



LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY NETWORK

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ONE-YEAR AFTER JUNE 28, 2009 COUP D'ÉTAT IN HONDURAS NATIONAL POPULAR RESISTANCE CONTINUES UNDIMINISHED

A year ago, on June 28th 2009, a U.S. backed military-oligarchic coup was perpetrated against Manuel Zelaya, the democratically-elected President of Honduras. This coup established a reign of state-sponsored terrorism and persecution and it played a key role in the regional plan being promoted by the U.S., Canada and business elites, of attempting to halt the advances of Latin American countries in their legitimate aspiration for sovereignty, participatory democracy and addressing social inequities.

President Zelaya became a target after trying to modestly improve the conditions of Honduras' impoverished majority (60% of 8 million who live below the poverty line), by increasing the country's minimum wage by 60% from US \$175 (until then, the lowest in the region) to \$275 monthly, despite strong opposition from the country's business elites and multinational companies.

Zelaya was also punished for strengthening south-south regional ties by integrating Honduras in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) in 2008 and in the *Petrocaribe* energy alliance in 2007, both championed by Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. He also supported the drafting of a new mining law that would have prevented new gold mines that use cyanide, from carrying out operations in Honduras and he was working on replacing the notorious Palmerola air base—which was used by the U.S. in the 1980's as a launching pad to wage proxy wars on Central America— with a commercial airport.

Since the June 2009 coup, all progressive measures implemented by Zelaya have been reversed, the Palmerola air base has been reinstated for military purposes and a new military base has been established on the Honduran northern coast within reach of Nicaragua.

On November 29, 2009, while deposed president Zelaya was being held captive in the Brazilian Embassy in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, Porfirio Lobo Sosa was brought to the presidency by sham general elections held by the coup regime, which were viewed widely as illegitimate throughout the international community and by a majority of Latin American countries due to the fact that they were carried out in an environment of deep militarization and heavy repression against the national resistance movement that opposed the coup.

The Lobo government was inaugurated on January 27, 2010 and it remains unrecognized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and by the United Nations. However, both Canada and the U.S. are actively promoting Honduras' reintegration into the OAS and its full recognition by the international community. To date, unfortunately, all Central American countries (with the exception of Nicaragua) have recognized the Lobo regime and Colombia and Peru have done the same in South America, while the influential governments of Brazil and Argentina are still refusing to do so.

The day after Lobo's inauguration, Canada's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Peter Kent, announced: ***"As Hondurans begin this new chapter in their history, Canada stands ready to assist with the challenges that lie ahead. As we have throughout the impasse, Canada will continue to do all it can to help Honduras quickly return to full democratic and constitutional order. Once that has been achieved, we will also support President Lobo's efforts as he moves to fully reintegrate Honduras into the international and hemispheric community, including in the Organization of American States."*** On February 24, 2010, shortly after Minister Kent's last visit to Honduras and only a day after the release of his press communiqué exalting the successes of the Lobo regime, Claudia Brizuela Rodriguez, the daughter of a prominent radio journalist and anti-coup activist was shot in the face in front of her children after opening the front door to her home.

There is no doubt that Canada's priority in Honduras—as elsewhere in the region—is not to uphold human rights or democratic rule, but to promote corporate investment and business interests. In Honduras, Canadian investors have injected more than \$400 million, mostly in mining and *maquila* (assembly plant) textile industries.

The violence unleashed in Honduras since June 2009 and under the Lobo regime has been widespread, targeting mainly activists advocating for deep social reforms:

- ▶ 708 human rights violations, including 54 murders, between June and December 2009¹.
- ▶ Honduras was the third worst place (after Colombia and Guatemala) in terms of trade union rights violations with 12 unionists murdered.²
- ▶ Thus far in 2010, seven journalists have been murdered making Honduras one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists.³
- ▶ A total of 160 cases of human rights violations that appear to be politically motivated—including illegal detentions, sexual assaults, politically-motivated murders, torture, kidnappings, internal displacement due to threats, among other violations.⁴
- ▶ 48 documented assassinations of anti-coup Resistance members since the coup, with 15 having occurred since the inauguration of much-disputed President Lobo.⁵
- ▶ A death threat on May 20th, 2010, received by Carlos H. Reyes, a former candidate for Honduran presidency, member of the Coordinating Committee of the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP) and president of the Labour Union of the Soft Drink Industry.

A year into the historic struggle against the military-oligarchic coup in Honduras:

- ▶ The Latin American Solidarity Network-LASN (Toronto) condemns the Harper Canadian government's proactive role in attempting to legitimize the Honduran coup— not only by ignoring the mounting evidence of human rights violations— but by advocating at the OAS and internationally, for the full recognition of the illegitimate Lobo regime which was the coup's successor.
- ▶ LASN expresses its solidarity with the broad-based **National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP)**—comprised of teachers, students, environmental organizations, labour unions, feminists, Indigenous and Garifuna groups— in its unwavering struggle against Lobo's illegitimate government and for genuine democratic and social reforms.
- ▶ LASN also expresses its support for the FNRP's nation-wide petition and mobilization campaign that will culminate on **June 28, 2010 (exactly one-year after the coup)**, demanding a national referendum to establish a Constituent Assembly.

**Latin American Solidarity Network-LASN (Toronto) Coordinating Committee
Toronto, Canada—June 25, 2010.**

¹Source: *Committee of Family Members of Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH)*.

²Source: *International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) 2010 survey of trade union rights violations around the world*.

³Source: *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)*.

⁴Source: *Report titled, "First Thirty Days of the Porfirio Lobo Government" published on February 28, 2010 by COFADEH*.

⁵Source: *Human rights groups in Honduras*.