

Rights Action  
March 30, 2015  
[info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

Assassination of 4 Student Leaders in Honduras Prompts Protests  
March 27, 2015

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Assassination-of-4-Student-Leaders-in-Honduras-Prompts-Protests-20150327-0001.html>



("No to death squads. Soad Ham lives!" reads the main banner. "Day 2098 in resistance" to the June 27, 2009, military coup, reads the sign held high.)

Soad Ham, a 13-year-old student leader of the Central Institute of Tegucigalpa who participated in the student protests against the Honduran government in the last two weeks, was found tortured and killed inside a plastic bag Wednesday. On Thursday, the opposition Libre Party called for protests against the assassination of Ham and 3 other student leaders this week.

The largest public high schools in the country have been protesting against the decision to change the class schedule, which will mean that the students in the afternoon will leave their schools at 7 p.m. – a very dangerous hour for students to be on the streets of Latin America's most dangerous city. Public high schools are generally located in areas riddled with crime, and there is no public transportation services at those hours. Moreover, many students live in dangerous areas where organized crime has established curfew hours.

The decision was taken by Marlon Escoto, Education Minister, who argued that adding five minutes to each class would improve the quality of education in the country. Students criticized the decision however, saying that in many class rooms there are not even enough chairs. The students, along with teachers and parents have been demanding changes to the education system and protests have often been met with repression from police.

The murder of the students has moved other groups to become more active in the issue. "We came here in solidarity with the families of the victims that have lost their lives in this student struggle and we want to denounce this ridiculous state that we have in Honduras," said former President Manuel Zelaya, who is now coordinator of the Libre Party. "They are directly responsible for the existence of death squads, because they protect them with their silence, they protect them knowing they exist."

During the march, students denounced profiling by intelligence agents as one example of abuse of power from the authorities. One infiltrated police agent was discovered during the demonstration, but protesters were able to handle the situation without any aggression against the public official.

The protesters marched toward the Presidential House and demanding the resignation of President Juan Hernandez and Education Minister Escoto. "This demonstration is in solidarity with the struggle of high school students and also condemning the selective assassination of four student leaders" said José Luis Herrera, a university student leader. "We need reforms because we can see the problems of the education system and in everything else in the country, they are killing young people, a 13 years old girl and we can't let violence become something normal," said another student leader, Diana Sabillon.

The high school students began this struggle independently, but now they have the support of the university students, of the National Resistance Front, the Libre Party and other organizations that have committed to continue their support until the government respects the rights of students.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear friends, the letter below has been emailed to as many Canadian and U.S. politicians and government officials (and media) as we have email addresses for. PLEASE make this email your own, and send it to your own politicians, government officials, and media.

March 27, 2015

The U.S. & Canada Helped, In Effect, Murder Soad Nicolle Ham Bustillo, A 13 Year-old Honduran Girl

Memo: To Canadian and American politicians & government officials

Re: Assassination of 13 year-old middle school student by Honduran police

Enclosed: 2 photos, to be displayed on office billboards and other public places



Here is 13 year-old Soad Nicolle Ham Bustillo on March 25, 2015. After she was kidnapped by police on March 24, her murdered body was dumped for all to see.



Here is Soad Bustillo on March 24, protesting education privatization plans.

I think that all American and Canadian politicians and government officials should reflect on this photo, to learn more about the U.S.- and Canadian-backed Honduran regime that dumps bodies of murdered girls in public places.

These photos should be posted in public places across Canada and the U.S. to educate North Americans about the State terrorism tactics of repression being used by the Honduran regime. (On request, I can send more photos of more people murdered by the regime, their bodies dumped in more public places.)

From a report by the Honduran Committee for Freedom of Expression (C-Libre):

“On March 24, three students were assassinated (two boys and one girl), students taking in night classes at Jesús Aguilar Paz Institute of Comayagua, who had left the school grounds after class. On the morning of March 25, the cadaver of a 13-year-old girl – Soad Bustillo - was found wrapped in a sheet. She was a student at the Vicente Cáceres Central Institute of Comayagua. She was last seen on the morning of March 24 leaving her house to go to school. The minor was the victim of kidnapping for multiple hours and her cadaver was found this morning wrapped in a sheet in the La Granja neighborhood of Comayagua. Globo Radio and TV showed photos of her participating, a few days before, in a student protest.”

“Murder Capital of the World” / “Repression Capital of the Americas”

Most North Americans learn little about what is going on in Honduras from our media that is, I believe, in violation of its public trust and journalistic responsibility to investigate and report on issues pertinent to the U.S. and Canada.

Since the June 2009 military coup, that ousted the last democratically elected government, Honduras has become the ‘Murder Capital of the world’ and a ‘Repression Capital of the Americas’.

Yet, repression and violence in Honduras are not a “Honduran problem” – they are an American / Canadian problem.

Since the coup, the U.S. and Canadian governments have supported and legitimized a succession of repressive regimes. Military and police “aid” has increased from both countries to the Honduran regime that uses repression and violence to create and maintain an environment conducive to global corporations and investors.

As a result, North American companies and investors, and the investment development banks (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank), have increased business activities in: African palm production, maquiladora sweatshops, privatized “model cities”, tourism, hydro-electric dams and mining, benefitting from and turning a blind eye to the repression, corruption and impunity.

Please reflect on these photos of Soad Bustillo, and share them widely. There are many policy decisions the governments of the U.S. and Canada should take. But, if you do not look at these photos, if our governments (and media) continue to turn a blind eye to the repression and violence that our countries are helping create and perpetuate, then the regime will dump more bodies in more public places, while more corporations and investors continue with more business as usual.

Grahame Russell, director  
[info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)  
[www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)  
[www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org](http://www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & United States)  
To support community organizations working for human rights, and the building of real democracy and rule of law in Honduras, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:  
Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8  
USA: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091  
Credit-Card Donations: <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>  
Stock donations: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

More information: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)  
To receive our print newsletter: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)  
Get on/off our listserv: [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)  
Follow us on facebook: [www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org](http://www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org)

\*\*\*\*\*