

## Rights Action

### Day 27 of Honduran Coup Resistance July 24, 2009, Alert #32

- Letter (english and spanish) from Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize winner, to the Catholic Church of Honduras and Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez
- Message of Bishop Santos of the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Copán (Honduras)

#### **FOR INFORMATION FROM & ABOUT HONDURAS, CONTACT:**

Grahame Russell (Rights Action co-director): 1-860-352-2448 (Connecticut), [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

Jonathan Treat (journalist in Tegucigalpa): [504] 8877-4161, [jonathantreat@gmail.com](mailto:jonathantreat@gmail.com)

Sandra Cuffe (journalist in Tegucigalpa): [504] 9525-6778, [lavagabunda27@yahoo.es](mailto:lavagabunda27@yahoo.es)

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#### **LETTER FROM: ADOLFO PÉREZ ESQUIVEL, NOBEL PEACE PRIZE TO: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF HONDURAS AND CARDINAL OSCAR ANDRÉS RODRÍGUEZ**

(Translated for Rights Action by Rosalind Gill, [RGill@glendon.yorku.ca](mailto:RGill@glendon.yorku.ca))

"We must resist in hope, dear brother Rodríguez, and in this hope, we must walk the road of the people and not of the oppressors."

The coup d'état in Honduras by the military dictatorship and its accomplices brought death, the detention of hundreds of people, harassment and imprisonment of journalists, confiscation of their equipment and violations of human rights.

This situation leads me to ask Cardinal Rodríguez and the dictator Micheletti and his followers the following question: Is this what they intended? To kill defenseless people, to suspend the civil rights of the

people, to detain and repress those who demand their rights and the reinstatement of President Zelaya?

Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez: your choice to be an accomplice of the military dictatorship is not the way of the Gospel. You cannot go against your people, in the name of so-called security and law, to condone violence and repression and serious violations of human rights.

The shepherd who abandons his sheep, permits atrocities and supports dictatorship to defend his economic and political interests is not worthy of being recognized as one of Christ's shepherds by his people.

In Latin America, we have a long and painful history of military dictatorships with which Church officials have been accomplices. These regimes have used repression, murder, disappearings and torture to impose their State terrorism.

Unfortunately, Church officials continue to support such regimes in a number of countries. Witness the stance taken by Cardinal Terrazas in Bolivia, who allied himself with and supported those who plotted to bring down President Evo Morales. In Venezuela, Church officials supported the military coup against President Hugo Chávez.

I heard your public statements against the President of Venezuela. You have the right to disagree but not to slander. I never heard you make public statements against US intervention in your country and on the continent, or against the atrocities committed in Columbia and the armed uprising against our fellow people in Ecuador.

Thanks be to God, there are signs of hope for the future of the life and dignity of our brothers and sisters who are faithful to the Gospel and to their people and committed to fighting for a more just and humane world.

Many would give up their lives to give Life; the martyrs of the Church teach us how to follow the way of Christ. Do you remember our brother, Archbishop Romero, of El Salvador?

You know full well that Honduras is a country with a long history of US intervention, supported by economic, political and church groups. Today, these same power groups, with the US ambassador as an accomplice (he admits he met with the coup organizers) oppose the reforms proposed by President Zelaya and they staged a coup d'état to ensure that the Referendum was not held.

What are you afraid of brother Rodríguez? - Of your own fears? Of a Referendum to let the people decide what road to take? Are you afraid of the poor, of letting them participate, of their wanting to join ALBA and to not submit to CAFTA because it means more dependency on the US and supports the economic interests of those who have always repressed the Honduras people?

Do not forget that 70% of the Honduran population lives in poverty and 58% lives under the poverty line - this is the result of social and structural injustice.

The violence against the people is an attempt to maintain this situation of social and structural injustice and the situation is out of control. This dictatorship is like the "sorcerer's apprentice" - it cannot stop what it has set in motion.

The international community is demanding the immediate reinstatement of President Zelaya. The EU, the UN, social, political and religious groups, as well as the Brazilian Bishops, Don Pedro Casaldáliga and Demetrio Valentín, are all demanding a return to law and respect for the wishes of the people.

Listen to the voice of Bishop of Copán, of your own country, and the thousands of voices from all over the continent and the world, that reject this dictatorship.

If President Zelaya committed a crime, or made any mistakes, the country has a National Constitution and laws in place to determine if he is responsible. But those who support the dictatorship are preventing the law from being applied and support illegal coup d'état to take power. And you try to hide your crimes with words that are empty of content.

You speak of the Law, of the Constitution and of human dignity but you violate and contaminate them - your response is to repress the people, causing death and harm.

How can you explain all these contradictions and this lack of values? What do these atrocities have to do with Christ's message?

I hope that God guides and enlightens you in your sermons, because you are lost in a labyrinth of uncertainty. How long are you going to act like an Inquisitor, supporting the hangmen who are spreading terror and have usurped power in your country?

Do you realize that the coup d'état in Honduras endangers democracy on the entire continent?

The people have the right to resist against injustice and to refuse to cooperate with oppressors and those who usurped power. And the governments and peoples of Latin America have the responsibility not to recognize an illegitimate and repressive government.

Many years of struggle and suffering caused by dictatorships all over the continent have taught us painfully that it is preferable to die as free men and women than live as slaves.

For hope always shows us a new dawn for the life and dignity of our peoples. We must resist in hope, dear brother Rodríguez, and in this hope, we must walk with the people and not with the oppressors. You must make a choice, as a man and a clergyman: to serve God and your people or to serve the oppressors and those in power.

There are many questions. You have the answer.

"Only Truth will free us". May the God of Life guide and illuminate you in his Peace and Goodness.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Nobel Prize for Peace

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### **De Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Premio Nobel por La Paz A la Iglesia de Honduras y al Cardenal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez**

"Hay que resistir en la esperanza, hermano Rodríguez, y esa esperanza está caminando junto a los pueblos y nunca en el camino de los opresores."

El golpe de Estado en Honduras, desatado por la dictadura militar y sus cómplices, trajo muerte, cientos de detenidos, periodistas perseguidos y apresados, confiscados sus equipos y violado los derechos humanos.

Esta situación lleva a preguntarle al Cardenal Rodríguez, al dictador Micheletti y sus secuaces: ¿Es esto lo que esperaban? ¿Asesinar a personas indefensas, suspender las garantías constitucionales del pueblo, apresar y reprimir a quienes reclaman sus derechos y la restitución del presidente Zelaya en sus funciones?

Cardenal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez: el camino que has elegido de ser cómplice de la dictadura militar, no es el camino del Evangelio. No puedes estar en contra de tu pueblo y permitir la violencia y represión que, en nombre de la supuesta seguridad y del derecho, comete graves violaciones, precisamente, de los derechos humanos.

El pastor que abandona sus ovejas y permite las atrocidades y apoya la dictadura para defender sus intereses económicos y políticos, no es digno de ser reconocido como Pastor de Cristo y por su pueblo.

En América Latina tenemos una larga y dolorosa historia de dictaduras militares y complicidades de jerarquías eclesíásticas, que estuvieron al servicio de la opresión y fueron cómplices de la muerte y desaparición de personas, de torturas, para imponer el terrorismo de Estado.

Lamentablemente esa actitud continúa en varios países, como el comportamiento del Cardenal Terrazas en Bolivia, que se alió y apoyó a los golpistas para intentar derrocar al Presidente Evo Morales.

En Venezuela la Jerarquía eclesíástica apoyó el golpe militar contra el Presidente Hugo Chávez.

Escuché tus declaraciones contra el presidente venezolano. Tienes el derecho de disentir, pero no el de difamar. Nunca escuché tus declaraciones para condenar la intervención de Estados Unidos, en tu país y el continente, o sobre las atrocidades cometidas en Colombia y la incursión armada contra el pueblo hermano del Ecuador.

Gracias a Dios, hay signos de esperanza y horizontes de vida y dignidad, de hermanos y hermanas que fieles al Evangelio y a su pueblo, se comprometen y luchan por un mundo más justo y humano y muchos de ellos dieron su vida para dar Vida; son los mártires de la iglesia que nos enseña a seguir el camino de Cristo.

¿Recuerdas a nuestro hermano Monseñor Romero, en El Salvador?

Bien sabes que Honduras es un país con un largo historial de intervenciones de EE.UU. apoyado por grupos económicos, políticos y eclesíásticos. Hoy esos mismos grupos de poder, con la complicidad del embajador de los EE.UU. en Honduras, quien confiesa que estuvo reunido con los golpistas, se oponen a las reformas que propuso el Presidente Zelaya y deciden dar el golpe de Estado para negar la Consulta Popular.

¿A que le tienes miedo hermano Rodríguez? ¿A tus propios miedos? ¿A la Consulta Popular para que el pueblo decida el camino a seguir? ¿Tienes miedo a los pobres, que participen y quieran adherir al ALBA y no someterse al TLC que es mayor dependencia de los EE.UU. y que esa decisión afecte los intereses económicos de aquellos que siempre oprimieron al pueblo hondureño?

Recuerda que Honduras tiene el 70 % de la población en la pobreza y el 58% bajo el nivel de pobreza, situación provocada por la injusticia social y estructural. Al recurrir a la violencia contra el pueblo para sostener la situación de injusticia estructural y social, la situación se les ha vuelto incontrolable. Están como el "aprendiz de hechicero", ya no saben cómo pararla.

La comunidad internacional les reclama el inmediato regreso del presidente Zelaya. La OEA, la ONU, sectores sociales, políticos y religiosos, como los Obispos de Brasil, Don Pedro Casaldáliga y Demetrio Valentín, reclaman la vuelta a la legalidad y respetar la voluntad del pueblo.

Escucha la voz del obispo de Copán, de tu tierra, las miles de voces de todo el continente y el mundo, que rechazan la dictadura.

Si el presidente Zelaya cometió un delito, o cualquier falta, el país tiene la Constitución Nacional y las leyes vigentes para determinar su responsabilidad. Pero ustedes impiden aplicar la ley y recurren al golpe de Estado. Y pretenden disfrazar sus crímenes con palabras vaciadas de contenido.

Hablan del Derecho y de la Constitución, de la dignidad humana y los violan y contaminan, y responden reprimiendo al pueblo, provocando muertes y heridos.

¿Por qué tantas contradicciones y falta de valores? ¿Qué tienen que ver esas atrocidades con el mensaje de Cristo? Espero que en tus oraciones Dios te guíe e ilumine, porque estás perdido en la maraña de la incertidumbre. ¿Hasta cuándo piensas seguir de inquisidor, apoyando a los verdugos que implantaron el terror y asumieron el poder en tu tierra?

¿Tienes conciencia que el golpe de Estado en Honduras, es un peligro para la democracia en el continente? El pueblo tiene derecho a la Resistencia frente a las injusticias, a no cooperar con los opresores, a desconocer a quienes usurparon el poder. Y los gobiernos y pueblos latinoamericanos tienen la responsabilidad de desconocer a un gobierno ilegítimo y represor.

Muchos años de lucha y sufrimiento implantado por las dictaduras en todo el continente nos enseñaron en el dolor, que es preferible morir como hombres y mujeres libres, que vivir como esclavos. Porque la esperanza siempre nos muestra un nuevo amanecer para la vida y dignidad de nuestros pueblos.

Hay que resistir en la esperanza, hermano Rodríguez, y esa esperanza está caminando junto a los pueblos y nunca en el camino de los opresores. Tienes que optar, como hombre y como pastor: servir a Dios y a tu pueblo, o server a los opresores y poderes de turno. Son muchos las preguntas. Tú tienes la respuesta.

"Sólo la Verdad nos hará libres". Que el Dios de la Vida te guíe e ilumine y en su Paz y Bien.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Premio Nobel de la Paz

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### **MESSAGE FROM BISHOP SANTOS OF THE DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA DE COPÁN (HONDURAS), JULY 2, 2009**

The diocese of Santa Rosa de Copán, faithful to the mission of announcing the Kingdom of God and of denouncing situations of injustice, asks all Hondurans to take profound efforts to re-establish social peace.

We, the great majority of Hondurans, do not want confrontations in the streets, civil wars, or wars with other peoples.

Therefore we ask the groups who have altered the public order to put all the good will they have into resolving by means of Dialogue the present crisis which has been produced by the social inequality in which we have always lived.

As those who are responsible for guiding the Catholic Church in Western Honduras, we repudiate the substance, the form, and the style with which a new Head of the Executive Branch has been imposed on the People. If President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales had committed something illegal he has the right to a just trial just like every Honduran citizen and in general every human being. Article 84 of the current Constitution says in its text, "No one can be arrested unless by virtue of a written command of the Competent Authority."

The coup d'etat of June 28 has these consequences: protests of the citizenry in the streets and highways, a climate of insecurity and fear in families because of the limitation of constitutional rights, including: The right to freedom of movement, freedom of association and to demonstrate, inviolability of one's home, the right of private property, freedom of the press and of dissemination of ideas and opinions, personal freedom, including the right not to be detained administratively in a police station for more than 24 hours and a limit of six days of investigative detention under judicial orders, which would lead to indefinite detentions.

All this mentioned above is contained in the Decree about the "State of Exception" which was being drawn up yesterday, July 1, in the National Congress. With this we are coming near to a massive violation of human rights.

In regard to this we especially repudiate:

The violent manner in which Radio Progreso and other means of communication were silenced.

Illegal detentions.

The exiling of some countrymen/women.

The bloody beatings and wounds.

As the Catholic Church on pilgrimage in the West of Honduras we want to remind the 124 deputies of the Liberal Party and the National Party responsible for the Coup d'Etat and presently in power that they are not the owners/masters of Honduras and that no one can be above the law.

The present deputies ought to remember that they get their salaries from the people whom they are oppressing. If the plebiscite and referendum had been given institutional status, as we the bishops of the Honduran Bishops Conference suggested in our communication of June 19, we would not be in this situation.

They preferred to be faithful to the economically strong groups, both national and transnational. We hope that in the next elections the People will give them a vote of punishment.

We wish to remind everyone, especially the Armed Forces and the National Police, of the fifth commandment which says "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). This commandment forbids also beating, wounding, and all abuse of human beings who are created in the image and likeness of God and who are Temples of the Holy Spirit.



We regret every violation of the Constitution of the Republic which those who have governed us have been doing up to now. We reject every threat and meddling of foreign nations in the internal affairs of Honduras.

We Hondurans want peace. No more lies. We want to be told the truth. No more injustice. We want respect for the integrity of the person and respect for human rights. We want to live in freedom. We do not want repression.

The call of Jesus is to live in love. Therefore, no more hatred, no more revenge, no more violence, no more spitefulness.

Jesus says in Mark 4:40, "Why do you have so much fear? How is it that you do not believe?"

Inspired by these words of Jesus we invite all of you to trust in the merciful and saving presence of the Lord who accompanies us in our pilgrimage.

Let us intensify our prayer for Honduras.

Let us beg the Lord to grant that we may achieve Peace and prosperity and let us ask our patron, Saint Rose of Lima, to intercede for us.

Santa Rosa de Copán, July 1, 2009  
Diocesan Pastoral Council

This message was delivered publicly by Monseñor Luis Alfonso Santos, SDB, in the cathedral of Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras, on Thursday, July 2, 2009, at 12:00 pm. Translated by John Donaghy ([jdonaghy@igc.org](mailto:jdonaghy@igc.org))

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**TO DONATE FUNDS TO PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT IN HONDURAS, 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

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**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 Micheletti

- unconditional return of the entire constitutional government
- concrete economic, military and diplomatic sanctions against the coup plotters and perpetrators
- respect for safety and human rights of all Hondurans
- application of international and national justice against the coup plotters, and
- reparations for the illegal actions and rights violations committed during this illegal coup

FOR MORE INFO: see series of Honduras Coup Alerts at [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org). Contact Grahame Russell at [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org) or Annie Bird at [annie@rightsaction.org](mailto:annie@rightsaction.org)