

Assassination of Jose Angel Flores & Silmer Dionosio George in Honduras U.S. Government Certifies Human Rights Requirements for More “Aid” to Honduran Regime

October 18, 2016, by Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network

[http://us9.campaign-
archive1.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=088bedfef2](http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=088bedfef2)



(Jose Angel Flores, MUCA)

The Honduras Solidarity Network in North America denounces the assassination today of Jose Angel Flores, President of the campesino organization MUCA (Unified Campesino Movement of the Aguan) and Silmer Dionosio George, another MUCA leader. The campesino activists were killed by gunmen as they left a meeting of MUCA members. While we are still waiting for more information about the murders, we wish to emphasize that both men were recognized to be at risk by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and were recipients of that organization’s precautionary measures making the Honduran government responsible for their safety.

We are indignant that in the face of the ongoing and documented violence, repression and corruption involving the Honduran government, the US State Department has certified that it is satisfied that the Honduran government has taken effective steps to improve human rights. This inexplicable certification, given the situation in Honduras, clears the way for \$55 million in U.S. aid.

Week by week, the human rights violations and violence against the Honduran people by the State continues. We cite, as examples, some recent incidents:

On October 9th there were two separate assassination attempts against leaders of COPINH. The General Coordinator, Tomás Gómez Membreño, was driving the organization's vehicle when he was fired on by unknown persons. Earlier, before dawn, on the same day, a local COPINH leader Alexander García was asleep in his home with his wife and children when unknown persons opened fire on the house, riddling it with bullets. By sheer luck the victims escaped injury in both cases.

These assaults occurred after all of the case files on the investigation of the March 2016 murder of COPINH's leader Berta Cáceres, were mysteriously stolen from a vehicle owned by a government judicial official on September 29th. The United Nations and the OAS anti-corruption entity in Honduras (MACCHI) have demanded an explanation and investigation from the Honduran government of why the files were not secured and how they were stolen.

There has also been no follow-up on the reports of a "hit list" for political assassinations being implemented by a special group of the Honduran military.(1) We reiterate our support of the family of COPINH's coordinator Berta Cáceres Flores (assassinated on March 2, 2016) in their demands that all those responsible in any way for that murder be brought to justice and that the illegal Agua Zarca project be ended.

October 3 - A protest of privatization of highways at the toll road booths near Tegucigalpa was attacked by National Police using quantities of tear gas. The peaceful protest included elected members of the political opposition in the national congress.

On September 30 the minister of security, in a clear attempt to stop citizens from exercising the right to assemble and to protest, had publicly threatened repression for anyone planning to protest.

October 10 - During a protest against privatization of the highways at the new toll road near Progreso, armed, uniformed on-duty National Police from the special unit called the COBRAS threatened a participant during the peaceful protest,

saying to well known writer, poet and photographer, Hector Flores (Chaco de la Pitoreta), “You are easy to find and to lose.”

The Honduras Solidarity Network is also in receipt of numerous complaints for this same period of continued criminalization, intimidation and violence against small farmers, and indigenous communities and we also take note of the reports of the intimidation against journalists, lawyers and the political opposition.

The U.S. government continues to support and enable the violence and intimidation against Hondurans by the Honduran government and the national and international corporations it serves. President Juan Orlando Hernandez has hired a US public relations firm and has traveled himself to the US at least 4 times in less than 4 months in a PR offensive aimed at countering the facts.

The US State Dept. “human rights certification” is part of this public relations “theater of the absurd” as it states that “We have certified that the central government of Honduras is taking effective steps to, among other things, combat corruption...; implement reforms, policies, and programs to improve transparency and strengthen public institutions, including increasing the capacity and independence of the judiciary and the Office of the Attorney General;...investigate and prosecute in the civilian justice system members of military and police forces who are credibly alleged to have violated human rights, and ensure that the military and police are cooperating in such cases; cooperate with commissions against impunity, as appropriate, and with regional human rights entities; and protect the right of political opposition parties, journalists, trade unionists, human rights defenders, and other civil society activists to operate without interference.”
(2)

We condemn these actions and once again make the demand that the US stop funding and training Honduran security forces, and stop supporting the megaprojects and privatizations that are behind the Honduran government’s ruthless assaults on the people’s human and civil rights.

(1) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/21/berta-caceres-name-honduran-military-hitlist-former-soldier>

(2) <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/10/263159.htm>

TAKE ACTION: STOP U.S. FUNDING OF VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS!

Demand that your Member of Congress support the Berta Caceres Human Rights in Honduras Act - HR5474. Since the 2009 U.S. and Canadian-backed military coup, solidarity and human rights organizations in the U.S. and in Honduras have worked to stop U.S. funding violence in Honduras.

On June 14, 2016, U.S. Congressman Hank Johnson of Georgia introduced HR5474, an Act that would cut off U.S. funding and support for the repressive Honduran military and national police and end U.S. support for funding of mega-projects against the wishes of the local population. As of September 25, 2016, 41 representatives have signed on in support.

MORE INFORMATION:

Honduras Solidarity Network in North America

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Funding

Since 1998, Rights Action has been funding community based development, indigenous rights and environmental organizations in Honduras. Since the 2009 U.S. and Canadian backed military coup, our work in Honduras has – sadly, necessarily - increased. Make cheque payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations:

- Canada: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/rights-action/>
- U.S.: <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations> (click on NetworkForGood)

Donations of stock? Write to: info@rightsaction.org

Radio Interview - Canada in Honduras

The role of Canadian government and corporations in relation to Honduras. RadioFree Winnipeg speaks with Grahame Russell, director of Rights Action, about repression and terror that community and environmental defenders,

activists and journalists have been subjected to since the 2009 military coup and how Canada is implicated.

- To Listen: https://tumblr.co/ZCYRZj2DDj5_b

More Information

Grahame Russell: grahame@rightsaction.org

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