

## **ALERT #1 - Military Coup in Honduras**

Rights Action, June 28, 2009, 2pm

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On the Day of the National Survey for Constitutional Reform, the Honduran President Was Captured by the Military

According to reports from national human rights organizations, at approximately 1am the president of Honduras, Mel Zelaya and his family were captured by the military. He was taken to a military airport. He denounced the military coup and his capture to TeleSur over the telephone from Costa Rica.

It is also reported that other members of the government, particularly the ministers, are being arrested, and that cars with diplomatic license plates are being stopped and searched to facilitate the detentions.

Robert Michelletti, one of the strongest opponents of the president and president of the Congress, is rumored to be backed by the military to assume the presidency.

Communications have been interrupted. The national press, all strongly opposed to the president, is silent. Channel 8, established by President Zelaya after years of press censorship, and was shut down. Community radios have been cut off.

Nationally the national telephone system was shut down, and the national energy grid has been shut down in many areas.

The national telephone system was temporarily cut off, and in some areas cellular phones are not longer operating.

The military is occupying the entire county, and has established checkpoints in the entry and exits of towns, presumably to restrict protesters and possibly to facilitate detentions.

Despite the military occupation there are protests throughout the country and repression is being report.

We are extremely concerned for the safety of the human rights organizations that have supported the President and the efforts for Constitutional Reform.

Currently there are reports of the military pursuing civil society leaders in the street. COPINH, the National Council of Indigenous Peoples has strongly backed the constitutional reform effort. The home of Bertha Caceres, a leader of COPINH, has been under military and police surveillance for several days. Today leaders of COPINH have been pursued by the military in the street, and are in hiding.

On Tuesday of last week Fabio Ochoa, the regional coordinator promoting the Constitutional reform consultations, was shot five times when leaving a television station after promoting the constitutional reform. He is in intensive care.

The proposal to draft a new constitution, via the establishing of a CNA, is the culmination of a series of positive measures undertaken during "Mel's" presidency, including: a raise in the minimum wage; measures to re-nationalize energy generation plants and the telephone system; signing a bill that improves labor conditions for teachers; joining the Venezuelan Petrocaribe program which provides soft loans for development initiatives via petroleum sales; delaying recognition of the new US ambassador after the Bolivian government implicated the US embassy in supporting fascist paramilitary groups destabilizing Bolivia, and others.

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Contact your own media and Members of Congress, Senators, Members of Parliament, to demand:

- 1- a return of the constitutional government and no recognition, whatsoever, of this military coup or any post-coup government
- 2- respect for safety and human rights of all Hondurans

Funds are needed for emergency response and legal defense work. Make TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS to Rights Action and mail to:

\* UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

\* CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

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