

HONDURAS COUP ALERT #23

Interview: HONDURAS RESISTS INTERVIEW WITH BERTA CÁCERES, COPINH

BELOW:

- Rights Action Notes from Tegucigalpa
- 2 social movement, political activists killed
- Foreign journalists threatened and forced to leave the country
- Demands & What to do

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- Please re-distribute this information all around
- To get on/ off Rights Action's email list:
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NOTES FROM TEGUCIGALPA

- more peaceful protests today, shutting down the main road leaving Tegucigalpa to the north, and the road to the airport, for 3 hours
- apparently, pro-democracy activities this week will build towards more attempts, Thursday and/or Friday, for huge pro-democracy activities and mobilizations, country wide
- social movement leaders fear increased repression, as witnessed by last week-ends killings (see below) and the silencing of two international media outlets that had provided the most coverage since the coup (see below)
- many social movements leaders are getting text messaged threats to them and their families
- when part of President Zelaya's commission to the Costa Rica dialogues returned to Honduras, they were detained by 30 soldiers and police for a short period of time

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HONDURAS: 2 LEFT ACTIVISTS MURDERED

<http://weeklynewsupdate.blogspot.com/2009/07/wnu-997-2-honduran-activists-murdered.html>

On the evening of July 11, a group of men entered the home of Honduran activist Roger Bados, in the 6 de Mayo neighborhood of the northern city of San Pedro Sula and shot him dead. Bados was the former president of the union at a local cement factory and a member of the leftist Democratic Unification Party (UD) and of the Popular Bloc, a coalition of grassroots organizations active in the struggle against the military coup that overthrew President Zelaya on June 28.

Ramón García, also a UD member, was killed the same night in the Callejones area of the western department of Santa Bárbara. Unknown persons ordered him to get out of a bus and killed him, according to a UD leader, Renán Valdés, who said that García's sister and his nephew's wife were also wounded.

Erasto Reyes, another grassroots leader, said the murder came at "a moment in which the political crisis is aggravating the security situation for leaders." But he said the organizations will continue to carry out "peaceful, nonviolent" mobilizations. "We're not letting down our guard; we're continuing in the struggle."

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JOURNALISTS ARRESTED BY HONDURAN POLICE ON SATURDAY EVENING, FORCED FROM COUNTRY ON SUNDAY, JULY 13

Journalists from the Venezuelan-based Telesur TV and Venezolana de Television (VTV) were detained on Saturday night, apparently til 2am Sunday morning. All of their belongings were searched. They were threatened, and told to leave the country. On Sunday, all members of the Telesur and VTV media programs left Honduras – by air or by land.

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Interview

HONDURAS RESISTS INTERVIEW WITH BERTA CÁCERES, CIVIL COUNCIL OF POPULAR AND INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS OF HONDURAS (COPINH)

<http://hondurasresists.blogspot.com/>, Sunday, July 12, 2009

Honduras Resists: What is the state of resistance against the coup d'etat after two weeks?

Berta Cáceres: The resistance of the Honduran people has been firm and heroic not just in Tegucigalpa but in all of the national territory. Just today hundreds more friends came from the west from as far as 500 kilometers. In Olancho the army machine-gunned the tires of the buses that were coming leaving the passengers to walk days to arrive in Tegucigalpa. More and more people are arriving from all over, from every state, from every region of the country each day. Today there were marches in Olancho, Santa Bárbara, Cortés, Progreso, Tela, Comayagua, Intibucá and many other places too. In the whole national territory this resistance is growing.

For its part, the army has had blockades all over the country. We have to remember that we are confronting the ultra-right oligarchy not just from Honduras, but from the whole continent wanting to impede all of the processes of emancipation lead by the peoples of this continent. This coup has not just been against the people of Honduras and against Zelaya but against all of the peoples who share our dream of creating another world, a world where people can count on the basic necessities of life, a world with respect for human rights, with the right to popular participation in the government.

We have filled the plaza of the central park of Tegucigalpa several times now. There are vigils honoring our fallen friend from Olancho, Isis Obed Murillo. Next week we are taking three days to rejuvenate and strengthen ourselves in preparation for an enormous action that same week.

We call once again on international solidarity to make itself present in our country to testify to what is happening and monitor human rights abuses. To the international organizations like the OAS and the UN we are thankful for your resolutions but we need those resolutions to be made concrete in our country.

HR: What is your perspective about the nature of the coup government?

BC: It must be highlighted that we are dealing with an ultra-right and highly repressive government. The coup-makers include many personalities well known for their role in death squads in past decades, trained by the United States in the School of the Americas or School of Assassins as we call it. The ultra-right mafias from all over the Americas are here in the country.

For example Robert Carmona, of the terrorist anti-Cuban groups in Miami, brother of the de facto president of Venezuela during the coup there, is in our country. Yesterday he was meeting with the national congress. The coup-makers represent the richest people of our country and of Latin America, who have maintained tight relations with the CIA for decades.

HR: What are the objectives of the resistance movement?

BC: This struggle is not just for the restitution but for the concretization of a project of participatory democracy, re-founding the country through a National Constitutional Assembly. These are the major objectives of our resistance. One of the main causes of the military coup was that the President was orienting himself towards a process of consultation of the people for a new Constitution that favors the people.

But that cannot be achieved under the current de facto government. In this moment there is tremendous repression of our freedom of expression, of our mobilizations, we can't talk about the assembly on the radio. They have cut off our voice. There is an aggressive and manipulative media campaign carried out by the coup-makers who include Mr. Jorge Canahuati Larach, owner of the two main newspapers in the country, La Prensa and El Heraldo. So there can't be conditions for this process until we achieve the restitution of our democracy.

That's why the first objective of the resistance is to kick out the coup-makers and reinstate the President and then have a Constitutional Assembly that advances respect for diversity, recuperation of our resources, protection of our biodiversity, indigenous autonomy, food security, the rights of women, of young people, of all of the oppressed sectors of the Honduran people.

HR: Explain more about the role of the media in this coup...

BC: Since before the coup the media for months and months had been carrying out a media campaign to side-track the struggle for a Constitutional Assembly, because the media belongs to those people who fear losing their economic and political power in the country.

The main myth that they have launched before the Honduran and international public is the idea that the process of re-founding our country, the dream of participatory democracy made concrete in the proposal of the people for a national constitutional assembly, is just a proposal of President Zelaya to stay in power. Re-election isn't for him to decide but for the people. When he talked of the re-founding of the country it wasn't

about re-election but about the large social themes already mentioned, the emancipation of our people in Honduras as part of the emancipatory project of the continent.

The media lies, saying that he didn't have much support from the people. That's not true, the coup happened because they knew that the people support him and the proposal for a Constitutional Assembly. He had achieved 70% popularity, never before had a president had that type of support. He had more sympathy than the official candidates from the parties in power. So that's why they had to carry out a coup. If the people didn't support him they wouldn't have had to carry out a coup.

This coup goes beyond Honduras. The media of much of the continent spread the same lies that the people don't support Zelaya, that the coup happened because of a violation of the constitution, as if the de facto government that is repressing us, cutting off our voices, killing and jailing our people, imposing a state of siege, a curfew, freezing the bank accounts of many people and organizations, and using the national press as its own voice has anything to do with democracy.

HR: In your opinion what was the role played by the U.S. government in the coup?

BC: There were people from the CIA here the night before the coup. They took them here under a huge security operation. The U.S. State Department admits it met with the leaders of the coup a week beforehand. We are clear that there is involvement of the ultra-right sector of the U.S. government.

I think that Barack Obama has a more open and progressive mind, but of course the ultra-right and the military industry in the U.S. still maintains collaborative relationships with the military members that they trained and with the elite that has always been allied with them. They decided to carry out a coup not just against Presidente Zelaya but against our processes of true integration of the peoples with initiatives like ALBA. They decided to make a coup against the emancipatory projects because of their fear of the participation of the people.

HR: What acts of President Zelaya earned him so many enemies within the army, the congress and the Supreme Court?

He didn't have a history of being a social struggler, but as he himself told us, since the beginning of the government he felt that the powerful sectors were bothered because it wasn't as easy for them to control him

as it was with other politicians, they found themselves faced with someone different who they thought was going to be more manipulable.

Since his first intervention he said key things like that there would be no more concessions to mining companies, a promise that he carried out, confronting the destruction and exploitation of our natural resources for the benefit of transnational corporations.

He also intervened to stop the monopolization in our country of the energy sector; he has joined Honduras into PetroCaribe; he has moved towards the nationalization of the gas storage tanks, which didn't succeed because of the judicial power controlled by the vested interests. He integrated Honduras into the Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas (ALBA), a different kind of diplomatic project, based on solidarity and participation, which has directly benefited the Honduran people. He has rejected many of the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The teacher's law was approved contrary to the wishes of the IMF.

He also raised the minimum wage for workers, a reform really needed by the workers. That same day, businessmen filed 450 suits against him.

He also rejected the credentials of the gringo ambassador, in solidarity with Bolivia in the face of U.S. meddling in Bolivia's internal affairs, demanding respect for the Latin American economy. He has supported integration projects like a common bank for Latin America, the consolidation of diplomatic relations with Cuba, Venezuela, El Salvador, Nicaragua, etc..

During his presidency medical and educational support from Cuba has increased. Now Micheletti has made 350 Cuban teachers, who were teaching literacy to the poorest Hondurans, leave the country and is threatening to kick out over 300 Cuban doctors.

But more than anything, the people have supported him because he's been the only president willing to break with the traditional manipulation of the Honduran oligarchy and listen to the alternative proposals of poor people, of the social movement, of those who fight for the rights of women, of the indigenous, of the workers, of the peasants, of all of the sectors that until recently were completely excluded from national politics, marginalized and forgotten about.

He has advanced so much that we can't give up this struggle for participatory democracy that opens paths for profound changes to the

conditions of our people.

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WHAT TO DO:

1. pressure American and Canadian governments to increase commercial, financial and political pressures on coup plotters and perpetrators
2. raise funds for pro-democracy movement in Honduras

1- AMERICANS AND CANADIANS SHOULD CONTACT YOUR OWN MEDIA, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, SENATORS & MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, TO DEMAND:

- unequivocal denunciation of the military coup
- no recognition of this military coup and the 'de facto' government of Roberto Michelletti
- unconditional return of the entire constitutional government
- concrete economic, military and diplomatic sanctions against the coup regime
- respect for safety and human rights of all Hondurans
- application of international and national justice against the coup plotters, and
- reparations for the illegal actions and rights violations committed during this illegal coup

2- FUNDS ARE NEEDED FOR THE 'PRO-DEMOCRACY', EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN HONDURAS:

Rights Action staff in Honduras are providing emergency relief funds, every day, to community development, campesino, indigenous and human rights organizations for: food and shelter, transportation and communication, urgent action outreach and human rights accompaniment 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

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>