

Rights Action

DAY 87 – SOLDIERS & POLICE OPEN FIRE ON PEACEFUL PROTESTERS IN FRONT OF BRAZILIAN EMBASSY

(Alert#67, September 22, 2009, 8:30am)

BELOW:

A summary of some of what happened yesterday, when President Zelaya returned to Honduras. The Honduran people have taken to the streets and public places to show support for the return of their democracy.

The oligarchic-military regime imposed a military curfew yesterday. As you will read, below, Hondurans did not respect the curfew --- rather, thousands of people surrounded the Brazilian embassy ...

This morning ...

- soldiers, police and tanks opened fire on the peaceful protesters with rubber bullets and tear-gas. People are wounded
- the regime has imposed a complete curfew on the entire country. People are to stay in their homes
- the regime has shut down all four airports in the country

Read on ... and please contact your congress-person, your senator, your member of parliament to demand international intervention to put an end to this military regime and please donate funds that we are channeling to people and organizations involved in the National Front Against the Coup.

INTERVIEWS & MORE INFORMATION:

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DAY 86, September 21, 11:00pm – PRESIDENT ZELAYA HAS RETURNED TO HONDURAS - UPDATE

This is a hugely uplifting moment in the struggle – an extraordinary struggle and achievement of the Honduran people, ... and there is a risk of more brutal repression.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END - ?

The oligarchic-military regime has again imposed a military curfew on the country.

Across Honduras, 1000s and 1000s and 1000s of people are not respecting the illegal curfew, imposed by an illegitimate regime. Thousands of people and vehicles are surrounding the embassy of Brazil, to where President Zelaya arrived today. The government of Brazil has announced that President Zelaya is a "guest" in the embassy.

Honduras's Radio Globo is reporting live (<http://www.radioglobohonduras.com/>) about the developing situation, including voices of Hondurans from in front of the Brazilian embassy, after curfew, including a live interview with President Zelaya from the embassy – calling for calm, calling for the soldiers and police to not sue repression, calling for Hondurans to take to the streets and public places to take back their democracy!

BELOW:

a "live blog" from Monday, by Al Giordano, that gives a flavor of what happened and is happening ...

ACTION:

Today is the day for Americans and Canadians to call and call and call their congress members, senators and members of parliament, to make the demands as set out at the bottom.

DONATIONS:

See at bottom, to make tax-deductible donations for member organizations of the National Front Against the Coup.

Thank-you to all who have donated over the past 86 days.

More funds are needed to help the people's movement stay strong and present in the streets and public places of Honduras, taking back their democracy.

Through various means, Rights Action is sending funds every day directly to people and organizations at the forefront of the anti-coup, pro-democracy movement.

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LIVE BLOG: PRESIDENT ZELAYA HAS RETURNED TO HONDURAS

<http://narcosphere.narconews.com/thefield/3439/live-blog-president-zelaya-has-returned-honduras>, by Al Giordano - September 21, 2009

The Honduran president Manuel Zelaya is in Tegucigalpa..., in the Brazilian embassy. "I am here in Tegucigalpa. I am here for the restoration of democracy, to call for dialogue." he told Honduras' Canal 36 television network.

As occurred during the first hours of the June 28 coup d'etat, the Internet signals of Channel 36 and Radio Globo are blocked, as is cell phone service in the capital (I've yet to confirm that there is any Internet or cell phone access in Tegucigalpa at all right now - it all appears to be jammed – but we do have reporter Belén Fernández reporting right this moment from that city and the information blockade will be broken soon enough.)

We can take that extreme of censorship as additional confirmation that the President has indeed returned and the illegitimate coup regime is panicking.

Developing... We'll update here as we're able to report and confirm more...

Update: 12:08 p.m. Tegucigalpa (2:08 p.m. ET): TeleSur confirms that the President is in Tegucigalpa but adds that it cannot confirm reports that he is in the United Nations building there. It anticipates a press conference from Zelaya this afternoon...

12:24 p.m. Tegucigalpa (2:24 p.m. ET): One of our correspondents just got an email message from Tegucigalpa which reports that not all cell phone service is blocked.

12:28 p.m.: Via TeleSur: The Spaniard news agency EFE reports that the President is in the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa.

12:29 p.m.: The US State Department confirms that Zelaya is in Honduras (via AP).

12:39 p.m.: The web page of the coup regime's "president" leads with a loud denial: "Micheletti denies the presence of 'Mel' in the country." Meanwhile AFP reports that the Brazilian government has confirmed Zelaya's presence in its Embassy in Tegucigalpa, according to TeleSur.

12:47 p.m.: TeleSur is showing images of uniformed National Police members, with billy clubs, shields, helmets and guns, surrounding the zone near the Brazilian Embassy, apparently to close access to the area, blocking anti-coup demonstrators from entering or leaving. The network is also broadcasting live images, from Channel 36, of two helicopters circling over the Embassy.

12:51 p.m.: TeleSur reporter Adriana Sívori is now inside the Brazilian Embassy and confirms President Zelaya's physical presence there.

1:57 p.m.: We now have phone contact with Narco News correspondent Belén Fernández, who in Tegucigalpa this morning walked into the Radio Globo headquarters just as the news broke that Zelaya had returned. She's going to have one hell of a story for us later today.

2:04 p.m.: Connecting the dots... The return of Zelaya has all the markings of a very well coordinated operation by the Honduran civil resistance and the member countries of the Organization of American States (OAS). The choice of Brazil's embassy - the Latin American country with the largest Air Force - pretty much guarantees that the coup regime can't possibly think it can violate the sovereignty of that space.

That the US State Department confirmed, this morning, that Zelaya is in Honduras while the coup regime denied it strongly suggests it had advance knowledge that this would happen today (if not active participation).

This is a textbook example of what we've referred to before as "dilemma actions." It puts the coup regime on the horns of a dilemma, in which it has no good options. It can leave Zelaya to put together his government again from the Brazilian embassy with the active support of so many sectors of Honduran civil society, or it can try to arrest the President, provoking a nonviolent insurrection from the people of the kind that has toppled many a regime throughout history.

Minute by minute, hour by hour, and, soon, day by day, the coup regime is losing its grip. At some point it will have to choose either to unleash a terrible violent wave of state terrorism upon the country's own people - which will provoke all out insurrection in response (guaranteed by Article 3 of the Honduran Constitution) - or Micheletti and his Simian Council can start packing their bags and seeking asylum someplace like Panama.

Meanwhile, the people are coming down from the hills to meet their elected president. This, kind readers, is immediate history.

2:24 p.m.: Some other consequences of today's breaking development: President Zelaya today erases any of the talk or speculation that he did not have the courage to put himself at risk in this struggle, which will also have an emboldening effect on every single individual among the hundreds of thousands in the civil resistance. The effect is causing all to think: If he's willing to risk all, then so am I.

This move also makes a laughing stock out of Micheletti and his security forces. Remember our reports about how airfields throughout the country were blocked by buses and other vehicles, so paranoid was the regime about Zelaya's potential return? That Zelaya slipped through the security net demonstrates that the coup regime does not have the control it claims to have.

Micheletti - the usurper dictator - has also helped elevate his status as a national buffoon with his early claims today that Zelaya hadn't really returned. He accused the media that reported his return of lying and of "media terrorism."

Well, now the same pro-coup newspapers that reported his tantrum have this photo, taken today, of President Zelaya and his cabinet members inside the Brazilian Embassy: There you have it. Countdown to complete mental breakdown by Micheletti and his dwindling core of supporters (and, yes, that includes a grouplet of US expats that have been blogging constant disinformation from Honduras – their self-delusion and dishonesty to all is now crashing on the rocks of reality, too).

2:56 p.m.: Ivan Marovic - who as a young man played a major role in strategizing the civil resistance that toppled the Serbian dictator Milosevic, and who spent a few days in Honduras this summer at the invitation of the civil resistance - and I just had a chat online about our observations of what is happening and how it changes everything in Honduras. With his permission, I'll share with you an excerpt:

me: So, let's put ourselves in Micheletti's shoes. What options does he have at this point?

Ivan: It's a tough one. He can arrest Zelaya, but Zelaya said he's here to call for dialogue. That would be bad. Micheletti can enter a dialogue, but then he's screwed.

me: Well, I don't think he can send troops into the Brazilian Embassy, which is sovereign territory. Brazil has the biggest air force in Latin America. Brazil is the coordinating nation of the UN security forces in Haiti...

Ivan: This is important, because with Zelaya in the country, the momentum has shifted. Stalling doesn't work anymore.

me: It's a textbook "dilemma action."

Ivan: Yes.

me: The regime can either leave him there to reassemble his government with broad popular support, or it can unleash a wave of violence and terror, which would provoke all out insurrection. Now that Zelaya has demonstrated he is willing to risk his own freedom and safety, that becomes contagious to hundreds of thousands that will decide to do the same.

Ivan: Yes, this has a big symbolic value. That's why no regime is afraid of the government in exile. But in the country, that's a different thing. It's a game changer, folks.

3:37 p.m.: The coup regime makes its first move, declaring a military curfew in effect from 4 p.m. to 7 a.m. What's not clear is whether it will be obeyed by the crowds converging around the Embassy, and what the regime's next move will be if the public disregards its curfew.

4:21 p.m.: The military curfew began 21 minutes ago, but a multitude of citizens continue to congregate in front of the Brazilian embassy, making and listening to speeches against the coup regime. In other words: What if they called a curfew and nobody stayed home?

4:31 p.m.: Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim says that he doubts very much that the Honduran coup regime would commit "a flagrant violation of International Law" by invading his country's embassy in Tegucigalpa.

4:56 p.m.: The regime is trying everything. Cell phone service is being screwed with again for the past hour. Channel 36 has gone off the air. Radio Globo's Internet site is down. Here is an alternate link to Radio Globo's live stream. Keep storming the gates of the information blockade.

5:06 p.m.: Radio Globo reports that a caravan of more than 2,000 vehicles filled with coup opponents is en route from the state of El Paraiso to the national capital. Also reports massive traffic jams in Tegucigalpa now, an hour after curfew took effect.

5:21 p.m.: Coup "president" Micheletti just spoke on a "cadena nacional" (in which all TV, radio and cable stations are required to broadcast his

message). He confirmed that Zelaya is in the country, insisted that the June 28 coup was "legal," said Zelaya will have to face charges against him, insisted that the country is in complete calm (if so, then why the military curfew?), attacked the government of Brazil for protecting Zelaya in its Embassy, and told everyone that the National Police and the National Army are behind him. He ended with shouts of "Viva Honduras" to a small group of coup functionaries. He sounds frightened, but is digging in his heels.

Upon the termination of his broadcast, a woman on Radio Globo mocked him mercilessly, saying "no one owes obedience to an order by a de facto regime," and noted that the curfew was called just ten minutes before it took effect, leaving millions of Hondurans to have to get home from work but without enough time to do it. "Nobody is obeying the order," she said. "Nor should they."

5:30 p.m.: I'll be live on Flashpoints radio (available at the KPFA website), hosted by Dennis Bernstein, at the top of the hour (8 p.m. ET, 5 p.m. PT) to talk about the situation in Honduras. There will also be a report from Tim Russo - professor at the upcoming Narco News School of Authentic Journalism - who was in front of the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa today when President Zelaya appeared from the balcony to greet the crowd, and took audiotape of the moment.

5:42 p.m.: Leaders of the Liberal Party bloc that turned against the coup have now signed a public letter calling on party members "in all the popular barrios" of Tegucigalpa and throughout the country to converge on the Brazilian Embassy to protect President Zelaya. Radio Globo just read the letter live on the air.

5:50 p.m.: The coup regime has just cut electricity to entire neighborhoods surrounding the Brazilian Embassy and Channel 36 TV. How long do you think it will take the people to install a generator in each place? The same will happen when the regime cuts the water, the next likely step coming from that form of logic. And the people will usher in water trucks to refill the tanks. Hell, they'll bring it cup by cup if they have to! This is a losing gambit by the Micheletti regime because it does not have control of the street.

6:52 p.m.: As predicted in the previous update, the regime's attempt to cut electricity to the Brazilian Embassy is already an epic fail. Tim Russo just reported live on that Flashpoints radio show from inside the Embassy as the electric power went back on! A discussion about a half hour prior, on Radio Globo, included a call for generators and a pledge by the head of

the electrical workers union to send technicians to set them up. A half hour later, there was light.

An organized people can never be beat. That is the lesson of Honduras.

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SPEAKING TOURS: “RESISTANCE TO MILITARY COUPS & GOLD MINING DEVASTATION IN HONDURAS & GUATEMALA”

In October, activists with Rights Action will be on speaking tours in Ontario, Quebec and eastern Canada, and north-east USA, showing slides and short documentaries and speaking about the on-going pro-democracy, anti coup movement in Honduras and about indigenous and community resistance to Goldcorp Inc.'s open-pit, cyanide leach mines in Guatemala and Honduras.

Karen Spring (spring.kj@gmail.com) in Ontario

Francois Guindon (francois.guindon@gmail.com) in Quebec and eastern Canada

Grahame Russell (info@rightsaction.org) in north-east USA

AMERICANS & CANADIANS should contact our members of congress, senators & members of parliament every day, day after day, send copies of this information, and demand:

unconditional and public support for the return of the entire constitutional government of President Zelaya

an immediate suspension of the release of all international funds and loans to the regime

unequivocal denunciation of the military coup and no recognition of this military coup and the regime of Roberto Micheletti

no recognition of the November 2009 elections, that candidates from the traditional Nationalist and Liberal parties are campaigning for, even as the country is militarized and repression is widespread

concrete and targeted economic, military and diplomatic sanctions against the coup plotters and perpetrators

application of international and national justice against the coup plotters and perpetrators

reparations to the victims for the illegal actions and rights violations committed during this illegal coup

TO DONATE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE FUNDS to the peaceful, people's pro-democracy movement in Honduras, 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>

For foundations and institutional donors, Rights Action can (upon request) provide a full proposal of which organizations and people we are channeling funds to and supporting.

Thank-you for your on-going support for our work and for this struggle.

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