

Rights Action

DAY 156, Coup Resistance
(November 29, 2009, Coup Alert#99)

Honduran Military Raids Campesino Organization Day Before The Elections

By Laura Carlsen, www.americaspolicy.org. Photos and photo-text by Tyler Shipley, with a Rights Action delegation

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HONDURAN MILITARY RAIDS CAMPESINO ORGANIZATION DAY BEFORE THE ELECTIONS

(By Laura Carlsen, www.americaspolicy.org. Photos and photo-text by Tyler Shipley, with a Rights Action delegation, tyshipley@hotmail.com)

Today, November 28, heavily armed members of the national police, military and criminal investigation units under the coup regime raided the Honduran farm organization COMAL (Alternative Community Marketing Network) in Siguatepeque, in Comayagua. COMAL is a coalition of 42 small-scale farming and women's organizations from throughout Honduras.



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(Along with people from COFADEH, Quixote Center and Common Frontiers, Ty Shipley of the Rights Action delegation traveled to Red Comal while the illegal raid was taking place. Honduran military guard the gate of the Red Comal campesino organizing center)

At 1:40 p.m. about fifty members of the security forces broke into the offices of COMAL. After breaking down the doors with their guns and intimidating the employees, they produced a search order a full twenty minutes later. The offices were ransacked, under an order that stated authorization to search for weapons and "materials that could threaten lives".



(Through one window broken by the military, destruction left by soldiers and police is evident)



(One office inside Red Comal, after the illegal search-and-seizure, which included stealing over 4000 lempiras cash (more than \$200))

At 2:30 the raid spread to the training center of the organization. Security forces confiscated four computers, including the accountant's computer. They also took

educational materials used in community workshops to analyze the current political situation and publications from the non-violent resistance movement. The soldiers referred to these materials as "proof" of subversive activities. Intelligence agents removed a list of all the people who had attended workshops in the organization and employees. They took the entire petty cash fund as well.



(After hours of search and seizure and destruction of offices, classrooms, bedroom and even the kitchen at the Red Comal center, the combined military and police forces left with boxes of posters, laptop computers, and money they stole)

The offices were left in total disarray, employees were stripped of there cellphones and held in the offices during the raid. No-one had been arrested at last report. Security forces continued to ransack the offices until 5:20 p.m.



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(The man sitting is Julio, the watchman on duty, who was cuffed, thrown to the ground, and kicked repeatedly)

Miguel Alonzo Macias, director of planning and projects for COMAL, stated that the police and soldiers entered heavily armed and nervous. Among the information they took from the offices were computer archives containing photographs of the peaceful marches where members of the organization demonstrated against the coup, "where they can see the faces of everyone of us who participated", and testimonies from communities describing violations of human rights under the coup. The group fears further persecution.

In a phone interview, Macias stated, "What just happened to us is evidence that basic guarantees of individual human rights and institutional rights do not exist in Honduras. As a result, the objective conditions in terms of the personal security for people to be able to vote freely don't exist either."

"It's important for the international community and international human rights groups to be aware that this is happening and of what kind of military actions are being carried out. These actions are clearly meant to intimidate the population that sees things differently than the de facto regime and that condemns the coup."

"The security forces have our names, identification numbers, vehicles and photographs. We now have to take precautionary measures to protect ourselves and our families. The international community should demand respect for human rights in our country, where these rights are being constantly violated. We also

demand assurances for the safety of our people and other detained and identified as under watch by security forces."

Write letters of support to: info@redcomal.org.hn; www.redcomal.org.hn

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JUST SAY NO. WRITE, RIGHT NOW ...

Rights Action is one of a number of organizations that have international human rights observer missions in Honduras. These are NOT election observing missions. We do not recognize the validity of these elections.

For reasons set out above and in previous Alerts (found at www.rightsaction.org), a majority of Hondurans and most of the so-called "international community" have concluded the November 29th elections (for President, Congress members, and Mayors) are neither free nor fair in any way.

Now – through to next week - is the time to contact your own politicians (members of parliament, congress members and senators) and insist on:

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

TO DONATE FUNDS

Please continue to financially support the pro-democracy, anti-coup movement in Honduras. In Honduras, this week, we are providing emergency relief funds directly to victims and family members of victims of repression.

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.