

Rights Action
November 30, 2013

Results of Honduran Elections Fraudulently Changed
Interview With Leo Gabriel, Official Election Observer from European Union
By Giorgio Trucchi

WHAT TO DO ~ Americans / Canadians:

Keep on sending this and other information to your MPs, Congressional Reps & Senators.

- Their democracy was stolen by military coup in June 2009
- Their elections were stolen in November 2009
- Now, the 2013 elections are being stolen

Keep on denouncing the electoral fraud, repression and corruption in Honduras. Since the military coup of 2009, the governments of Canada and the USA – and many North American businesses – have maintained strong political, military and economic relations with the regime in power, empowering and ‘legitimizing’ the repressive, military-backed government. Global business and investors have everything to gain, from this electoral fraud, corruption and repression; the people of Honduras have everything to lose.

Interview With Leo Gabriel, Official Election Observer from European Union
<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/honduras-archives-46/4584-the-results-of-the-elections-in-honduras-were-changed-says-european-union-observer->
By Giorgio Trucchi, Translated by Adrienne Pine, 29 November 2013

According to Leo Gabriel, the European delegation had a heated internal debate about the preparation of its report. On Tuesday Nov. 26, the European Union electoral observation mission (EU-EOM) presented a preliminary report on the Honduran elections to the national and international press. Despite demonstrating “serious signs of trafficking in [election worker] credentials and other irregularities”, in addition to a “clear imbalance in the visibility of different [political] parties in the media” and “a lack of transparency in electoral campaign

financing,” the mission gave high marks “in terms of voting transparency as well respect for the will of voters in the tabulation.”

The report also confirmed that “the system used for the transmission of official tally sheets guaranteed all political parties a trustworthy mechanism for the verification of the results published by the TSE (Supreme Electoral Tribunal),” and congratulated electoral authorities for having achieved “greater transparency” than in previous elections.

These claims, which are at the core of the text issued by the EU-EOM, contrast with the strong statements condemning irregularities issued by the LIBRE (Liberty and Refoundation) and PAC (Anti-Corruption Party) parties who, together, make up nearly 50% of the votes counted. The candidates of the respective parties, Xiomara Castro and Salvador Nasralla, have not accepted the results published by the TSE and claim to have proof of fraud. With 88.32% of the official tally sheets counted, the TSE already declared that National Party candidate, Juan Orlando Hernández, “is the winner of the elections” with 36.55% of the vote. In second place [according to the TSE] is Xiomara Castro, with 28.84%.

Leo Gabriel, Austrian journalist and member of the EU-EOM, stated that the vast majority of the members of the mission were in strong disagreement with the preliminary report. According to him, the disagreements about what happened on November 24th provoked a heated internal debate. Nonetheless, political calculations and business interests prevailed and [the EU-EOM] preferred to close their eyes and ignore the obvious changes made to the results and the violation of the Honduran people’s will as expressed at the ballot box.

Opera Mundi: ¿What is your assessment of the elections in Honduras?

Leo Gabriel: We had the opportunity to observe the elections at the polling stations and we arrived at conclusions that stand in diametric opposition to the EU-EOM leadership, with regards to the supposed transparency in the voting and vote-counting processes. I carried out my job as an electoral observer in the department of Cortés, one of the most densely populated departments on the national level, and I could see from the start that this electoral process was compromised.

OM: What were the irregularities you observed?

LG: I can attest to countless inconsistencies in the electoral process. There were people who could not vote because they showed up as being dead, and there were dead people who voted. It was also clear that there was a huge mess at the voting stations, where the hidden alliance between the small parties and the National Party led to the buying and selling of votes and [electoral worker] credentials [note: by law each party has the right to have an election worker at each mesa electoral or voting station, but as Gabriel notes, in many voting stations, the smaller parties sold their rights to the National Party].

During the transmission of the results there was no possibility to find out where the tallies were being sent and we received reliable information that at least 20% of the original tally sheets were being diverted to an illegal server that they kept hidden.

To speak of transparency after everything that happened last Sunday is a joke and I believe that, first and foremost, we observers have to be honest and portray what we have really seen.

OM: ¿Why, then, is the central EU-EOM team saying in its report that the voting and vote count were “transparent?”

LG: Some of them really believe what the TSE says, but in general there is a deeper political and economic reason. The 2009 Coup d’État harmed the image of Honduras around the world, slowing down progress on the Association Agreement signed by the European Union and the Central American region (EU-CA AA). Presenting [an image of] a clean and transparent electoral process helps the European Union to clean up Honduras’s image around the world and set this commercial project into motion.

OM: Is it true that the content of the preliminary report caused a heated internal debate among the EU mission?

LG: In the general evaluation meeting, the majority of my colleagues who observed the elections “on site,” on the ground, were in agreement about the irregularities I just laid out. No one defended the content of the report or the idea

that there had been transparency in the process, and that brought us up against the intransigence of the EU-EOM team leaders, who did not want to cede even one millimeter. We argued for a serious discussion of the topic, taking into account what we had witnessed and suggesting changes to the text, but they firmly refused.

OM: Do you believe that the results of the TSE do not reflect the truth about what the Honduran people expressed at the ballot box?

LG: I believe the TSE pulled the results out of their sleeves according to a pre-defined political calculus.

OM: You mean you think it was all a set-up?

LG: Yes, because these results don't have any basis and the speed with which they came out with the early data demonstrates that. Nonetheless, I retain the hope that the parties which are denouncing fraud will have the ability and the will to systematically present, nationwide, all the copies of the vote tallies, comparing them with the data presented by the TSE. In this way the truth will come to light.

OM: [Evidence of fraud] would be a serious blow to the credibility of these observation missions.

LG: Of course. What I ask myself is: "How is it possible that the leadership of the EU-EOM has not even mentioned in its report that there are parties representing nearly 50% of the votes counted, who are not recognizing the results and which denounce serious irregularities or fraud?"

OM: What is the point, then, of these observation missions?

LG: It is not possible to generalize from the example of Honduras, because there are other examples in which EU missions have played a relevant role and have appropriately dealt with lack of transparency in electoral processes. Here, political, economic, commercial, and even partisan interests prevailed.

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