

Rights Action

FUND-RAISING APPEAL - August 18, 2009

RESISTING & ROLLING BACK THE COUP-REGIME IN HONDURAS: IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY & THE RULE OF LAW

BELOW: A summary of funds Rights Action has distributed thus far and an appeal for more funds

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The people of Honduras enter their 8th week of resistance to the repressive military coup regime in Honduras, since the June 28th coup.

There is a struggle to restore the government of President Zelaya and continue on their path to bring about real democratic reforms.

This is a struggle of Hondurans for Honduras, and it is a struggle of the Americas. Across the continent, there are struggles going on between poor majorities and wealthy and powerful elites who resist change to the status quos in their countries and in the Americas.

With global support and activism, there is a chance that the Honduran people can turn back the coup! It is very difficult, the repression, rights violations and destruction of democracy are happening now, but the need and desire are there, in the Honduran people.

We write to ask for donations that we will use by Rights Action and channeled to our groups in Honduras, for their work in defense of democracy and the rule of law.

To date, Rights Action has channeled \$35,000 to:

- National Front Against the Coup: flights, Hond – Costa Rica, negotiations mediated by Oscar Arias: 1,710
- National Front Against the Coup: flights & costs, Hond - Washington DC: 3,543
- National Front Against the Coup: flight, Hond – Costa Rica, negotiations mediated by Oscar Arias: 607
- National Front Against the Coup: communications & mobilizations committees: 1,675
- COFADEH (Committee of Family Members of Disappeared): human rights investigations and legal defense work: 3,500
- OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Garifuna and Black Peoples): community work in defense of democracy: 3,785
- COPINH (Counsel of Indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras): community work in defense of democracy: 11,481
- Environmental Defense Committee del Valle de Siria: community work in defense of democracy: 167
- TheNetwork: computer: 470
- Emergency support: families – victims of repression: 388
- Emergency support: people/ journalists threatened: 370

- Human rights accompaniment / reporting: 7,140
- Guatemala / Rigoberta Menchu human rights emergency delegation: 1,208
- Independent journalism: 1,062

BACKGROUND

Since 1998, in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, RA has supported and worked with indigenous, campesino and human rights groups in Honduras, including: 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 and worked with 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

SINCE THE COUP

None of these groups were committed supporters of the military-ousted President Mel Zelaya. However, all of them are committed supporters of real democracy and the rule of law.

Leaders of our partner groups, and many others, are being targeted 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!)

Rights Action staff have been in Honduras since before the coup, and are working with people, organizations and the National Front Against the Coup, and are reporting regularly on what is happening.

ACTUAL SITUATION

The situation in Honduras could not be much worse. Like other groups, Rights Action receives more information about resistance and repression than we can relay. The basic situation is as follows:

- the democratically elected government was violently deposed on June 28th in an illegal military coup, in collusion with powerful economic and political elites
- the coup regime has militarized the country and many public institutions

- most balanced media has been shut, repressed or censored, while a propaganda campaign (apparently very well planned by the pro-coup sectors) is being implemented by the coup regime
- people have been killed by soldiers, police and para-military groups, including journalists, campesinos, opposition politicians, teachers
- dozens of people have been injured and 100s of people have been arbitrarily captured (and suffered abuse while detained)
- Army and police violence is being used to repress the on-going, daily protests against the coup
- Some members of popular organizations are in hiding as they are being targeted for illegal capture or repression
- there is a 'state of siege' in place, including army and police road-blocks, daily curfew, etc, enforced by the army and police
- the illegal coup regime is ousting pro-democracy individuals from state ministries and institutions, replacing them with pro-coup regime people

At www.rightsaction.org, please read our series of "Honduras Military Coup Alerts". You will read analysis and reports, and references to groups – in Honduras and outside – who are working to resist the coup.

FUND-RAISING GOAL: \$165,000

FUNDS TO BE USED AS FOLLOWS:

- general support funds for our partner groups carrying work in their own regions of the country, and nationally, in defense of democracy and human rights: \$100,000
- emergency funds for 'at risk' individuals who have been targeted by the regime: \$15,000
- legal defense funds for people illegally detained by the regime: \$15,000
- funds to help with communications, transportation and food costs related to defense of democracy and rule of law activities: \$15,000
- funds to enable North American human rights to come to Honduras to accompany the Honduran people, and for Hondurans to travel to North America to inform about the situation: \$20,000

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TO DONATE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE FUNDS, MAKE CHECK 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>

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We look forward to your questions or comments about this work. We would gladly set up a time to talk on the phone.

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