

HONDURAS: Urgent Backgrounder Information

On June 28 2009 the military, Supreme Court and National Congress conspired in an illegal and unconstitutional coup d'etat against Manuel "Mel" Zelaya which resulted in his forced removal from the country. The coup resulted not only in the overthrow of the democratically-elected President and a breach of constitutional order but, also in the militarization of the country. It was under this climate of repression and violence that on November, 2009 Porfirio Lobo Sosa was brought to the presidency by fraudulent elections. The elections were carried out in an environment of deep militarization and heavy repression against the national resistance movement that opposed the coup and elections. The final outcome is viewed widely as illegitimate throughout the international community, and it remains unrecognized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and by the United Nations.

Since then the violence unleashed by the state on the persistent and peaceful resistance movement has continued to spiral out of control with the aggravating the already precarious human rights situation in the country.

General Facts:

- 48 documented assassinations of anti-coup Resistance members since the coup, with 15 having occurred since the inauguration of much-disputed President Lobo
- The LGTB community, including its leadership, has been the target of persecution and hate crimes. The community reported 25 murders in 2010, while indigenous and Garifunas organizations reported death threats and systematic attacks against their ancestral heritage sites and offices.
- Ongoing and escalating threats and attacks on human rights defenders and journalists
- Adoption of a seriously abuse-prone Anti-Terrorism Law that adds to other elements of the legal system as a means to suppress the peaceful social movement that arose to resist the coup
- Violent suppression of an agrarian justice movements in an area of the country known as the Bajo Aguan
- The majority of victims are human rights defenders, women's rights activists, LGTB activists, environmentalists, union leaders, campesino organizations, journalists, National Front for Popular Resistance activists or their family members, Resistance Lawyers' Front litigants or defenders, NGO social leaders, student organizations and mass media companies (radio, television, press, including alternative and community mass media).

Most Recent Repression:

- March 28, 2011 - Explosives thrown at office of Commission of Truth in San Pedro Sula
- March 28th, 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 is in custody in Tela facing charges of sedition and blocking a public roadway
- March 26th - 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 18, 2011 Ilse Velasquez, a teacher's union activist and a member of COFADEH since her brother Manuel Velasquez was disappeared, was killed during a ferocious repression against a protest by educators in Tegucigalpa. The 59 years old teacher lost consciousness on the street after a tear gas canister fired by the riot police struck her forehead
- In March 2011 the military and Police forces occupied the offices of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Honduras (**COPEMH Spanish acronym**) holding more than 30 teachers hostages
- COFADEH (Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees) in Honduras reported that that From January 2010 to January 31, 2011 a total of 1658 Human Rights violations

For a full list of the details and figures outlines in the last point see "A PERSPECTIVE FROM HONDURAS' CIVIL SOCIETY TRUTH COMMISSION; Speaking notes for a presentation to the March 9, 2011, Hearing on Honduras Convened by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Commons, Canada." <http://lacs.n.weebly.com/honduras.html>

REQUEST:

Call on the Canadian Government to take immediate action to protect the rights of civil society in Honduras, Cease current FTA negotiations with Honduras and support the continued suspension of Honduras' participation in the Organization of American States



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