



Preliminary Report of the International Observation Mission of the American Association of Jurists (AAJ), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) and the International Association Against Torture (AICT) on the Crisis in Honduras caused by the Coup d'état and the Breach of the Rule of Law.



September 15, 2009

Preliminary Report

Preliminary Report of the International Observation Mission of the American Association of Jurists (AAJ), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) and the International Association Against Torture (AICT) on the crisis in Honduras caused by the coup d'état and the breach of the Rule of Law.

(August 25-30, 2009 in Tegucigalpa, Honduras)

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief background

The Republic of Honduras is a Central American country with a population of approximately 7.5 million people, of which 90% are Mestizo, 7% American Indian, 2% Black and 1% White. Honduras is the third poorest country in Latin America. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in 2007 the rate of destitution and poverty reached 69%, and 46% of the population were indigent or lived in extreme poverty.¹

Since the early twentieth century, Honduran history was characterized by the control of economic resources by foreign companies like United Fruit Company, Standard Fruit Company, and Cuyamel Fruit Company, making bananas the chief export, hence the pejorative use of "Banana Republic." In 1924, to protect the interests of the fruit companies and the Honduran oligarchy, and, in turn, to silence social demands, the United States invaded Honduras, supported by the national oligarchy and other political sectors.

Historically, Honduras has been subjugated to the political, economic, and military designs and strategies of the United States. An example of the close dependent relationship with the United States is that "[Honduras] sends [the United States] 70% of their exports (bananas, coffee, and sugar); and receives 3 billion dollars [in remittances] from 800,000 Honduran emigrant families".²

Since the 1950s, under various military regimes³, Honduras has endured a history of human rights violations, including disappearances, murders by death squads, and a policy of terror against those who advocate in favor of political, economic, and social rights.⁴ Impunity and the lack of an independent judiciary have also impeded the development of a strong national democratic system.⁵

In 1954, the United States signed a bilateral agreement of military assistance, which it extended in 1982

¹CEPAL, *Cumbre de las Américas 1994-2009, Indicadores Seleccionados*. Quinta Cumbre de las Américas, Puerto España, 17 -19 April 2009.

² Ramonet, Ignacio. Honduras. Le Monde Diplomatique, Spanish edition, August 2009.

³**Governments and Coups: 1956-1957:** Military juntas, **1963-1975:** López Arellano holds power via two successive coup de etats, **1978:** Military coup against Juan Alberto Melgar, establishing military junta **1982:** First civilian government. **2009:** Military coup against Manuel Zelaya.

⁴See: *Velásquez Rodríguez vs. Honduras*; decided, July 29 1988 by the Inter-American Court for Human Rights.

⁵See, 1989 GAO Report; Former U.S. Ambassador in Honduras, Cresencio Arcos, admits that the principle failure of U.S. assistance to Honduras during the 1980's was not to have conditioned the aid to strengthening the democratic institutions, including the judicial branch. Also, in 1992 he stated, "a society must not permit that justice is converted into a snake who only bites bare feet while leaving unpunished those who wear boots".

to include the Palmerola air base (also known as Soto Cano.) It is precisely in 1982, after various coups d'état, that Honduras instituted a civilian government. However, Honduras was prime territory for the Anti-Sandinistas, financed primarily by the United States to support the Nicaraguan Contra and combat guerrilla movements in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. This was the precursor to the 1982 constitution that is currently in place, which is based upon the 1957 and 1965 constitutions (also enacted during military regimes) and includes sections approved in closed sessions with the military commanders⁶.

On November 27, 2005, Manuel Zelaya Rosales, candidate from the Liberal Party, was elected. He took office on January 27, 2006. During his presidency, Zelaya initiated a series of reforms, including raising the minimum wage. The reforms, which were fiercely opposed by the powerful economical and ruling sectors, were measures directed to mitigate the profound economic and social inequalities in the country and to enable the less privileged classes to meet their basic needs. In addition, President Zelaya's other initiatives confronted big business and the religious, political, and media leadership, including integration with the regional alternative trade group initiated by Venezuela called ALBA, the elimination of intermediaries in the purchase of petroleum, and the government contract with the cheapest bidder - the Venezuelan company PetroCaribe.

The decision to conduct a non-binding popular referendum, asking Honduran citizens if they wanted a fourth ballot in the November 29, 2009 elections to decide whether they should convene a Constituent Assembly to amend the Constitution, was decisive in the execution of the coup d'état.

The powerful economic forces, politicians, and influential sectors that control the media vehemently opposed the referendum and appealed to the judiciary and the legislature to initiate accelerated procedures, ignoring due process, to justify baseless actions against President Zelaya. In addition, the Attorney General filed an action against President Zelaya, via a contentious administrative procedure. The Supreme Court quickly ordered the suspension of the referendum.

President Zelaya subsequently issued an Executive Order on May 26th, based on the Citizen Participation Law, to conduct a non-binding National Opinion Poll, to be held on June 28, 2009, presenting the following question:

Do you agree that, in the 2009 general elections, a fourth ballot should be added for the people to decide whether to convene a Constitutional Assembly? Yes - No

On May 29th, in response to a request for clarification, the Supreme Court declared that this National Opinion Poll, and any future poll or referendum with the same intent, would be subject to the same ban. Appeals from groups favoring the poll were summarily denied.

On June 25th, the Executive branch issued a public decree that it intended to carry out the National Opinion Poll. In response, the Legislative branch authorized an arrest, detention, and search of Zelaya's residence. This action by the Legislative branch violated the separation of powers. It is significant that the decision is dated June 27th -- a Saturday outside of normal business hours, when it would be difficult for the President to legally oppose the arrest order.

Early morning on Sunday, June 28, 2009, the Armed Forces kidnapped and expatriated the president, handing him over to foreign authorities in Costa Rica, flagrantly violating Article 102 of the Honduran

⁶ Interview with Dr. Edmundo Orellano, August 2009.

Constitution. The Supreme Court of Honduras, in contrast to the speed with which they acted against constitutionally-elected President Zelaya, has not undertaken any legal action, (up to the writing of this report), to sanction those responsible for violating the Constitution and the law. The delegation observes that the proceedings against president Zelaya were extremely accelerated, without the basic guarantees of due process or the right to a defense. Thus, a military coup d'état was established on June 28th, imposing a de facto government under then president of the National Congress, Roberto Micheletti.

Since June 28th the international community has repudiated the coup, demanding the reinstatement of President Zelaya and the restoration of the rule of law and institutional order. The United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the European Union have condemned the coup by introducing sanctions against the de facto government. On July 4, 2009 the OAS suspended Honduras from the Pan-American organization based on its Charter of 1948 and the Inter-American Democratic Charter of 2001. Although the United States government has not officially stated that what happened in Honduras was a military coup d'état, it has taken punitive measures --including revoking the visas of coup leaders, suspending the processing of non-immigrant visas, and suspending some military and economic aid.

The delegation notes the intransigence demonstrated by the coup government with the goal of maintaining power until the November 29, 2009 elections. The delegation considers it crucial that the international community maintain a firm position against recognizing the pre-electoral process and the upcoming election results. Furthermore, the delegation asserts that the coup d'état and the repressive actions against the Honduran people should not remain in impunity.

2. Members of the Delegation



Mission participants:

Vanessa Ramos - President of the Continental AAJ member of the bureau of the IADL, NLG member
Arturo Fournier Facio - AAJ- Costa Rica (missing from photo)

Emily Yozell - NLG and AAJ- Costa Rica

Gustavo Enrique Cabrera Vega - AAJ- Costa Rica and Coordinator for Service for Peace and Justice in Latin America (SERPAJ)

Lucy Rodríguez - NLG

Kevin Breslin - NLG

Roger Wareham - AICT, NLG and the December 12th Movement

* (Accompanied here by Dr. Juan Almeyda, center)

3. Objectives:

- a) Document the institutional and political crisis, as well as the polarization in Honduras, and the events leading up to the June 28th coup d'état
- b) Follow up on decisions made by international organizations like the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the European Union, who have condemned the coup and demand the return of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales
- c) Prevent the coup d'état in Honduras from becoming a precedent that could expand to other regions of Latin American, and advocate respect for international law, the rule of law, and peaceful conflict resolution
- d) Hold meetings with public officials, different representatives of Honduran civil society, and human rights defenders to obtain different perspectives and draw the mission's own conclusions
- e) Document human rights violations, not limited to civil and political rights, but including economic, social, and cultural rights, according to the international covenants (agreements) ratified by Honduras⁷
- f) Ensure compliance with the principles of the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, and identify violations of these principles
- g) Make our observations available to the mass media and national and international public opinion through press releases, the publication of a report, participation in conferences and forums, and in addition, alerting the attention of the United States government and international organizations.

4. Description of the Mission's activities and interviews

- August 25, 2009: Mission participants Emily Yozell and Lucy Rodríguez attended the press conference convened by the OAS delegation of foreign ministers



- August 26, 2009:
 - Observation of a peaceful march organized by protesters against the coup d'état

⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, American Convention on Human Rights, Inter-American Democratic Charter, Convention on Elimination of Discrimination of Women, Covenant on the Rights of the Child, International Covenant to Eliminate all forms of Racial Discrimination, ILO Covenant 169, among others.



- Interviews:
- Dr. Juan Almendáres, Director of the Center for Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (CPTRT), former Rector of the UNAH
- Edmundo Orellano, university professor, constitutional law expert, held several government positions, including Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Security under Zelaya
- Blanca Dole, Director, Feminist University Women Collective (COFEMUN) and Celeste Mejía, Youth coordinator, COFEMUN
- August 27, 2009:



- Office of Attorney General:
 - Sandra Ponce - Special Prosecutor for Human Rights
 - Aldo Francisco Santos Sosa - Special Prosecutor for the Environment
 - Yani del Cid - Special Prosecutor for Indigenous and Cultural rights
 - Elizabeth Orellano – Special prosecutor in the Women's rights unit.
- Office of National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH)



- Commissioner Dr. Ramón Custodio
- 1st Deputy Yoleth Calderón (not shown)
- 2nd Deputy Dr. Nery Velásquez

-
- Dr. Leo Valladares Lanza, university professor, constitutional expert and founder of the Center for Research and Promotion of Human Rights (CIPRODEH)
- Liberal Party caucus members:
 - Edna Carolina Echeverría H representing Gracias a Dios region
 - Javier Hall Polio, representing Yoro

- Manuel de J. Velásquez, of La Paz, accompanied by
- Jairo Hernández of the Honduran resistance movement.
- Claudia Herrmannsdorfer and Regina Fonseca, Center for Women's Rights and



members of Feminists in Resistance

- Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice
 - Criminal prosecutors Jari Dixon Herrera and Alejandro Castillo Ferrufino
 - Leonides Donato Elvir of National Lawyers Front Against the Coup
- August 28, 2009
 - Bertha Oliva, Director of the Committee of Relatives of Detainees and the Disappeared



in Honduras (COFADEH)

-
- Simon Henshaw, Chief of the United States Embassy and Nathan Macklin, human rights officer
- Reina Rivera Joya, Executive Director of CIPRODEH (Center for the Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights in Honduras)
- Honduran Supreme Court:



Magistrate and President of the Court, Jorge Alberto Rivera Vilés and Administrative and Labor law Judge, Victor Manuel Martínez Silva

-
- Civil Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), met with group of representatives

- Alfredo López, Vice President of the Fraternal Black Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) and member Selvin López



- August 29, 2009
 - Congressman Marvin Ponce Saucedo of the Democratic Unification Party



- Father Andrés Tamayo, threatened defender of environment resources in Olancho
- Kenia Carolina Irías Guzmán, former Technical Director of the National Women's Institute (INAM)
- Juan Barahona, National Coordinator of the Popular Block of Honduras and the National Resistance Front to the Coup d'état, joined by resistance members Reina Centeno and José Barahona
- Wilfredo Méndez, Executive Director of the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU)
- Association of Judges for Democracy (AJD): Judge Mario Rolando Díaz

- August 30, 2009
 - Mission participants attended commemorative events in Tegucigalpa on the International Day of the Disappeared



○

5. Primary Conclusions

5.1 The mission confirmed that on June 28, 2009 a military coup d'état began in Honduras, causing a rupture of institutional order and the rule of law, through the unconstitutional removal, kidnapping and forced expatriation of elected President Manuel Zelaya Rosales. The Constitution of Honduras does not provide for this manner of removal of the president. Fundamental precepts of constitutional law, as well as charters and international treaties ratified by the Honduran state, guarantee the right to a legal defense and the applicable substantive and procedural due process of the law. In short, the coup was an extra-legal solution that powerful sectors used to end their conflict with President Zelaya, who favored legal and democratic measures advancing social progress.

5.2 There is no legal basis whatsoever for ousting President Zelaya, despite documents and decrees issued to confuse the public. The real motivations for the removal of President Zelaya by the coup leaders were the objections by the influential economic and political sectors to Executive decisions, including the social advancements such as the increased minimum wage, proposals for meaningful civil society participation, the contract with PetroCaribe and agreeing to join ALBA.

"...the vast majority recognizes that what happened in Honduras was a military coup d'état with dire consequences for the future of the country, except for a few who tried to find a constitutional justification without any foothold." (Special United Nations Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Frank La Rue, press release on the Rapporteur's visit to Honduras, August 10, 2009)

The ousting of President Zelaya violated the Honduran constitution as follows:

- Article 102, which states that, "No Honduran may be expatriated or delivered by the authorities to a foreign state"
- The constitutional Preamble "to strengthen and develop the rule of law"
- Article 1, which establishes that "Honduras is a sovereign state, comprised of a free, democratic, and independent republic, to ensure its inhabitants the enjoyment of justice, liberty, culture, and economic and social welfare"
- Article 2 because popular sovereignty legitimately expressed in the voting booth was replaced through the usurpation of executive power
- Article 4, which mandates the division of state powers; and
- Article 5, guaranteeing the participation of all political sectors, was violated by Congress' summary decision without the knowledge, presence or consideration by (several/many/important) Congressional members who would have opposed the coup.

5.3 The mission reports that the acts of the coup leaders leading to the arrest of legitimately elected President Zelaya are obscure and as of yet lack satisfactory explanation. The delegation observed a stark contrast between the speed in planning and executing the coup to remove President Zelaya, by abuse of force and violation of fundamental human rights, and the delays in resolving numerous appeals and habeas corpus petitions filed by civilians, and the absence of prosecution of the Honduran army for its violations and express breach of Constitutional Article 102.

5.4 Honduras is a country of profound socio-economic inequalities, marked by a strong social and political polarization, which has intensified since the coup and which goes beyond the return and reinstatement of the legitimate president. The polarization and institutional instability can be seen, on one side, in the alliance of the powerful economic and political elite that controls executive, legislative, and judicial power, along with the armed forces, the

leadership of the Catholic and Protestant churches, and the heads of the mainstream media, who illegitimately refer to the ousting of president Zelaya as a constitutional succession; and on the other side, in the sectors of the population that demand the restoration of the rule of law, the return of president Zelaya, and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. The delegation observed that the resistance movement against the coup consists of a broad representation of civil society, including human rights defenders, women's organizations, indigenous communities, Garifunas, Afro-Hondurans, representatives from various ethnic organizations, NGOs, students, teachers, doctors, lawyers in both private practice and public employees from various state institutions, representatives of the National Congress, journalists, political leaders, clergy, environmentalists, and laborers in general.

5.5 The mission concludes that there have been serious violations and abuses of rights. It confirmed in its interviews that some human rights violations existed and occurred before the coup⁸. However, the human rights violations increased significantly in quantity and gravity after June 28, 2009. There have been several serious violations of political and civil rights, including the right to life, physical integrity, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and thought, freedom of association and assembly, and the guarantee of due process of the right to information. Between 3,000 and 4,000 people have been arbitrarily arrested during mostly peaceful demonstrations against the coup, also violating the fundamental constitutional rights contained in Articles 2 and 3 of the Honduran constitution, which outline the right to resort to insurrection in defense of constitutional order.

5.6 There have been systematic violations of economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the right to health and work. For example, the mission received various complaints that hospitals have been militarized, and that medical staff at the public hospital La Escuela have refused to assist injured protesters. Workers have been fired in discriminatory and arbitrary ways without apparent justification other than for speaking out against the de facto government and its breach of the rule of law.

Honduras is obligated to comply with the international covenants, treaties, and conventions it has ratified, such as the American Convention on Human Rights in articles, 5 (right to humane treatment), 7 (right to personal liberty), 8 (judicial guarantees), 11 (protection of honor and dignity), 13 (freedom of thought and expression), 15 (right to assembly), 16 (freedom of association), and 23 (political rights.)

5.7 The mission received reports of deaths caused by excessive use of force, repression and torture by the police and members of armed forces, including the use of live bullets against protesters demonstrating against the coup. It has been reported that the National Police and the Armed Forces were responsible for the deaths of Isis Obed Murllio Mencias, Pedro Magdiel Muñoz, Roger Vallejo Soriano and Pedro Pablo Hernandez. There was a lack of willingness on the part of the prosecutors to diligently and timely investigate the facts and bring those responsible to justice, which once again contrasts with the speed and efficiency with which government bodies proceeded against the deposed President. The mission reaffirms the right to life that the Honduran constitution, in Article 65, recognizes as inviolable. Furthermore, the American Convention, Article 4 (1) establishes that "every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." This fundamental human right is also enshrined

⁸ See eg., Annual Reports from the U.S. State Department, **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices**, chapters on Honduras.

in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 6 (1) of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, recognizes that the right to life is inherent in the individual and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of life. Similarly, other international covenants and conventions reaffirm the inviolability of human life.

5.8 The mission noted the excessive and disproportionate use of force and repression by the National Police, the military, and COBRA special forces against those who expressed opposition to the coup d'état. It is of particular concern that these excesses are being committed against the most historically vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous people, children, Garifunas, Afro-Hondurans, rural and low-income sectors.

5.9 Contrary to the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression adopted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during its 108th session of the General Assembly, entered into force on March 29, 1996, the mission observed restrictions, censorship, and limited access to fair and balanced information. Additionally, it noted cases of persecution, attacks, and intimidation against journalists and the media independent of the coup regime, who are fulfilling their duty to inform and transmit information provided by opponents to the de facto government. We were informed of the excessive influence of powerful media conglomerates that censor and block information opposing the de facto government as well as attacks on independent and impartial media. The mission took note of acts of intimidation perpetrated against the media, including Radio Globo, Radio Progreso and television channels 11 and 36.

5.10 The mission received reports of discrimination, harassment, and cruel and degrading treatment of women exercising their right to expression and peaceful dissent against the coup. The reported actions included sexual insults, threats, blows to the breasts and genital areas, sexual assault, rape and arbitrary firings from government agencies.

5.11 The mission received testimony of the abusive treatment of minors, including arrests, arbitrary detention, and forced military recruitment by the Army amongst the poor in both rural and urban areas in violation of Honduran law and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5.12 The mission noted a disproportionate military presence in Tegucigalpa in state public service institutions, educational centers, hospitals, and the media. It verified the joint presence of National Police, the army, and COBRA special forces, constraining the citizens' free movement and repressing anti-coup demonstrators.

5.13 The mission received reports of the use of undercover agent agitators in demonstrations against the de facto government with the goal of committing violent, criminal acts resulting in use of force and charges against demonstrators.

5.14 The mission noted that various complaints and appeals made by individuals and NGOs to investigate the coup have not been resolved and were not attended to within the time constraints of habeas corpus.

5.15 The mission concludes that there exists a consensus in Honduras among all groups and social organizations in opposition to the coup to convene a National Constituent Assembly, free of military coup influence, to draft a new constitution that expands and ensures the democratic

participation of all Hondurans and facilitates improvement of the overall political, economic, social, and cultural situation.

6. Preliminary recommendations

6.1 Inside Honduras

6.1.1 The restoration of the rule of law, democratic institutions, and the return of the chief Executive Power to President Manuel Zelaya Rosales, without conditions.

6.1.2 The implementation of reforms to ensure the subordination of the Armed Forces to civil order, or preferably, the consideration of proposals that could lead to the elimination of the military and their permanent institutional abolition, much like the civilist examples of Panama and Costa Rica.

6.1.3. That state agencies, like the office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, whose specific function is to protect human rights, be led by members and staff committed to defending human rights and not those that have expressed biased political support of the coup, as Commissioner Dr. Ramón Custodio has done. His actions have affected numerous victims of human rights violations who prefer not to present claims to CONADEH because they distrust the commissioner and feel unprotected by him.

6.1.4 The Special Prosecutor for Human Rights must act impartially and diligently to fulfill her mandate to protect the human rights of all Hondurans.

6.1.5 All of the country's political and social forces must cooperate to guarantee the universal constitutional principles and the possibility of introducing reforms or amendments, as in all the constitutions of the world, to exercise the right to convene a National Constituent Assembly which contributes towards recognition of broad citizen participation in all sectors and on equal footing, and to ensure the full implementation of the rule of law and respect for political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights.

6.2 International community

6.2.1 The mission urges the international community to maintain a firm position of condemnation and refusal to recognize the illegal de facto government in Honduras, to unambiguously denounce the de facto government as illegitimate and to demand, without conditions, the reinstatement of President Zelaya and the re-establishment of the rule of law and the democracy in Honduras.

6.2.2 The mission urges the international community and the States to suspend, if they have not already done so, all bilateral, diplomatic, and economic relations with the de facto government of Honduras.

6.2.3 The mission urges the States and the international community to reject the results of the November 2009 elections if they are convened and conducted by the de facto government and to promote conditions for free and fair elections.

6.2.4 The mission recommends that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) continue monitoring the human rights situation in Honduras and continue visiting and reporting on the human rights situation in the context of the June 28, 2009 military coup with the goal of holding the violators accountable before the international community.

6.2.5 The mission recommends that the United Nations prioritize the human rights situation in Honduras in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Committee and promote verification and observation missions to be undertaken by its various agencies, such as the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special

Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right of Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous people, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, related intolerance and the Special Rapporteur on the question of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and the Economic and Social Council

6.2.6 The delegation calls upon the Embassies and the diplomatic representatives in Honduras to open their doors to ensure the protection of human rights of all persons and to provide access to people whose lives and physical integrity are at risk.

6.3 United States

The mission urges the United States government to issue an official statement declaring that there was indeed a *military* coup in Honduras on June 28, 2009. The mission considers it a positive step that Secretary of State Clinton has announced the intent to refuse to recognize elections conducted by the de facto government. Additionally, the delegation urges President Barack Obama's administration to maintain a firm position advocating the unconditional reinstatement of President Zelaya and continue to take active measures to isolate the de facto regime until the reestablishment of the rule of law.

6.4 NGOs

6.4.1 Continue to monitor the human rights situation in Honduras and systematically organize observation and accompaniment missions.

6.4.2 Implement awareness-building activities, meetings, forums, and demonstrations against the coup globally.

6.4.3 Organize an International Tribunal to examine breaches of the rule of law and institutionality in Honduras and to review the “legality” of the coup d'état as well as the possibility of constituent assembly for constitutional reforms to mitigate the critical situation.



APPENDIX 1

Presentation of the Honduras Delegation's Member Organizations

American Association for Justice (AAJ)

The AAJ is a non-governmental organization founded in Panama in 1975 with consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and a permanent representation at UN headquarters in New York and Geneva. Its mission and principles include: a) The people's struggle for self-determination, economic independence and State sovereignty over their own wealth and natural resources; b) Action against imperialism, fascism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racial discrimination, and discrimination against women, Aborigines, and ethnic minorities; c) The defense of real peace based on the principle of peaceful co-existence between states of different social and economic systems; d) The defense and promotion of human rights and the realization of more effective guarantees of protection; e) The condemnation and denunciation of existing laws in American countries, which contradict or distort the principles and objectives of the AAJ; f) The establishment of fraternal relationships and joint actions with lawyers from around the world and their organizations, who are committed to objectives similar to those enunciated in this Statute; g) The mobilization of lawyers from American countries to develop joint action aimed at making lawyers in their respective countries actively participate in the process of socio-economic change that is consistent with the principles and objectives enumerated here; h) The defense, effective protection and dignity of the legal profession and lawyer's solidarity with those persecuted for their action in support of the principles expressed herein.

The AAJ develops all of its activities according to its principles and objectives, such as conferences, continental and regional meetings and missions. It has organized missions to Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Venezuela, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Haiti and other countries within and outside the Americas. No member of the AAJ received compensation for the current mission.

International Association of Democratic Lawyers

IADL is a non-governmental organization founded in Paris in 1946, with consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and UNESCO. Its principles and objectives include:

- Facilitate contacts and exchange points of view between lawyers and legal organizations throughout the world in order to promote good will and understanding between all
- Work together to achieve the goals stated in the Charter of the United Nations
- Promote common action among lawyers
- Within the legal field, study and practice democratic principles to encourage the maintenance of peace and cooperation between nations
- Restore, defend, and develop democratic rights and liberties in law and practice
- Promote the independence of all people and oppose any restriction to that independence, whether it be by law or in practice
- Defend and promote human rights and the rights of the people, the preservation of ecology and sustainable environments
- Fight for respect for the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession
- Defend the rights of people and economic development and enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress and natural resources

Since it's founding, IADL has participated in the defense of human rights, denouncing threats to international peace and security, while also issuing opinions on legal issues under international law. IADL makes important statements on racism, discrimination, colonialism, economic and social justice and human rights.

National Lawyers Guild

The NLG is an organization of lawyers in the United States founded in 1937. It was the first association of lawyers in United States history with a platform of racial integration. Since its founding, the NLG has joined the struggle for democracy, economic and social justice, and has also spoken out against oppression and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, immigrant status, class, gender, and sexual orientation. The principles and objectives of the NLG advocate for the human rights of workers, women, peasants, disabled and minority groups, who depend on the welfare of the whole country, the eradication of racism, the protection of civil rights and fundamental liberties, and a vision of law as a tool for change and protection. The NLG calls for basic and progressive change in the United States political and economic system leading to a more equitable system. Through its membership of lawyers, law students, prisoners trained in law (jailhouse lawyers), legal assistants, and its national and local chapters, the NLG is at the service of the people. The NLG advocates for human rights above property interests.

International Association Against Torture

AICT is a non-governmental organization with consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, which was founded as a response to the imposition of regimes and dictatorships in Central and South America. During the 90s, AICT dealt with and brought to public light cases of political prisoners in the United States. Additionally, it has denounced the role that racism plays in the disproportionate incorporation and mistreatment of prisoners in the Americas. AICT documents human rights violations of people of color, particularly African people, in the United States and in other parts of the world. It has also spoken as a petitioner in the UN Human Rights Council, working groups, special rapporteurs, and other specialized bodies of the United Nations.

For additional information, contact:



PO Box 765, Inverness, CA 94937, U.S.A

Task Force on the Americas

www.nlginternational.org



Vanessa Ramos, AAJ Continental President; vramos1565@aol.com