and his burial in a mass grave. This is yet another death since the start of the emergency regime, and it is raising serious concerns about the protection of human rights in El Salvador.

The Institute of Legal Medicine (IML) informed Jesús Joya on September 19 that his brother Henry Eleazar Joya, who had been missing ever since he was captured and detained during a wave of mass arrests on April 19, was dead and had been buried in a common grave, falsely registered under the name Henry Cuellar Joel. A person who was detained together with Henry Eleazar Joya stated that he had been beaten in prison and was seriously injured. Since Henry was buried in a common grave on July 8 (73 days before the family was given notice), the family had no way of verifying this testimony. Jesús Joya had been looking for his brother for several months, and finally had to identify him through a photograph of the corpse.

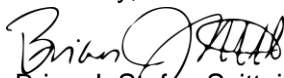
Sadly, this is not the first and last case of a missing family member found dead or buried weeks or even months after being detained or disappearing; many families have not been given any indication of the whereabouts or physical state of their loved ones. The State of Exception in El Salvador, which was first declared in March and has since been prolonged multiple times, has led to countless arrests and too many deaths in detention or on the streets. The laws and regulations authorized through this emergency state have invited serious human rights violations. Despite outcries from Salvadorans and international organizations and governments, it shows no signs of stopping.

This is the fourth letter we have written to your government in the past several months expressing our deep concerns about the human and civil rights violations that have occurred since your government declared a State of Exception on March 27 (cf our letters April 13, May 25, and August 21, 2022). Journalists, union leaders, well-known religious leaders, and others are being targeted. The country now lacks respect for democratic plurality. Furthermore, the rights of everyday Salvadoran citizens are being violated through the suppression of constitutional guarantees.

We condemn this abuse of the State of Exception and the countless resulting acts of violence and rights violations as we mourn yet another innocent death. We therefore strongly urge you to:

- end the arbitrary arrests and acts of violence
- suspend the State of Exception immediately
- allow for family members to establish contact with their loved ones who have been detained and inform them about any change in their location or well-being

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Sr. Presidente Nayib Bukele, Presidente de la República ~ via email and US mail
 Carmen Milena Mayorga de Monterrosa, Ambassador of El Salvador in Washington, DC ~ via email & US mail
 Julissa Mantilla Falcón, Rapporteur for El Salvador, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email & US mail
 Katherine Duffy Dueholm, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of the United States Embassy in San Salvador ~ via email & US mail
 US State Department: Lisa Spink at the El Salvador Desk ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: