**Costa Rica recognizes Eduardo Urbina as refugee**

<http://defensoresenlinea.com/costa-rica-reconoce-como-refugiado-a-joven-hondureno-criminalizado/>

On April 23, 2018 Eduardo Urbina —Honduran student, victim of criminalization in his country – was freed after having been detained for over one month by authorities in Costa Rica while his request for refugee status was under review.

Based on analysis of the facts and evidence, Costa Rica granted him refugee status due to the risk Eduardo faces because of his role as a political activist, student leader and human rights defender in Honduras.

Urbina was the target of multiple threats and acts of intimidation in the context of the post -electoral repression that began last November. Months earlier, students at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH) were also criminalized.

The Hernandez regime accused Urbina of burning a military truck on December 15, 2017 that had been used to repress protests that day. However on December 10, 2017, five days prior to the burning of the military truck of which he was accused, Urbina fled to Costa Rica with the assistance of the *Committee of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras* (COFADEH.) COFADEH, as his legal representative presented irrefutable evidence proving that Eduardo Urbina was not in Honduras on December 15and requested the Public Ministry to withdrawal the charges against him. However, the Attorney General of Honduras issued an extradition order.

The resolution of Costa Rica to grant Eduardo refugee status states that the government of Honduras, in a clear act of persecution, accused Eduardo of crimes for events that occurred when he was already in Costa Rica and then requested his extradition which resulted in his detention.

“*This case reflects the hostility with which the government of Honduras criminalizes those who decide to raise their voice for a country in which there are not even minimum guarantees for the protection of human rights. We celebrate that in acknowledgement of this situation, the government of Costa Rica has recognized his status as a refugee*” stated Bertha Oliva, coordinator of COFADEH.

Marcia Aguiluz, Director of the *Central America and Mexico Program of* CEJIL underscored that “*the risk determined in the case of Eduardo, occurs in a context of violence and human rights violations against defenders, organizations and communities that defend human rights in Honduras. The repression and criminalization must stop and the state of Honduras must guarantee the right to defend human rights.*”

*The Center for Justice and International Law* (CEJIL) and the *Committee of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras* (COFADEH) as organizations that monitored, accompanied and provided legal representation for his case in partnership with others, celebrate this decision that safeguards the life of Eduardo and contributes to recognizing and strengthening the indispensable role of human rights defenders.