

Dear Sir/Madam,

Over the last few days we have received disturbing information about increased human rights violations against teachers, students and peasant organizers in Honduras. It has been brought to our attention that the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) has made an urgent call to the international community to demand that the regime of current President, Porfirio Lobo, cease its repression and continued criminalization of peaceful protests taking place in Honduras. Listed below are examples of some of the more recent human rights violations that require your immediate attention.

- **On March 28, 2011:** Explosives were thrown at office of the non-governmental Commission of Truth in San Pedro Sula at 2:10pm. In the offices there were two Canadians that have been participating as international observers to the on-going efforts of the commission. Also present was the Regional Coordinator, Attorney Brenda Mejia, who had recently participated in the "Criminalization of Social Protest" hearing of the CIDH in San Pedro Sula (Friday, 25 March), held by lawyers in opposition to the current regime.
- **On March 28, 2011:** Miriam Miranda, an important Resistance leader and coordinator of OFRANEH (Organización Fraternal Negra de Honduras) was injured and then detained during a highway blockade. She was in custody in Tela facing charges of sedition and blocking a public roadway.
- **On March 26, 2011:** Jaime Donaire, coordinator of the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP) in the municipality of Minas de Oro in the province of Comayagua, was assassinated by armed men.
- **On March 22, 2011:** Police launched tear gas bombs into the building, which houses the offices of the secondary school teachers union, COPEMH, and the non-governmental Truth Commission.
- **On March 21, 2011:** When protests were resumed, police directly aimed tear gas canisters at staff of TV Globo and Channel 36 who were trying to record and report on police actions.
- **On March 18, 2011:** Ilse Velasquez, a teacher's union activist and a member of COFADEH since her brother Manuel Velazquez was disappeared, was killed during ferocious police repression against a protest by educators in Tegucigalpa. The 59 year old teacher lost consciousness after a tear gas canister fired by the riot police struck her forehead.
- **On March 18, 2011:** Military and police forces occupied the offices of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Honduras (COPEMH Spanish acronym) holding more than 30 teachers hostage.
- **On March 17th:** In the cities of Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, and Danlí, police, as well as men in civilian clothing driving cars without license plates, repressed peaceful demonstrations of teachers and members of the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP). According to a preliminary report, as many as 50 people were detained, wounded, and beaten in those demonstrations.

COFADEH has reported that from January 2010 to January 31, 2011 a total of 1,658 Human Rights violations

The specific context in which these human rights violations and intimidatory acts are taking place, along with the general climate of insecurity for human rights defenders in Honduras, alert us to the existence of a state policy of repression directed towards popular opposition movements in Honduras. We are further concerned that human rights violators in Honduras, using a historically documented tactic, are choosing this current period when international attention is focused on crises taking place elsewhere, particularly in Japan and Libya, to dramatically increase levels of repression and rights violations.

Considering the above-mentioned cases, numerous previous denouncements, and that Canada is currently negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with Honduras, we as Members of Civil Society Organizations from Canada, call on the Canadian Government to:

- Demand that the Honduran government take immediate action to protect the rights of civil society in Honduras, particularly and urgently for those examples listed above.
- Cease current negotiations with Honduras towards a Free Trade Agreement until an environment of full human rights protection has been effectively implemented, and acknowledged by credible international human rights organizations.
- Support the continued suspension of Honduras' participation in the Organization of American States, OAS, until an environment of full human rights protection has been effectively implemented, and acknowledged by credible international human rights organizations.

Sincerely,

[Enter here your name or Organization name]

[Enter here address of your Organization]

[Enter here your email]