

## **Honduras Military Coup Alert #9**

### **Rights Action EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND-RAISING APPEAL, July 3, 2009**

Rights Action co-director Grahame Russell is in Honduras working with our long-term Honduran partner groups. For interviews, email or call Grahame to set up a time to talk on the phone: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org), [504] 9507-3835

BELOW: -1- an emergency fund-raising appeal; -2- Rights Action's position vis-à-vis the coup

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### **EMERGENCY FUNDING APPEAL, JULY 3, 2009**

#### **DEFENDING DEMOCRACY & THE RULE OF LAW IN HONDURAS**

**AMOUNT** (short-term): \$75,000

The military coup in Honduras has received widespread international coverage. Some coverage is pro-coup, some is ambiguous; fortunately much coverage is critical – in varying degrees and ways - of the military, economic and political sectors that conspired to overthrow the democratic government of Honduras.

There is a chance that the Honduran people – with global support – can turn back the coup! It will be difficult, the repression is happening now, but the need and desire are there, in the Honduran people.

At [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org), you can read our series of “Honduras Military Coup – Alerts”. In them, you will analysis and reports and references to groups – in Honduras and outside – who are working to resist the coup. Below, we reproduce Rights Action's basic position.

We write to ask for emergency funds, that we will channel to our long-term partner groups in Honduras, for their work in defense of democracy and the rule of law.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Since 1998, in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, RA has supported and worked with a number of indigenous, campesino and human rights groups in Honduras: COPINH (Civic Counsel of Indigenous & Popular

Organizations), OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Garifuna People) COFADEH (Committee of Family Members of the Disappeared).

Since 2002, we have supported a number of groups that are denouncing and opposing the environmental and health harms, and human rights violations, caused by Goldcorp Inc's open pit, cyanide leech gold mine in central Honduras: Siria Valley Enviro-Defense Committee and CPRPT (Center for Torture Prevention).

We supported these groups in their emergency response work to Hurricane Mitch, their community and enviro-defense work related to mining, and in their long-term community development, human rights promotion and environmental defense work.

Even as each of these groups works in particular regions, on particular issues, they all have a common vision of a different future for Honduras – one based on:

- \* real democratic participation
- \* a well functioning administration of justice
- \* an end to exploitation and poverty, and
- \* an end to impunity and human rights violations

None of these groups can be called deeply committed supporters of the military-ousted President Mel Zelaya. None of them think Mel was a perfect leader. However, all of them are committed supporters of real democracy and the rule of law.

They also support the initiative, that President Zelaya was supporting, to decide, democratically, whether or not to establish a constituent national assembly and, with widespread participation, reform the constitution.

### **SINCE THE COUP**

For these reasons, these groups are utterly opposed to the illegal and brutal coup. Leaders of these organizations, and others, are being targeted right now, by the military regime. Many of them also suffered from the State terrorism and repression of the USA-backed military regimes of the 1980s and early 1990s.

For these reasons, backed by information you will read in our “Honduras Military Coup Alerts”, we seek funds for each of these groups, and for Rights Action's work.

Our Rights Action colleague Rosario Martinez (a Guatemalan woman), has been in Honduras since before the coup, and is working “on the ground” with our partner groups, with people and movements in resistance to the coup.

**FUNDS ARE BEING USED AS FOLLOWS:**

- general support funds for our partner groups carrying forth with their own bases, in defense of democracy and human rights: \$50,000
- emergency funds for ‘at risk’ leaders who have been targeted by the military regime: \$5,000
- legal defense funds for people illegally detained by the regime: \$5,000
- funds to help with communications, transportation and food costs related to defense of democracy and rule of law activities: \$10,000
- funds to enable to delegations of human rights defenders from El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua to come to Honduras to accompany the Honduran people: \$5,000

Make tax deductible donations to Rights Action and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

CANADA: 552-351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Annie Bird (Rights Action co-director, presently in the USA): [annie@rightsaction.org](mailto:annie@rightsaction.org) and Grahame Russell (co-director, in Honduras), [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org).

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**RIGHTS ACTION’s position:**

**ALERT #5 - Military Coup in Honduras, June 30, 2009**

**THE SITUATION IS BLACK AND WHITE, NOT GREY**

The governments of the United States and Canada must explicitly denounce the coup and break all relations until the democratic government is restored and there is a reconciliation and justice process in place.

The situation in Honduras could not be much worse. Like other groups, Rights Action is receiving more information about the coup and repression

than we can relay. While much of it is hard to confirm with 100% certainty, there is no doubt that:

- the democratically elected government was deposed in an illegal military coup
- the Army has taken over the country
- people have been killed
- dozens of people have been injured
- dozens if not over 100 people have been arbitrarily captured
- Army and Police violence is being used to repress protests against the coup, in favour of democracy
- leaders of popular organizations are in hiding as they are being targeted for illegal capture or repression
- there is a 'state of siege' in place, enforced by the Army and Police
- the media has been either shut down or is under control of the coup regime: inside Honduras, a propaganda campaign is being implemented
- the 'de facto' government is proceeding to "name" its new government

### **THE SITUATION IS BLACK AND WHITE, NOT GREY**

Rights Action – a not-for-profit organization with legal status in the USA and Canada – calls on Canadians and Americans to directly and repeatedly contact your own media and politicians and demand that the US and Canadian governments unequivocally denounce the military coup, denounce the 'de facto' government, and break all political, military & economic ties with Honduras until the democratic government is restored and there is a reconciliation and justice process in place.

In different ways, the governments of the USA and Canada have denounced the coup – the United States with a bit more clarity, Canada with a more muddled approach -, but then instead of demanding a return of the democratic government and trials for the coup plotters and implementers, both governments have called for discussions between all the parties (including, of course, the coup plotters and the military regime now in place).

IMAGINE: An organized gang of wealthy, well-armed criminals plan their crime ahead of time, break into your home and property; steal your property; kill and/or physically abuse some of your family members; prevent you from communicating your situation to anyone, including the media and the legal and political authorities; ..., ... and then imagine that other people come and say the solution is for you to sit down and talk with the criminals and solve your problems peacefully with them.

This is not a grey issue. This is a black and white issue. Insist, to your American and Canadian politicians (senators, congresspersons, members of parliament, etc) that the USA and Canada not call for the parties to sit down and talk. This is an illegal military coup, there is only one option: denounce it, reject it, oppose it.

Once the coup and repression have ended, once the legitimate government has been restored, once the coup conspirators have been identified and denounced (and put on trial), then, and only then, there will be many 'grey' issues for Hondurans to sit down discuss and resolve – democratically, according to the rule of law.

But, there is nothing 'grey' to discuss or resolve about the illegal and brutal coup.

Citizens of the USA and Canada must be involved; this is our issue. Historically, and on-going today, the Canadian and particularly US governments, and both our private sectors – including mining companies, sweatshops, fruit companies, etc - have had extensive economic and military relations with the Honduran oligarchies, militaries and their governments.

The Honduran oligarchy and military are carrying out this coup to maintain in place an unjust, exploitative and often repressive status quo – one that has benefited US and Canadian investors, businesses and consumers.

It is this unjust status quo that the people of Honduras are trying to change, via opinion polls and ballot boxes, to possibly form a National Constituent Assembly that might lead to popular participation in a process of serious constitutional reform.

The international community must not accept the position of asking that the various Honduran sectors peacefully resolve their problems via dialogue. With guns and tanks, a brutal military coup has occurred - it must be denounced, rejected, opposed.

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FUNDS ARE NEEDED FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND LEGAL DEFENSE WORK IN HONDURAS. Make tax deductible donations to Rights Action and mail to:

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CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

**AMERICANS AND CANADIANS SHOULD CONTACT YOUR OWN MEDIA,  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, SENATORS & MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, TO  
DEMAND:**

- unequivocal denunciation of the military coup
- no recognition of this military coup and the 'de facto' government of Roberto Michelletti and the unconditional return of the constitutional government
- increasing economic and military sanctions against the coup regime
- respect for safety and human rights of all Hondurans
- the application of international and national justice the coup plotters, and
- reparations for the illegal actions and rights violations committed during this illegal coup