

Rights Action

DAY 89 – HONDURAS COUP RESISTANCE

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THE ONE-SIDED WAR ON THE STREETS OF HONDURAS

By Jeremy Kryt, Narco News Bulletin,

“The people can't even walk the streets in peace,” Bertha Oliva told me. “They're being beaten just for stepping out of doors. hunt them as if for sport. What kind of a country has this become?”

The oligarchic-military regime of Roberto Micheletti/ General Ramon Vasquez continues today with a complete military lock-down of the country. An all-day military curfew is in effect; civil rights are not being respected.

And yet again, yesterday, thousands of people in Honduras' pro-democracy, anti-coup movement took to the streets – despite the military curfew, and more tear-gas, beatings, illegal detentions and torture - marching from the National University of Pedagogy to the Brazilian embassy, that the regime has surrounded and cut-off, because Honduran President Mel Zelaya, his family and hundreds of other people are inside.

BELOW:

- 2 photos from COFADEH of victims of torture & beatings
- Article: “The one-sided war on the streets of Honduras”
- How to donate fund for the National Front Against the Coup & what to do?

INTERVIEWS & MORE INFORMATION:

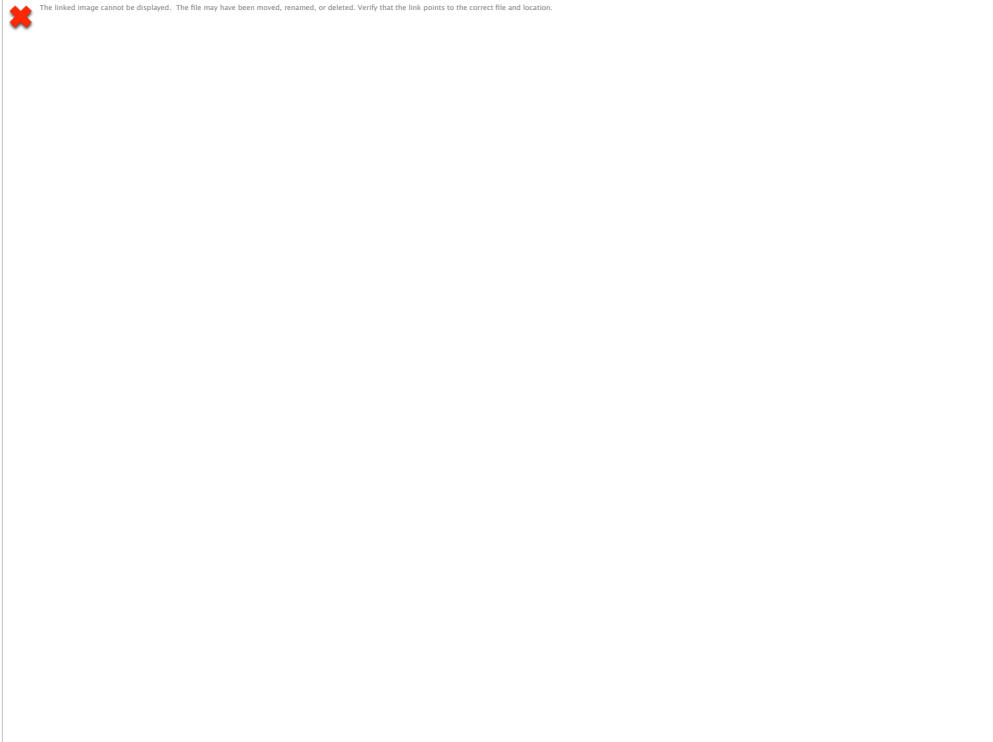
- Grahame Russell, Rights Action co-director, (860) 352-2448, c: (860) 751-4285, info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org
- Juan Alemendares, Honduran doctor and human rights activist, 011 [504] 9985-4150
- Sandra Cuffe, freelance journalist in Honduras, 011 [504] 9525-6778

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This is Walter Javier Rodriguez, 21 years old. Walter was detained and tortured in two police stations in Tegucigalpa. Walter explains that he was sitting in his neighborhood when the police grabbed hi, threatening his life. "First, they took me to the police station in the Alemania neighborhood and then to the 4th police station in Belén. In both places, they closed us in a cell and beat us with hoses, brooms and with whatever the could find, telling us they were going to kill us."



This is Carlos Humberto Izaguirre, 51 years old. Carlos was tortured by police for the 4th time since the June 28 coup. Carlos came to COFADEH to present his testimony.

(Photos distributed by "Honduras Resiste: todos y todas por la constituyente". National Front Against the Coup. Send your messages to: fian-honduras@googlegroups.com, to be re-published. Esteban Meléndez, journalist in resistance.)

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THE ONE-SIDED WAR ON THE STREETS OF HONDURAS

By Jeremy Kryt, jkryt@aol.com, Special to The Narco News Bulletin, September 23, 2009, <http://narconews.com/Issue60/article3822.html>

(Tegucigalpa, Honduras, September 22, 2009): Government forces attacked a peaceful crowd outside the Brazilian Embassy Tuesday morning, in an apparent attempt to dispel support for deposed President Mel Zelaya. Mr. Zelaya had returned to the country on Monday after almost three months in exile.

"It was terrible repression," said National Congressman Marvin Ponce, who was with Zelaya in the Embassy until around nine o'clock the night before. "This is a reflection of their philosophies, this government of putchists. They

don't respect human rights. They don't want a political dialogue," said Ponce, and he ought to know: The Congressman was himself assaulted during a nonviolent protest last month, suffering several broken bones, including his right arm, which was fractured in three places.

Eye-witness testimony indicated that the soldiers and police fired tear gas, rubber bullets, and live rounds into the crowd. "It was brutal," said resistance organizer Juan Barahona, director of El Bloque Popular. "I was outside the embassy when the police began their dispersal. Afterwards we reorganized, and marched through some of the poor barrios. But the police attacked us there as well."

The day before, thousands had gathered in front of the Brazilian Consulate in the Colonia Palmira, to welcome home Mr. Zelaya with chanting and songs. The de facto government imposed a curfew starting at four p.m., and cut power to the Embassy; but Zelaya's supporters stayed on in the streets all night long, defying orders to disperse.

This reporter spent most of Monday inside the embassy with Mr. Zelaya. The ousted President addressed the thousands gathered outside, urging them to pursue a nonviolent resistance to "Los Golpistas."

"We will continue the struggle for democracy," said Zelaya, as the crowd voiced their desire for a new constitution. "This time I won't be caught napping," joked Zelaya, referring to the episode on June 28, when the military accosted him in his pajamas.

Later, when power was cut, there were fears the authorities might storm the gates at any moment, and side arms were handed out to security guards. The lights soon returned courtesy of the compound's generator (and gas supplied by La Resistencia). The expected attack didn't come until dawn, when police launched tear gas shells into the courtyard, and forcibly occupied neighboring buildings.

"These bullies can enter my home, and do anything they please," said one disconcerted neighbor, lugging her valuables away from the scene. "Just because I live next to the Brazillian Embassy, they treat me like a criminal."

Apparently, the "bullies" could do as they pleased throughout the capital on Tuesday. To mention just one example: The offices of the Committee for Detained and Disappeared Persons of Honduras (COFADEH) were attacked without provocation, when police fired tear gas canisters at the building.

"They want us to give up our investigations," said COFADEH Director Bertha Oliva, "because they're scared of the evidence we have against them."

I arrived at COFADEH about ten minutes after the attack, and people were still weeping from the gas. "But bullets and bombs will not dissuade us," Oliva said. "refuse to be intimidated."

Later that day, Oliva told me that COFADEH alone had documented 36 injured people on Tuesday, many bearing severe welts and scalp lacerations from police batons. She also reported at least two deaths. Congressman Ponce believes put the total number of wounded at 172.

Independent reports indicated about 350 people were also arrested and detained in the Villa Olympica soccer stadium.

The official police tally, however, told quite a different story. According to their numbers, there were only 23 arrests, 10 injuries and zero fatalities. Law enforcement officials also made clear their intentions for Zelaya. "The minute he steps outside the building, he goes to jail," said Colonel Samuel Mengiver of Police Intelligence. And if Zelaya doesn't come out of his own volition? "We're ready to take him out of there by force," said the Colonel. "We're just waiting for the order."

One did not have to go far to see evidence of the tactics being employed by the authorities. Leaving the hotel this morning on my way to the Brazilian Embassy, I encountered several young men fleeing a squadron of baton-wielding police. As I watched, the officers caught up to two of them and commenced beating them viciously, even after they had fallen to the ground.

"We were just walking to work," said Aron Antonio, bleeding profusely from multiple head wounds. "I can't understand why they attacked us." I called an ambulance on my cell phone, but by the time it had arrived, Antonio's companion had lost consciousness. The youth's eyes refused to dilate, and he began to vomit where he lay in the gutter.

"The people can't even walk the streets in peace," Bertha Oliva told me. "They're being beaten just for stepping out of doors. hunt them as if for sport. What kind of a country has this become?"

By the time I reached the Embassy, the crowds had been dispersed, and masked police and soldiers had cordoned off the street, forbidding even

international journalists and human rights workers from approaching. A few hours later, a pick-up truck with massive speakers was wheeled in, to direct constant loud music toward the building.

I spoke by phone with Father Andres Tamayo – Catholic priest, and leading figure in the anti-coup movement – who was trapped with Zelaya inside the Embassy. “There are police in front of the building, and all of the surrounding houses. The government is also listening in, and blocking our calls,” he said, just before the line went dead.

Late Tuesday afternoon, 85 people were allowed to leave the Embassy. About 70 more - including Zelaya’s wife and young grandchildren – remain inside.

Meanwhile, the resistance movement shows no signs of slowing down.

“We will be in the streets again tomorrow,” said Juan Barahona. “We will not give up until Mel Zelaya returns to the presidency.” When asked what he thought would be the likely response from the authorities, Barahona conceded it might well be more of the same. “The police will not tolerate us. They’ll probably attack us again. But what else can we do? This remains an unequal struggle.”

Shortly after being turned away by police, while seeking to bring food and water to those in the Brazilian Embassy, Bertha Oliva echoed Mr. Barahona’s sentiments. “This is a one-sided war,” she said, nodding towards the masked officers. “They’re the only ones committing violence.”

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WHAT TO DO?

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
- unequivocal denunciation of the military coup and no recognition of the oligarchic-military regime of Roberto Micheletti and General Romeo Vasquez
- unequivocal demands, from “international community”, for regime to step down
- 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
- an immediate suspension of the release of all international funds and loans to the regime, including 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 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 amazing struggle.