

Press release - Tegucigalpa, July 30, 2009

International Mission denounces the brutal repression of pacific demonstrations in Honduras

The International Mission for Solidarity, Accompaniment and Observation to Honduras denounces the Honduran de facto government's (led by coup leader Roberto Micheletti) brutal repression of thousands of people protesting pacifically today against the Coup d'Etat and adhering to the public service sector's call for a national strike (General Strike) on the 30th and 31st of July. For the past 33 days, the National Front Against the Coup d'Etat has been organizing daily demonstrations.

The International Mission for Solidarity, Accompaniment and Observation, organized by the Bi-regional 'Enlazando Alternativas' network, denounces before the International Community that the army and the special forces of the National Police of Honduras attacked today thousands of pacific demonstrators, with fire weapons, wood and rubber projectiles and as well as tear gas, thrown even from helicopters.

The Families of Missing Arrested People's Committee COFADEH (Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras in Spanish) has informed us that there are hundreds of injured (among them some journalists) and arrested. We have observed that many women have been victims of military and police violence and we have gathered testimonies of protesters whom have been ill treated and brutally beaten, at times in a sexual manner (strikes on people's buttocks and threats of rape). Under age people were also attacked and arrested.

COFADEH also reported that the violent expulsion of protesters in the surroundings of Tegucigalpa by the police and the army had as resulted in over a hundred people injured. One member of the Honduran Confederation of High School Teachers, the COPEMH (Confederación de Profesores de Educación Media de Honduras in Spanish) was shot in the head and is struggling between life and death. Roger Abraham Vallejo Soriano (38 years old) was injured when protesters, many of them teachers, held a pacific demonstration that blocked a highway on the first day of the public service national strike against the Coup d'Etat. The teacher is being now treated in the Educational Hospital, where the doctors are doing everything they can to save his life.

We demand respect for the physical and moral integrity of the people protesting against the Coup d'Etat and the Roberto Micheletti's de facto government and of the journalists covering these demonstrations, as part of their professional duties. We also demand the immediate release of those who have been arbitrarily detained.

Members of the International Mission for Solidarity, Accompaniment and Observation are accompanying human rights organizations to the Fourth Police Station of the Capital of Honduras, where approximately 80 people are being detained, to verify the treatment they are being given. We have observed serious injuries in detainees caused by blows they have received.

Among the injured is Carlos H Reyes, Coordinator of the National Front Against the Coup d'Etat, STIBYS Union Presiden, leader of the Popular Block and the official independent candidate for the presidency. Juan Barahona, the coordinator of the National Front Against the Coup d'Etat, has also been detained.

The National Front Against the Coup d'Etat in Honduras, who has been calling the protests,

denounces the repressive acts being perpetrated also in other parts of the country, where roads are being occupied and demonstrations held.

Despite the brutal repression, the National Front Against the Coup d'Etat is announcing that the demonstrations will continue.

“You, from international organisations, do something for us. Enough of all this violence”, begged one teacher who was beaten during the demonstrations and sought shelter in the Centre for Women Studies in Tegucigalpa.

The International Mission for Solidarity, Accompaniment and Observation to Honduras is composed by: Nora Cortiñas, one of the founders of Mothers of the May Square (Madres de la Plaza de Mayo) / Jubilee South (Argentina); Thomas Wallgreen, Councillor of the Finland Socialdemocrat Party in Helsinki / Coalition for comprehensive democracy – Vasudhaiva kutumkalam (Finland); Mauricio Valiente, Spanish Commission for Refugee Help -CEAR (Spain), Father Efren Reyes from the International Christian Service of Solidarity with the Latin America People Oscar Romero – SICSAL (El Salvador), Claire Chastain, International Relations of the French Communist Party – Left European Party (French), Martha Figueroa Mier, World March of Women (Mexico), Bernadete Esperança Monteiro, World March of Women (Brazil) and Tom Kucharz, Ecologists in Action /Transnational Institute (Spain).

The International Mission for Solidarity, Accompaniment and Observation, made up of networks, social movements, NGOs, human rights organizations and European and Latin American politicians, is organized by the Bi-regional Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean 'Enlazando Alternativas' network.

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