

Rights Action

Day 145 of HONDURAS COUP RESISTANCE

(November 19, 2009, Honduras Coup Alert#92)

Tensions mount, leading up to undemocratic and discredited elections on November 29.

Rights Action commentary

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- Statement by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka: “Free elections not possible now in Honduras”
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- News: Dictatorship recruiting right-wing extremists as “observers”

The OAS (Organization of American States) remains MIA (missing in action), after getting it right within days of the June 28 military coup, when it demanded the “immediate and unconditional” return of President Zelaya and his government. Since that time the OAS has done little to nothing; for the peoples of the Americas, the OAS remains a manipulated and ineffective guarantor of democracy and human rights.

The US government continues to send envoys and officials to pretend (for public and media consumption) to try and resolve the political impasse. The US government showed its hand long ago, demanding “negotiations” with the criminal regime, thus legitimizing and empowering them. The US government continues to maintain this complicit position, and appears to be waiting for the ‘right moment’ to recognize the November 29 elections.

While we must continue to pressure our politicians, in Canada and the USA, to stand on the side of democracy (see ‘demands’, below), we should not and cannot count on our politicians. The main challenge remains to continue to support Honduras’ pro-democracy, anti-coup movement who are leading this struggle in defense of democracy and human rights, against this sham electoral process and elections.

HOW TO SUPPORT & WHAT TO DO: see at bottom

- Please re-distribute this information

- To get on/off Rights Action's email list:
<http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3/>

FOR INTERVIEWS & MORE INFORMATION

- In Honduras, Karen Spring, 011-504-9507-3835, spring.kj@gmail.com
- In USA, Grahame Russell, 860-352-2448, info@rightsaction.org & Annie Bird, 202-680-3002, annie@rightsaction.org

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AFL-CIO PRESIDENT RICHARD TRUMKA: FREE ELECTIONS NOT POSSIBLE NOW IN HONDURAS

<http://blog.aflcio.org/2009/11/16/trumka-free-elections-not-possible-now-in-honduras/>

The continued repression of trade unionists by the regime set up in Honduras after a June 28 coup makes it impossible to hold free and fair elections, says AFL-CIO President [1] Richard Trumka in a Nov. 13 letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. (AFL-CIO = American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations)

Trumka points out that delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention in September passed a [2] resolution calling on the U.S. government to suspend military aid to Honduras until President Manuel Zelaya, the democratically elected leader, is returned to office and human and trade union rights have been restored.

to read the AFL-CIO convention resolution on Honduras and to read Trumka's letter.

With an illegitimate government in power, scheduled elections later this month cannot be fair, free and open, Trumka says.

The violent and coercive repression of political opposition to the de facto coup regime, including trade unionists, has continued. At least 12 trade unionists have died in the violence since June 28.

National and international human rights organizations report ongoing human rights violations committed by state security forces, including killings, severe beatings, sexual violence, the imprisonment and torture of activists, as well as the arrest and detention of President Zelaya's supporters.

Trumka calls on Clinton and the U.S. government to oppose national elections in Honduras unless Zelaya is reinstated and to implement the recommendations in the AFL-CIO resolution.

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PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS

From the Desk of the President, Tegucigalpa, November 14, 2009

His Excellency
BARACK OBAMA
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington D. C. 20520
United States of America

Dear President Obama:

When I first met with Secretary of State Clinton on July 8 after the coup d'etat, the position of the Obama administration was made clear to me and to the world regarding its condemnation of the coup d'etat, non-recognition of the coup regime authorities and urging the return to the rule of law with the reinstatement of the President elected by the people.

The official position of your government was consistent with your representatives who sponsored and signed the resolutions of the UN, and the OAS and the third point that requires my immediate and safe restitution.

On June 28, 2009, the military abducted and forced me into exile to Costa Rica. The Honduran Congress issued an illegal decree ordering "The separation of citizen José Manuel Zelaya from the post of Constitutional President of the Republic" without constitutional authority to do so, no due process and without being summoned to a trial.

Secretary Hillary Clinton proposed mediation with President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica at our first meeting. Even though I consider it counterproductive to dialogue with people who are armed, I accepted the mediation taking into account the sponsorship by the U.S. and international community.

In a September 4, 2009 statement, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed the following: "The positive conclusion of the process initiated by Arias would be the basis for proceeding with a legitimate election."

It is well known that the de facto regime would not have signed the Accord without the visit to Honduras by Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Thomas Shannon, Daniel Restrepo and Craig Kelly. We all know why the Tegucigalpa - San José agreement was breached.

Faithful to the truth, President Oscar Arias declared: "Micheletti never had the will to work together. Instead, he ridiculed the international community, stalling for time and never returning power to where it belongs." Former President Ricardo Lagos, a prominent member of the International Verification Commission,

confirmed this by stating: "Mr. Micheletti broke it," "Micheletti did things he should not have done like saying 'I'll form a unity government without Zelaya' which is what caused the failure of this negotiated agreement."

The very day that the Accord's Verification Commission was installed in Tegucigalpa, State Department officials made surprising statements in which they changed their position and interpreted the agreement unilaterally with the following statements, "... the elections would be recognized by the United States, with or without reinstatement ...".

The de facto regime welcomed this change and used these statements for their own purposes. This noncompliance and violation resulted in an immediate termination of the Accord.

Therefore, we express the following:

The Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord is null and void because of unilateral noncompliance by the de facto government. The Accord was designed to be implemented comprehensively and simultaneously; it was not to be seen as twelve separate agreements. The single agreement with twelve points had a single purpose, to restore democratic order and social peace, and reverse the coup d'etat with the safe return of the legitimately elected President of the Republic by popular vote. This would foster a climate of national reconciliation and a subsequent constitutional electoral process, guaranteed to be free fair with the participation for all Honduran citizens.

The forthcoming elections should take place within a legal framework and with international support, especially from the OAS and UN. Without the political conditions which ensure the most basic rights for citizens, there can be no guarantee for free and fair elections with transparency.

With this, I note that the new position of the U.S. Government officials eludes the initial goal of the San Jose dialogue. It relegates the Accord with the legitimately recognized government into the background and attempts to shift the agreement toward a new electoral process regardless of the circumstances in which it develops. Among others, public resources are being approved by government officials who are not legally recognized and they are justified with budget documents that have not been authorized by the legitimately recognized President.

Under these conditions, this electoral process and its results will be subject to legal challenge and non-recognition. This seriously jeopardizes the future stability of relations between Honduras and other nations who recognize its results.

As noted by the OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza, there is no political climate for elections. This was also pointed out by U.S. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) who observed in her recent visit to Honduras that there is a proven climate of human rights violations in Honduras.

On November 6, we stated our refusal to continue with the false dialogue. With the passing of the deadline on November 5, the text of the Accord becomes a dead letter that has lost meaning. Agreements need to be followed in a timely and correct fashion. The violation of this one by the de facto regime is the condition which determines that the agreement ceased to exist.

Undoubtedly, precious time was lost in this failed attempt.

The presidential election is currently scheduled for the last week of November. In this case, as Constitutional President of Honduras, and as a citizen elected by democratic vote to represent the people of Honduras, I feel obliged to report that under these conditions we can not support the election. We are proceeding to legally challenge the election on behalf of thousands of Hondurans and hundreds of candidates who feel that this competition is unjust and that the conditions for free and fair elections do not exist.

Current repression in Honduras is widespread against the Honduran people as well as against the highest authority of the President of the Republic, overthrown by armed force and never subjected to a trial or due process. Instead of considering my achievements, three years of the best economic indicators and the largest poverty reduction in 28 years of democracy, I currently have 24 indictments and arrest warrants for corruption, drug trafficking and terrorism among others. Most of my cabinet ministers are subjected to political persecution and have fled the regime to different parts of the Americas.

3500 people detained in one hundred days, over 600 people beaten and injured in hospitals, more than a hundred murders and countless numbers of people subjected to torture directed against citizens who dare to oppose the regime and express their ideas about freedom and justice in peaceful demonstrations. All this converts the November election into an anti-democratic exercise under an uncertain state of lawlessness with military intimidation for large sections of our people.

To hold elections in which the President elected by the people of Honduras, who is recognized by your government and the international community, is a prisoner surrounded by soldiers in the Brazilian embassy, while the de facto president who was imposed on the country by the military is surrounded by the powerful in the governmental palace, would be an historical embarrassment to Honduras and a disgrace to the democratic peoples of the Americas.

This electoral process is illegal because it covers up the military coup and the de facto state which Honduras has been subject to. It provides no guarantees for Honduran citizens for a free and fair election. It is an undemocratic electoral maneuver repudiated by large sectors of the population to cover up for the perpetrators and masterminds of the coup d'etat.

Elections involve a process with debates and a presentation of ideas with equal opportunity for all. They do not just occur on election day.

In my capacity as President elected by the Honduran people, I reaffirm my decision that from this date onward, whatever the case, I DO NOT ACCEPT any agreement to return to the presidency to cover up the coup. We know that the coup has had a direct impact with the military crackdown on the human rights of the inhabitants of our country.

Mr. President,

I was present at the Summit of the Americas held in Trinidad and Tobago earlier this year, where you said: "Let's stop accusing the United States for what it did around the continent in the past and let's look toward the future."

The future that is revealed to us today, with the policy shift in the case of Honduras favoring abusive intervention by the military castes in the civilian life of our nation (which historically caused our countries in the twentieth century to go backward and to stagnate) is not more than the decline of freedom and the disdain for human dignity. It is a new war against the processes of social and democratic reforms which are very necessary in Honduras.

President Obama,

Each time that a legitimately elected government in the Americas is overthrown, violence and terrorism achieve a battle victory and Democracy suffers a defeat. We still refuse to believe that the military coup in Honduras is now the new state terrorism of the twenty-first century, and that it will be the future for Latin America that you spoke about in Trinidad and Tobago.

We are firmly determined to fight for our democracy without hiding the truth and when a people decides to fight peacefully for their ideas, no weapon, no army nor any maneuver is capable of stopping them.

I await your prompt response and I reiterate my highest consideration,

José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, President of Honduras

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INTIBUCANO POPULAR RESISTANCE FRONT AGAINST THE HONDURAN COUP

Press Release, Tuesday, November 17, 2009

(Translated for Rights Action by Rosalind Gil. Intibuca is a western department of Honduras)

The Intibucano Popular Resistance Front Against the Honduran Coup sends the following message to the people of Honduras in general and the people of Intibucá in particular:

1. We vigorously condemn the disrespectful attack on our moral integrity and the repressive hostage-taking by the golpistas.
2. We also repudiate assertions on flyers distributed in a pro-coup meeting summoned by Micheletti and Romeo Vásquez Velásquez, held by military reservists, on Saturday November 14, 2009, in La Esperanza, Intibucá.
3. We categorically reject the destructive criticism spread by extremist fanatical pro-coup elements against recognized highly respected Latin-American leaders such as Fidel Castro, Rafael Correa, Hugo Chávez, Daniel Ortega and the constitutional president of Honduras, José Manuel Zelaya.
4. We know who is behind these malicious assertions and we hold them fully responsible for any harm to or attack on members of the Resistencia Intibucana.

“IS 21st CENTURY SOCIALISM A PROJECT OR A BORING FILM?”

(Flyer distributed by repressive military agents in a meeting held by military reservists, Saturday, November 14 in La Esperanza, Intibucá. The meeting had been called by General Romeo Vásquez and Micheletti)

“XXIST CENTURY SOCIALISM IS THE SAME THING AS XXTH CENTURY COMMUNISM, ONLY IT IS MORE TEDIOUS BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN. THIS BORING FILM IS BEING PROMOTED BY CRIMINALS SUCH AS FIDEL CASTRO, HUGO CHAVEZ, RAFAEL CORREA, DANIEL ORTEGA AND IN HONDURAS, BY DRUG-DEALER MANUEL ZELAYA ROSALES, SUPPORTED BY LATIN-AMERICAN DRUG CARTELS.

“THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO BRING INTO THE RANKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT PEOPLE SUCH AS THE POOR, THE ILLITERATE, THE HUMBLE, THE UNFORTUNATE, DRUNKS, THE DRUG-ADDICTED AND CRIMINALS. THEY CAN ALL BE MANIPUALTED IN THIS FERTILE, BREEDING-GROUND TO BRING TO FRUITION THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROJECT PUT FORTH BY HEINZ DIETERICH STEFAN TO DECEIVE THE POOR AND THE HUMBLE.

“RIGHT NOW IN HONDURAS, THE IDEAS OF THESE CRIMINALS ARE BEING ENFORCED BY THREATS: BOMBS, SABOTAGE, BURNING OF

BUSINESSES, INSULTS, LIES AND MURDER. THE BLAME IS LAID ON THE POLICE AND LEADERS OF TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES ARE THREATENED SO THAT THE "COWBOY COMANDER" CAN BE REINSTATED. THIS IS NOT A HUMAN OR RATIONAL WAY OF DOING THINGS. THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT CIVILIZED. WHAT THEY ARE DOING IS TRULY CRIMINAL AND SIMILAR TO THE ACTIONS OF COMMUNISTS IN THE EIGHTIES IN CENTRAL- AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THEY ARE THE ONES THAT ARE LEADING A COUP - AGAINST THE CONSITUTION AND OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM."

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WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE ON THE AMERICAS
Issue #1012, November 15, 2009

HONDURAS: MORE CANDIDATES JOIN ELECTION BOYCOTT

In a press conference in Managua, Nicaragua, on Nov. 13, the mayor of San Pedro Sula, Honduras' second largest city, confirmed that he was no longer running for another term in general elections scheduled for Nov. 29.

"The people don't believe in this process, because these are elections where absolutely nothing is going to get elected," Mayor Rodolfo Padilla Sunceri said. A member of the center-right Liberal Party (PL), Padilla joined a growing number of candidates who have withdrawn from the race in order to protest the control of the process by a de facto government put in place after a military coup removed President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales from office on June 28 [see Update #1011]. Padilla was the frontrunner in polls taken before the coup.

The Nov. 29 general elections are intended to elect the president, the 128 members of the National Congress, 20 deputies to the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), and members of the country's municipal governments.

Independent presidential candidate Carlos H. Reyes officially withdrew from the race on Nov. 9. A former unionist with strong links to the grassroots movement against the coup, Reyes was third in a field of six candidates, according to polls. The frontrunner is Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo of the rightwing National Party (PN); Liberal candidate Elvin Santos trails him by 15-20%, according to political analyst Gustavo Irías. Santos is badly damaged by a split in the PL between supporters of President Zelaya and supporters of de facto president Roberto Micheletti Bain; both are members of the party.

The mayoral candidates boycotting the election include Heber Iván Gómez Mendoza, PL candidate in Morolica, Choluteca department; Luis Alberto Posadas Alfar, an independent candidate in Danlí, El Paraíso; and Gladys Gloria Ebanks Campell, an independent candidate on Roatán island, Islas de la Bahía department.

The small leftist Democratic Unification (UD) is badly split, with presidential candidate César Ham planning to continue in the race while many other candidates want to withdraw; the party will lose its place on the ballot and government matching funds if too many candidates drop out. The Party of Innovation and Social Democratic Unity (PINU) is also split. The leadership supports the coup, but many candidates for Congress oppose it and may withdraw, so that this party too could lose its ballot position. (EFE 11/13/09; Comun-Noticias 11/13/09 via Honduras Laboral blog; La Jornada 11/14/09 from correspondent)

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Alan Benjamin and Rodrigo Ibarra write:

Dear Friends, As you will read below, the de-facto regime of Roberto Micheletti is preparing the conditions for arresting and jailing all opposition leaders and activists who have called for a boycott of the November 29 elections. The regime is spreading disinformation about alleged foreigners from Venezuela and Nicaragua entering Honduras illegally with the sole purpose of disrupting Honduras' "democratic elections."

The specter of Chavez and the foreigners was precisely the justification for the June 28 coup; Chavez was alleged to have been behind Zelaya's so-called power grab -- when, in fact, it was the pressure of the Honduran people that got Zelaya to agree to hold a non-binding referendum as to whether or not the profoundly undemocratic 1982 Constitution should be changed. There was never any question of Zelaya extending his term of office.

Now the foreign bogeyman is being conjured up once again -- this time to deny the legitimacy of the boycott campaign and to prepare the roundup of activists who call for a boycott of the elections.

We have to build a massive movement internationally in defense of the National Front Against the Coup and their right to boycott fake elections and to fight for genuine democracy -- that is, for a National Constituent Assembly. And we must step up our campaign to press President Obama to refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the November 29 fake elections and of the new government emanating from these fake elections.

Hands off the National Resistance Front! Down with the coup government and its fake elections!

In solidarity, Alan Benjamin and Rodrigo Ibarra, Co-Editors, El Organizador

ROBERTO MICHELETTI: "HUNDREDS OF FOREIGNERS COMING IN TO BOYCOTT ELECTIONS"

(translation from Honduran newspaper El Tiempo, Nov. 16, 2009)

De-facto interim "president" Roberto Micheletti said that hundreds of foreigners have been entering the country to boycott the elections scheduled for November 29th. "We have knowledge of this. Our military, supported by our allies and friends, have initiated an investigation that has secured information about people from Venezuela or Nicaragua coming here to try to cause trouble to the electoral process", said Micheletti.

"There is a security plan to protect the population in general, for them to vote without fear, so that they can elect their new authorities".

Micheletti recalled that the Electoral Law in its article 209 stated that, "Will be sanctioned with a penalty of four years in prison whoever, without legitimate authorization, seeks to impede other persons, through violence, the exercise of their electoral rights".

A secondary law expresses that in addition to the electoral crimes that will be sanctioned with prison, will be also punished with prison time all persons who by any means impede access to the electoral locations that are needed for the functioning of the elections.

Calls to boycott the elections have been made by "sectors of society, as well as foreigners who have entered the country", for example "the leaders of the group called Popular Resistance, which has its intent to prevent the election".

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HONDURAS: DICTATORSHIP RECRUITING RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS AS "OBSERVERS"

by Jean-Guy Allard, Granma International

In order to cover up the invalidity of the upcoming November 29 elections, the usurping regime of Roberto Micheletti is heavily recruiting—via an association of pro-coup businesspeople — "observers" from right-wing extremist organizations. "Between 300 and 500 observers have now been confirmed," was the headline on the daily La Prensa, owned by the local magnate, Jorge "Pepsi" Canahuati, while the author of an article inside the paper claimed, with pro-coup fervor, that "about 600" of these "international observers from Northern, South and Central America" will be present at the elections.

Finding such observers when all international agencies devoted to this activity have refused to cooperate has been entrusted by the military/business junta in Tegucigalpa to one of its most active partners, Amilcar Bulnes, president of the

Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP). Bulnes told the daily La Prensa — owned by his friend Canahuati — that the election process “is central to providing a better investment climate,” which should be based on “social stability.” This opinion is shared by the hierarchies of the army, police and death squads run by Billy Joya.

“They will come from the United States, Europe, Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Central America,” Bulnes specified, revealing that two of them are among the most “eminent” representatives of the continent’s extreme right-wing forces: the former presidents of Guatemala, Alvaro Arzú, and of El Salvador, Alfredo Cristiani.

It has already been announced that the coup regime’s elections will feature representatives — also described as “observers” — from the neo-Nazi group UnoAmérica; the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Liberty, an appendage of the Liberty Foundation financed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED); and the Foundation for Social Analysis and Studies, run by the former Spanish prime minister, José María Aznar.

The organization UnoAmérica, tied to the CIA and financed by the NED, was involved earlier this year in a plot to assassinate President Evo Morales of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

(Translated by Granma International. Circulated by Walter Lippman, CubaNews, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CubaNews/>)

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ACTION NEEDED

TO DONATE FUNDS - Please continue to financially support the pro-democracy, anti-coup movement in Honduras. This extraordinary struggle, to defeat the oligarchic-military regime and to remake their constitution and country, will continue well into 2010. Make your tax-deductible 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 provide a report of which organizations and people we are channeling funds to and supporting.

HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION TO HONDURAS, November 24–December 1, 2009

Consider joining a Rights Action human rights observation delegation to

Honduras. For information: Grahame Russell, info@rightsaction.org, 1-860-352-2448

TELL YOUR CONGRESSPERSON, SENATOR, THE WHITE HOUSE & THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE HONDURAN COUP REGIME & THE NOVEMBER 29TH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The U.S. government announced it will recognize the results of the November 29 presidential “elections” in Honduras with or without democratically-elected President Zelaya back in office and power. This position is abusive and shameful.

From the Honduran people’s pro-democracy movement and the National Front Against the Coup, to governments across the Americas, to the Organization of American States, everyone and institution recognizes there are no conditions whatsoever in Honduras – under the control of an illegal and repressive military-oligarchic regime - to hold free and fair elections.

Since the June 28 coup, the regime has killed some 2 dozen Hondurans, illegally jailed over 3000 people, tortured (including rape) hundreds of people in illegal detention, and wounded hundreds in protests (due to rubber and live bullets, tear-gas and beatings). It is in the context of this on-going repression that the illegal regime aims to hold elections as their way of legitimizing and justifying the un-legitimizable and unjustifiable coup.

We urge U.S. citizens to contact your member of congress, senator, the white house and state department, to demand:

- The unconditional return of President Zelaya and his government to full constitutional power and authority
- No recognition of the November 29 elections
- Justice for the plotters and perpetrators of the military coup, and
- Reparations for the victims of the regime repression

STATE DEPARTMENT: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon: 202-647-4000

WHITE HOUSE: President Barack Obama and Dan Restrepo (Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs): 202-456-1111, 202-456-1414

VIEW The Real News:

“Nothing resolved in Honduras: Widely-celebrated, US-brokered agreement looks to have strengthened coup instead of reversing it”:

http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=4431

WATCH A 2-PART “FAULT LINES” NEWS REPORT ABOUT HONDURAS:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYY4vj9ROC0&feature=player_embedded
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upMu_oR2YUU&NR=1

FOR INTERVIEWS & MORE INFORMATION

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In USA, Grahame Russell, 860-352-2448, info@rightsaction.org & Annie Bird,
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