

Rights Action
December 1, 2013

4 LIBRE Party Members Killed in 7 Days, As Election Fraud Challenges Grow in Honduras

Below: News Reports

- Results of Honduran Elections Fraudulently Changed, Says European Union Observer (UpsideDownWorld)
- Honduras Candidate Makes Case for Election Fraud (New York Times)
- Honduras Election Results Challenged (Associated Press)

4 LIBRE Party Members Killed in 7 Days

Sent: Sunday, December 1, 2013

To: Presente Honduras

Subject: Another murder of a LIBRE activist (encl. 2 photos)

We were on the COFADEH (Committee of Family Members of the Disappeared) radio show on Radio Globo when they received the news of Jose Antonio's death. This makes 4 LIBRE members killed in the past 7 days. The victim was Jose Antonio Ardon known as Emo 2 (for his resemblance to the beloved resistance figure Emo who was also murdered). He was part of the famous motorcycle group Motorizada of the Resistance who always accompanied Xiomara, and LIBRE. He was ambushed by 4 gunmen and hit 4 times, about a block away from his home. Berta Oliva of COFADEH denounced this and the other murders on the radio show and expressed her grave concerns for the period that is opening up in Honduras now.

WHAT TO DO ~ Americans / Canadians:

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

- Honduras' democracy was stolen by military coup in June 2009
- Their elections were stolen by repression and fraud in November 2009
- Now, the 2013 elections are being stolen again by fraud and repression

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 fraud, corruption and repression; the people of Honduras have everything to lose.

Honduras Candidate Makes Case for Election Fraud

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras

December 1, 2013, By ALBERTO ARCE Associated Press

The opposition presidential candidate in last week's elections in Honduras is citing allegedly altered tally sheets, ballots cast by dead or absent people, and inadequate monitoring of polling stations in her bid to have a recount of a vote she calls fraudulent.

Xiomara Castro's call for her supporters to pour out in the streets to demand a vote-by-vote recount of last Sunday's election threatens further political instability for this poor Central American country. Castro's husband, former President Manuel Zelaya, was ousted in a 2009 coup that left the country polarized.

Honduras' electoral court has declared conservative Juan Orlando Hernandez, of the ruling National Party, the election winner. The court says he received 37 percent of the votes compared to 29 percent for Castro, with 96 percent of the votes counted. Six other candidates shared the remaining votes.

Voting was monitored by missions from the European Union and Organization of American States, which concluded that the election process was transparent despite irregularities including a faulty system for issuing poll workers' credentials and electoral lists in which people who are either dead or who left Honduras long ago could account for up to 30 percent of registered voters.

"Transparency does not guarantee that there are no mistakes in the process," said Jose Antonio de Gabriel, deputy chief of the European Union's observer mission. "But we do see the Electoral Tribunal has the will to correct them."

But Castro, 54, and her leftist Libre party say that the irregularities go beyond mistakes and amount to election fraud. Late Friday, Castro called the election "a disgusting monstrosity that has robbed me of the presidency" and said she will not recognize Hernandez's government. She called for a street protest on Sunday.

Ricci Moncada, Libre's representative on the Electoral Tribunal, said that many vote tally sheets were altered and in some cases falsified by including the votes of people no longer in Honduras to benefit Hernandez, adding that this was possible because there wasn't fair oversight at many voting stations.

In Honduras, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal issues the country's eight political parties credentials to have their members working polls on election day to avoid fraud. But the credentials only include the name of the party and location of the poll. Castro accused some of the smaller parties of selling their spots at polling stations to members of Hernandez's National Party.

Castro is not the only candidate who rejects the result. The Anti-Corruption Party candidate, Salvador Nasralla, who won almost 14 percent of the vote, has officially filed a complaint challenging the results.

Asked about the fraud allegations, electoral tribunal president David Matamoros said the vote tally sheets have been closely reviewed. "We must check to leave no doubt that the counts are correct," he said.

Hernandez has said his victory is legitimate and that he won't negotiate. But he hasn't comment directly on the fraud allegations.

The elections also left a divided Congress. The National and Liberal parties had long split the majority of the legislative seats, but the recent creation of the Libre and Anti-Corruption parties has changed that. Last week's voting to replace 128 lawmakers left the National Party with 48 seats, Libre with 39, the Liberal Party with 25 and the Anti-Corruption Party with 13.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/honduras-candidate-vote-stations-lacked-oversight-21058384>

Honduras Election Results Challenged

By NICHOLAS PHILLIPS and ELISABETH MALKIN, November 30, 2013

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Xiomara Castro, the left-wing presidential candidate in last week's elections, has rejected the official results and called on her supporters to march in the streets, adding new uncertainty to the country's already polarized politics. Calling the results "a fraud of incalculable proportions," Ms. Castro said late Friday that her party, Libre, would not recognize the new government, which she described as "illegitimate." She demanded a vote-by-vote recount from all 16,135 polling places in the election of last Sunday.

Libre's challenge to the official results could lead to weeks of political unrest in this small country, where a 2009 coup ousted Ms. Castro's husband, former President Manuel Zelaya. Many here and abroad hoped that the election would help to mend the rifts opened by the coup by bringing Mr. Zelaya's supporters into the electoral process.

But Ms. Castro, in her first public appearance since election night, appeared to be ready for a protracted challenge. Addressing "our people," "our youth," "our workers" and "businesspeople," she said at a news conference, "I call on you to unite to defend our proposal." She added: "This fight has just begun. They will never defeat us."

With votes from about 95 percent of the polling places counted Saturday, the candidate of the conservative National Party, Juan Orlando Hernández, had more than 36 percent of the total, a margin of almost eight percentage points over Ms. Castro.

But at the news conference on Friday, Ricci Moncada, Libre's secretary for electoral affairs, read a list of alleged violations. She argued that the result for thousands of tally sheets did not correspond with the electronic results reported by the electoral tribunal.

Results from 2,805 of the polling places that could not be scanned properly had not been counted correctly, she said, and those votes would tip the results to Libre. She asked the attorney general to open an investigation.

The voting was monitored by a number of international organizations, including the European Union and the Organization of American States. Those observer missions expressed concern about the voter rolls and the transparency of campaign financing in what the European Union called a “long, costly and unequal” campaign, but concluded that the results were reasonably transparent.

Libre has not challenged the results of elections for Congress and for mayors. According to the official results, Libre will be the second- largest party in Congress after the National Party.

The remaining votes were divided among six other parties, with the traditional Liberal Party in third place and the new Anti-Corruption Party in fourth. That party’s candidate, Salvador Nasralla, who won more than 13 percent of the vote, has also contested the results.

[Nicholas Phillips reported from Tegucigalpa, and Elisabeth Malkin from Mexico City.]

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/01/world/americas/honduras-election-results-challenged.html?_r=0

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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