

## Mounting evidence of electoral fraud by U.S. and Canadian-backed repressive regime in Honduras

Rights Action update & “Apparent Election Theft in Honduras” by Rick Sterling;  
SOAW (School of the Americas Watch) update

- <http://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/mounting-evidence-of-electoral-fraud-by-us-and-canadian-backed-repressive-regime-in-honduras>



Since the day of the fraudulent elections (Nov.26), at least 13 people have been killed by Honduran police and military; hundreds wounded and hundreds detained, according to COFADEH (Honduran committee of family members of the disappeared and detained).

As police refuse to follow orders and repress the Honduran people or enforce the illegal 'electoral-fraud' curfew, detailed information is coming to light about the electoral fraud planned and carried out by the U.S. and Canadian-backed regime of JOH (Juan Orlando Hernandez) and the National Party.

### **Resignation, full re-count or new election**

With so much evidence of blatant and computer electoral fraud, there are increasing calls across Honduras for the immediate resignation of JOH (Juan Orlando Hernandez) and installation of a care-taker government until the president-elect Salvador Nasralla would take power in January; through to calls for at least a full and public re-counting of ALL the votes, or a completely new run-off election with complete transparency and massive international observation.

**Emergency funding appeal:** for Honduran community groups working courageously and peacefully for real democracy – See below

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### **Apparent Election Theft in Honduras**

By Rick Sterling, December 4, 2017

<https://consortiumnews.com/2017/12/04/apparent-election-theft-in-honduras/>

*In 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton excused a coup in Honduras to stop a possible second term by a progressive president, but the U.S. now sits by as a right-wing president steals a second term*

Honduras is in crisis, again. The national election took place on Nov. 26 with results posted that night showing the challenger Salvador Nasralla with a 5 percentage-point lead with 57 percent of the votes tallied.

Then strange things began to happen.

After midnight on election night, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) stopped posting updates and effectively shut down for the next 36 hours. The TSE's president, David Matamoros Batson, said the TSE had received 13,000 tally sheets but was missing 6,000 from the total. With just over 18,000 total, this does not quite add up. Then two hours later, Matamoros increased the number of missing tally sheets to 7,500.

When updates resumed, mid-day last Tuesday, the results consistently favored the incumbent right-wing President Juan Orlando Hernandez. The opposition lead steadily diminished then disappeared.

The leader of the Opposition Coalition against the Dictatorship, Salvador Nasralla, denounced the apparent malfeasance and protests commenced across the country. Police and military have sometimes responded violently. Numerous unarmed Hondurans have been [killed](#) over the past five days.

On Monday, more than a week after the election, the TSE announced results giving a narrow victory to the incumbent National Party President Juan Orlando Hernandez. As mass protests continue, the opposition has demanded a recount of all the tally sheets received after the TSE shutdown.

The current National Party government derives from the 2009 military coup, which overthrew the moderately progressive President Manuel Zelaya supposedly because he simply considered the possibility of seeking a second term. When Zelaya was kidnapped in the 2009 coup, he was flown directly from Tegucigalpa to the U.S. government's Palmerola Air Base just 48 miles from the capital. After time on the ground there, with the coup leaders presumably consulting with Washington, the kidnapped president was taken to Costa Rica.

Five months later an election was held to replace Zelaya. The election was [widely boycotted](#) within Honduras but given the seal of approval by Washington. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the election made the coup a "moot point."

Four years later, in 2013, there was another presidential election, which included a new party: the Liberation and Refoundation Party known as LIBRE. This party represented popular forces, which supported Zelaya and his progressive policies — and emerged from the popular resistance to the coup. The party quickly

surpassed the traditional Liberal Party and presented a serious challenge to Hernandez's National Party even as international observers [documented](#) voter intimidation and other irregularities. Hernandez assumed the presidency on Jan. 27, 2014.

(Ironically, despite the justification for ousting Zelaya – because he allegedly considered seeking a second term in defiance of the constitution – Hernandez's path for reelection was [cleared away](#) by a contentious 2016 court ruling.)

Ahead of the 2017 election, LIBRE forged a broader coalition with two smaller parties to support Salvador Nasralla as their candidate. This political alliance took the name the Coalition Against the Dictatorship and former President Zelaya was head coordinator.

Days before the recent Honduras election The Economist published a blockbuster article titled [“Is Honduras Ruling Party Planning to Rig an Election?”](#) reporting: “The Economist has obtained a [recording](#) that, if authentic, suggests the ruling party has plans to distort results in the upcoming election.”

The two-hour recording is from a National Party training session. It details five tactics used to influence election results:

- buy the credentials of small party delegates who supervise the local polling place,
- surreptitiously allow National Party voters to vote more than once,
- spoil the votes for other candidates,
- damage the tally sheet which favors the opponent so it cannot be transmitted electronically to election headquarters,
- and expedite tally sheets favoring their party.

### **Thumb on the Scales**

Besides the reported rigging schemes in the field, the election referees were far from neutral. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) is led by president [David Matamoros Batson](#), who was previously Secretary General and a member of Congress for the National Party.

Following is evidence of TSE misconduct and bias:

## **1 – TSE delayed posting results that favored the opposition candidate.**

In the 2013 election, TSE started posting the election results at 6:13 p.m. when just 24 percent of the total votes had been received. Those returns gave the National Party candidate Juan Orlando Hernandez a 5 percentage point lead.

This election, TSE acted differently. At 7:55 p.m., TSE President Matamoros tweeted “We have received 40% of the results.” But they did not post this. They delayed posting the data until near midnight. Then they reported that with 57.2 % of total votes counted the results were:

- Salvador Nasralla (Opposition Coalition Against the Dictatorship) with 855,847 votes = 45.17% of total.
- Juan Orlando Hernandez (National Party) with 761,892 votes = 40.22%
- Luis Zelaya (Liberal Party, no relation to ousted Manuel Zelaya) with 260,994 votes = 13.77% of total.
- Several other candidates had less than 1%.

Prior to the election, TSE expected to post the results from 70 percent of the electorate on election night, raising the question of whether the TSE was holding back more results.

## **2 – TSE changed the election procedure.**

Honduras’ election procedure is to count and tally the paper ballots at each of the voting stations around the country. The tally sheet (‘acta’) is signed off by representatives from each party, then scanned and transmitted electronically to TSE headquarters where they are added to national totals and posted.



U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson meets with Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez, at the Department of State, March 21, 2017. [State Department photo/Public Domain]

Following the posting of results showing the opposition candidate with a significant lead, at about midnight on election day, the TSE changed the procedure and stopped posting results for the next 36 hours. TSE President Matamoros arbitrarily changed the procedures.

The explanation was given by Matamoros at 1:39 p.m. on Nov. 27: "Today we are going to start opening the ballot boxes coming in from across the country to understand the ballots and results." Five minutes later, at 1:44 p.m., he added "We cannot give results until all the missing tally sheets come in."

The situation was questioned by Spanish election observer Ramon Jauregui who [noted](#) "There is no technical reason that explains the delay, because the tallies from all 18000 polling places were transmitted electronically to the [@tsehonduras](#) on the day of the election."

### **3 – TSE falsely reported the number of missing tally sheets.**

At 1:56 p.m., Matamoros announced that the TSE had received 13,000 of the total but are still missing 6,000 tally sheets ("actas"). "We have received 13,000 tallies from across the country ..... we are missing 6,000". With a total of 18,100 tallies, the actual number missing should have been about 5,100.

At 4:17 p.m., the number of missing tally sheets mysteriously increased by 25 percent to 7,500. TSE's Matamoros announced "We are missing 7500 actas."

### **4 – TSE officials gave contradictory results.**

While Matamoros was issuing conflicting information about the number of missing "actas," another election official was saying something very different. As reported in [this Reuters](#) story:

"Election official Marcos Ramiro Lobo told Reuters on Monday afternoon that Nasralla was leading by a margin of five points, with about 70 percent of ballots counted. Lobo said Nasralla appeared certain to win, signaling that experts at the electoral body regarded his lead as irreversible."

The third-place Liberal Party candidate also [recognized](#) Nasralla as the winner and urged the National Party leader to concede defeat.

About noon on Nov. 28, the TSE resumed posting election results after the 36-hour interruption. The new data showed Nasralla's lead steadily declining and soon the National Party candidate and current President Juan Orlando Hernandez was [edging ahead](#). The Center for Economic and Policy Research has [analyzed](#) the data and determined the abrupt swing in elections results was "next to impossible."

### **Where Things Stand**

TSE has announced results showing Juan Orlando Hernandez winning the election. The Opposition Coalition candidate Nasralla has called for a [new election](#) under international observation and control. The Opposition Coordinator and former president, Manuel Zelaya, has issued a statement calling for the investigation and verification of the election procedures and results.

Honduras is important to U.S. foreign policy and the White House is closely following events. In mid-November Foreign Policy magazine ran an article titled [The United States has a lot Riding on the Honduras Election](#)" The article says "losing Hernandez would be a real setback."

Clearly the Honduran people have even more riding on the Honduras election. The coup of 2009 led to increased crime and violence along with massive repression of [landless campesinos](#), [environmental](#) and [indigenous communities](#). From the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, the domestic policies of Honduras have been skewed to benefit foreign corporations, plantations, the local oligarchy and neighbor to the north.

The current situation calls into question the objectivity of the U.S. and Organization of American States (OAS). Will the U.S. and OAS issue token criticisms but ultimately rubber stamp this Honduras election despite the glaring problems? If so, it will highlight the double-standard as the U.S. and OAS have aggressively criticized Venezuelan elections and [refused](#) to acknowledge the results even after full recounts and verification.

The Honduras election process offers the potential of verification but only if the data from each and every polling place is compared with the data recorded at the TSE headquarters. The secret National Party training described by The Economist specifically called for disruption of the transmission of unfavorable “actas” (tally sheets) to the headquarters.

If opposition demands for a thorough examination of election procedures and voting tallies are not met, protests and repression may explode in Honduras. The majority of the Honduran people evidently want new leadership and voted for it. It appears that the voters’ desires were thwarted through a manipulated election process and transparent theft.

[Rick Sterling is an investigative journalist who was an official election observer in the 2013 Honduras election. He can be contacted at [rsterling1@gmail.com](mailto:rsterling1@gmail.com)]

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SOAW (School of the Americas Watch) Update

**Honduran security forces refuse to repress the people**

**What to do!**

Yesterday was a remarkable day in Honduras. The COBRAS, an elite police force, and basic level police officers of the National Police announced they would no longer obey the government’s order to repress the protests and mobilizations taking place all across Honduras. ‘We are the people and we can’t be killing our own people to protect the interests of external persons,’ announced one of the Cobras. Another Cobra stated, ‘our job is to give peace and security to the Honduran people, not repress them.’

This incredible turn of events comes after violent repression of the massive protests, including numerous murders of protesters by the Military Police and the Armed Forces.

In a tremendous show of integrity, the Cobras and police officers abandoned the protests where they had been sent to repress and returned to their barracks. A huge crowd gathered outside the Cobras in Tegucigalpa, sharing food and water with the police officers arriving there, and celebrating those who have the dignity



to refuse to attack their own people for demanding a basic tenet of democracy be respected: the popular vote.

Earlier in the day, the Coordinator of the Alliance in Opposition to the Dictatorship, Mel Zelaya, presented slides of vote tally sheets altered by the election authorities to give more votes to the current President Juan Orlando Hernandez and take votes away from the Opposition Alliance candidate Salvador Nasralla.

Each party receives tally sheets from each voting station and so the Opposition Alliance was able to compare their tally sheets with those posted by the electoral authorities and found that the electoral authorities had frequently altered the results, even creating new tally sheets to increase the number of votes for Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH as he is called) and reduce those of the Opposition Alliance. The Liberal Party, which came in third place, is also willing to provide its copies of the tally sheets for comparison.

Salvador Nasralla declared he was requesting a meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States to present the vote tally sheets. The Opposition Alliance's findings suggest a major fraud operation by the electoral authorities, who are firmly aligned with US-backed President Juan Orlando Hernandez, to try to thwart a massive popular vote that roundly rejected his re-election effort.

People in Honduras continue in the streets demanding an end to the fraud and the dictatorship of Juan Orlando Hernandez, who has consolidated power throughout the past 8 years following the SOA-graduate led 2009 coup, and ran for re-election despite the Constitutional prohibition against re-election.

Last night, once again people throughout the country chanted 'Fuera JOH' (get out JOH) and banged pots and pans throughout the night in a show of resistance to the curfew and suspension of constitutional guarantees. Hernandez, whose regime continues to be financed by the United States despite the massively violent crackdown on protesters, is trying desperately to maintain his grip on power despite widespread popular rejection.

The Platform of Popular and Social Movements of Honduras is now demanding the immediate resignation of Juan Orlando Hernandez and thousands upon thousands continue in the streets today.

The momentum is clearly on the side of the Honduran people and the fraud is becoming too obvious to deny. As Hernandez tries to maintain power, will the US continue propping him up? Or will it finally acknowledge how corrupt and repressive his regime is and let the Honduran people decide their own future?

Take action in solidarity with the people of Honduras TODAY. The United States has financed and propped up the Juan Orlando Hernandez regime for far too long and bears responsibility for the murders of those who are simply demanding that the official election results reflect how people actually voted.

**Here are several ways to take action:**

Call the State Department Honduras Desk (202-647-3505) and demand the State Department publicly denounce fraud and repression in Honduras and request that the US not recognize the outcome of the elections until there is a transparent process that meets the demands of the Opposition Alliance. (\*Note: This is the number published in the Directory of the Department of State. If the operator tells you that it is a wrong number, please ask the operator to share the Honduras Desk's phone number)

Sample message: 'My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am calling to urge the State Department to speak out against election fraud and violent repression in Honduras. I am extremely upset that people protesting against fraud have been murdered by the US financed security forces and urge the State Department to suspend US aid to Honduras as well as condemn the violence by state security forces and the massive irregularities in the election results. The US should not recognize the outcome of the elections unless there is a transparent process that satisfies the demands of the Opposition Alliance with regards to transparency and review of votes, especially in areas where there appears to be inflated vote turnout.'

Tweet at the State Department or post on their facebook page: Call on the US to denounce fraud and violent repression following the elections in Honduras,

demand the immediate suspension of aid to Honduras, and demand accountability for the US financing of repression and murder in Honduras. Twitter: @StateDept, @WHAAsstSecty, @WHASpeaks, @USAmbHonduras. Facebook: @usdos

Organize or attend a protest, action, or vigil in solidarity with the people of Honduras. Contact us for more ideas or to connect with others in your area.

Finally, keep on e-mailing and calling your Representative and Senators urging them to support the suspension of US security aid to Honduras and to speak out against election fraud and repression by the US-financed security forces in Honduras. If your Representative hasn't already done so, ask him/her to co-sponsor HR 1299, the Berta Caceres Human Rights in Honduras Act.

In solidarity,  
SOA Watch  
PO box 43523, Washington, DC 20010  
<http://www.SOAW.org>

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### **Do Not Write Letters of Protest to the Regime!**

Wondering what to do about this latest act of State repression in Honduras? Don't write letters of protest to the regime. They are impervious to them; they are protected from them by their political, economic and military relations with the "international community".

In power since the 2009 coup, the corrupt, repressive Honduran rulers care about two things:

- maintaining their mutually beneficial economic and political relations with and support from the international community (primarily the governments of U.S. and Canada; but also the European community; the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank; and a host of global investors and companies working in the sectors of African palm, sugar cane, bananas, garment "sweatshop" factories, mining and tourism);
- maintaining relations with and support from the U.S. military.

The repression, corruption and impunity in Honduras are not “Honduran” problems. They are problems of this so-called “international community” together with the Honduran elites. International economic and military relations are the lifeblood of the regime. This is how power works.

Through our denunciations and activism, we have to make this “international community” – particularly the governments of the U.S. and Canada - take responsibility for their actions. If accountability is not brought to complicity of the military, economic and political backers of the Honduran regime, the repression, corruption and impunity will not stop.

### **U.S.A.**

In the U.S., call the U.S. Capital Switchboard to directly contact your Senators and Representatives: (202) 224-3121. Get their phone numbers and email addresses; send them copies of this and other information; politely insist that they agree to any and all of the following demands; share your efforts with the media, family, friends and networks.

### **CANADA**

In Canada, find your MP by entering your postal code on this page: <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>. Get their phone numbers and email addresses; send them copies of this and other information; politely insist that they agree to any and all of the following demands; share your efforts with the media, family, friends and networks.

### **In the short term, the U.S. and Canadian governments and politicians must:**

- Publicly condemn the multiple acts (open and covert) of documented electoral fraud being carried out by the corrupt, military-backed government of Juan Orlando Hernandez and the National party;
- Publicly condemn the suspension of constitutional rights, the imposition of a curfew and the acts of police and military repression happening across Honduras against anti-electoral fraud protesters and other citizens;
- State unequivocally that the government of Juan Orlando Hernandez and the National Party will be held fully accountable for any and all electoral fraud and repression taking place;
- Immediately suspend all economic, military, police and other “security” related relations with the corrupt, repressive government in power;

**In the medium and longer terms**, there must be legislative and senate inquiries in the U.S. and Canada into the underlying causes of Honduras' now endemic situation of repression and exploitation, corruption and impunity, with a specific focus on:

- The role played by the U.S. and Canadian governments supporting and legitimizing the 2009 military coup;
- The role played by the U.S. and Canadian governments supporting and legitimizing the fraudulent and repressive elections in 2009 and 2013;
- The role played by the U.S. and Canadian governments supporting the expansion of corporate and investor interests in Honduras, in concert with the repressive, corrupt governments in power, in the areas of mining, garment "sweatshop" industry, bananas, hydro-electric dams, tourism, and more;

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#### **More information**

- Honduras Solidarity Network: <http://www.hondurassolidarity.org/>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/HondurasSolidarityNetwork>,  
<https://twitter.com/hondurassol>
- Witness for Peace: [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org),  
<https://twitter.com/WitnessforPeace>,
- School of Americas Watch: [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org), <https://twitter.com/SOAWatch>
- La Voz de los de Abajo: <https://www.facebook.com/lavozchicago/>,  
[@lavozchicago](https://twitter.com/lavozchicago)

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#### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.) – Emergency humanitarian relief funds**

As the Honduran people are courageously protesting and saying no to electoral fraud and repression, they are suffering the consequences of military and police repression. Rights Action is sending emergency relief funds to our long-term partner groups in Honduras - COPINH and OFRANEH - and other community groups as they continue with their community-controlled development, environmental and human rights defense work and their emergency response to the electoral fraud and repression work, make check 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: <http://rightsaction.org/donate/>

Donations of stock? Write to: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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