

**Rights Action**  
**Day 136 of HONDURAS COUP RESISTANCE**  
(November 10, 2009, Honduras Coup Alert#89)

**Pro-Coup Northamericans In Honduras: Various letters written by North Americans**

“Please help us on Roatan ... We have all cut back our help and tightened our belts, which further hurts the islanders.” (This plea is not from Hondurans, but from pro-military coup North Americans living on Roatan, an island in the Caribbean, just off the north coast of Honduras)

Since June 28th, Rights Action has been involved in a range of work (direct funding, human rights accompaniment, reporting) in response to the oligarchic-military regime in Honduras, and the repression it is using against the people’s pro-democracy, anti-coup movement, headed by the National Front Against the Coup.

In over eighty-five Honduras Coup Alerts published since June 28th (check them out at [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)), as well as in information from other human rights and solidarity organizations (Quixote Center, School of the Americas Watch, Narco News, Chiapas Indymedia Center, etc), we have reported on repression and human rights violations, including killings, illegal detentions and torture and rape, military curfews, crack-down on freedom of expression, etc.

We have focused most of our efforts on supporting the pro-democracy, anti-coup movement (providing funding, human rights accompaniment and reporting) and on educating North Americans about the coup, so that we may pressure our governments to do everything possible to help return the government of President Zelaya to power.

We continue with this work.

During these months, Rights Action has learned that some Canadians and Americans living in Honduras are actively writing letters and pressuring the Canadian and US governments, in support of the military coup and the illegal regime of Roberto Micheletti & General Romeo Vasquez.

Some of these North Americans operate ‘property development’ projects and businesses in the tourist industry along the northern coast, on the Bay Islands and Roatan island.

**BELOW** - are various letters written by North Americans. Their words speak for themselves. Variousy, they are denouncing the “inaccurate media accounts,” and “all the untruths re: a military coup, riots & unrest” being reported on by various organizations and news sources, including Rights Action.

Their letters and emails to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the U.S. State Department and tourist websites and forums, are followed by pleas for stronger action in support of the Micheletti-General Vasquez regime, in order to prevent the continued decline of tourists and investors in their businesses and property projects that have led to decreases in their incomes.

## **GARIFUNA-INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES UNDER SIEGE FROM GLOBAL TOURISM**

Since Hurricane Mitch in 1998, Rights Action has supported the Garifuna-indigenous organization OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Black and Garifuna People of Honduras), helping them denounce the often times illegal and forced purchasing of land along the northern coast of Honduras, for large tourist resorts, hotels, and 'property development' projects.

When tourist projects are initiated, local communities are often forcibly and illegally driven from their lands, never receiving the so-called benefits that foreign owned tourism is supposed to bring to the local communities.

**WHAT TO DO:** see at bottom.

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## **LETTER TO RIGHTS ACTION (FROM ANGRY CANADIAN ON ROATAN ISLAND)**

"The fact that a military coup, in fact, does not exist here in Honduras is what any responsible person knowledgeable of the long term history, short term events leading up to June 28th and what has transpired since, should be reporting."

[Dave Barons, a Canadian business owner in the tourist industry on Roatan Island sent this email to Rights Action after listening to Grahame Russell (Rights Action) on the CBC's "The Current" radio program. Listen to interview:

<http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/2009/200907/20090729.html>.]

"After hearing Grahame Russell's ridiculous interview on CBC, I have to question the mandate of this organization (Rights Action). You were either telling a lie that you participated with "hundreds of thousands" of supporters of returning Zelaya to power or you simply weren't here in Honduras as you stated on CBC radio.

"Either way, I am disgraced as a Canadian that CBC chose to air your crap. The fact that a military coup, in fact, does not exist here in Honduras is what any responsible person knowledgeable of the long term history, short term events leading up to June 28th and what has transpired since, should be reporting.

“Further, the fact that Zelaya was illegally pulling a short run on the country exposing it to a future that would mirror that of Venezuela is what you should have been reporting. The fact that your organization obviously has motives that promote the transition from democracy to dictatorship in Honduras categorizes it as a Leftist Propaganda vehicle.

“I challenge you to retract your statements and provide a follow up interview that clarifies the reality of the Honduran situation; one that indicates that the legal and constitutional removal of Zelaya by his own government was necessary for the good of Honduras and its people.

“I plan to live here for awhile yet and wish all the best to the Honduran people. To wish Honduras to become a communist regime, like you imply, is not in the best interest of the Honduran people and their future. The reporting of inaccuracies of our situation to the media like you have done is embarrassing, frustrating and counter-productive to the cause of maintaining democracy in Honduras.

“Please read the accurate items that I have included below and get a grip on reality. Then, I urge you to use your site to promote democracy and not fascism.

Dave Barons, [davebarons@hotmail.com](mailto:davebarons@hotmail.com)”

[http://mack.house.gov/index.cfm?p=PressReleases&ContentRecord\\_id=5473bba0-37fe-4033-8979-57ab98441fa8&ContentType\\_id=8c55a72b-64f8-4cba-990c-ec1ed2a9de24&Group\\_id=b3c463ca-96b6-41ff-94e5-a945437bc123](http://mack.house.gov/index.cfm?p=PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=5473bba0-37fe-4033-8979-57ab98441fa8&ContentType_id=8c55a72b-64f8-4cba-990c-ec1ed2a9de24&Group_id=b3c463ca-96b6-41ff-94e5-a945437bc123)

<http://www.ibdeditorials.com/IBDArticles.aspx?id=334537207260360>

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB20001424052970204251404574340570960456550.html>

<http://www.examiner.com/examiner/x-5325-Orlando-Republican->

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## **LETTER TO CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER**

[A letter to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, written by investors and property owners of Villas Paraiso Escondido, a forty acre Canadian resort community on the Caribbean Coast of Honduras ([www.go2-paradise.com](http://www.go2-paradise.com)). Project contact: Tom Stollery ([tomstollery@hotmail.com](mailto:tomstollery@hotmail.com)).

From [www.go2-paradise.com](http://www.go2-paradise.com): “What we especially like about this enterprise is that we can live in a secure community, can live in our own home in a tropical climate, can get a bigger bang for our buck (check out the inexpensive year round bounty of fresh fruit and vegetables), can socialize with fellow Canadians, can become involved in local community works and can extend ourselves as much or as little as we want.”]

July 28, 2009

Prime Minister Stephen Harper  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, K1A 0A2  
[pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

Dear Mr. Harper:

Re: Canadian Policy in Honduras, Central America

We are a group of investors who have bought property and have built houses in Honduras, CA. We are writing to you to express our concern in regards to Canadian Government support of ex-president Zelaya being returned to a position of power in Honduras.

There appears to be widespread false information in the media that Zelaya was removed from office illegally, by a military coup d'état that was not supported by rule of law or the Honduran people.

Our understanding is Zelaya has been legally charged for criminal activity and for attempting to change the Honduran constitution for his own purpose, by the Honduran congress and judiciary, and was legally impeached.

Information available from international news services, as well as local contacts, indicate Zelaya was supporting drug trafficking from Venezuela to America and involved in various forms of corruption internally.

If Zelaya is allowed to return to power in Honduras and with outside influence from the ALBA group of countries it will result in the loss of democracy, freedom of speech and human rights for all Hondurans. The removal of democracy in Honduras will stop foreign investment and will result in financial losses to foreign and Canadian investments in that country. This loss of investment will ultimately cause economic hardship for Honduras and its people which is already one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere.

We believe the legally empowered interim government of Roberto Micheletti is working in the best interest of Honduras and the Honduran people in support of democracy and human rights, including a free election as called for in the Honduran constitution. We also believe the Honduran military is acting under the rule of law, in support of this interim government and with the greater support of the Honduran people.

For this reason we request the Canadian Government provide full public support of the legal interim government of Roberto Micheletti and acknowledge this support to the international bodies of the OAS and the United Nations.

We also request that Canada provide support to the continuation of foreign aid to Honduras to allow the interim government the means to continue their struggle for democracy and to provide for the basic needs of the Honduran people.

We suggest that Canada provide monitoring and assistance to ensure openness and fairness in the upcoming Honduras elections.

The Canadian Government must acknowledge that the rule of law exists in Honduras and support the position that Zelaya should stand trial for the corruption and criminal activity he has been legally charged with.

To prevent chaos and bloodshed Canada needs to immediately and publicly recognize that the vast majority of Honduran people support the impeachment action of their government and support peace and democracy in their country.

We believe violence and demonstrations against the interim government are being promoted and supported by ALBA countries to further their own interests and also by illegal organizations such as FARC.

We are extremely proud of Hondurans and the interim government to take impeachment action to preserve their democracy and we implore Canada to support their action in every means possible to assure their democratic freedom.

Thank-you for your assistance and attention, if required we can be contacted by return email.

Project contact: Tom Stollery, [tomstollery@hotmail.com](mailto:tomstollery@hotmail.com), [www.go2-paradise.com](http://www.go2-paradise.com)

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**[Another business owner, Penelope Leigh, writes to her friends and family and to the U.S. State Department “clarifying” what is happening in Honduras, asking the U.S. government to lift the travel advisory to prevent a further decline in tourism.]**

“We have all cut back our help and tightened our belts, which further hurts the islanders. I have to be very careful about what I buy for food and am rationing gasoline. It is quite grim and all because of the horrible lies in the media.”

Dear Family & Friends,

We are having a terrible time here on Roatan (Ghost Island). Please consider helping us by writing to Trip Advisor. The postings on this site have a huge impact on our tourism business. Visitors are wary now due to the Travel Advisory not to visit Honduras. We have had no problems here on Roatan at all....nothing.

Due to all the untruths re: a military coup, riots & unrest, businesses here are failing. We have all cut back our help and tightened our belts, which further hurts the islanders. I have to be very careful about what I buy for food and am rationing gasoline. It is quite grim and all because of the horrible lies in the media.

Please help us. It won't take more than a few minutes. I have written my letter below as an example. If you could write of your positive "visit," etc., it could very well save a business from closing its doors. We have so many islanders on half pay or deferred pay, that can not feed their families, it is truly getting scary.

You can write it in your own words, just asking them to PLEASE exclude Roatan from the Travel Advisory posting on their site. Just double click on: [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ContactUs?topic=tell\\_us\\_what\\_you\\_think](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ContactUs?topic=tell_us_what_you_think) And fill in your comments. Thanx so much for your most needed help!!

Dear Sir;

We have read the warning from the U.S. State Department posted on the Trip Advisor "Roatan Tourism" page with great concern. While this is the formal U.S. stance on the current situation, it must be noted that Roatan is an island over 30 miles from the mainland of Honduras. Roatan is technically a part of Honduras, but they are worlds apart in culture and geographical location. The political unrest occurred only on mainland Honduras. On the island of Roatan, we have had no incidents of any kind. It remains peaceful, tranquil and beautiful.

Since the removal of president Mel Zelaya on June 28th, Roatan has remained a safe, quiet haven for its residents and visitors. We've had many customers come in our store who feel the stance the US has taken is terrible and that it hurts the innocent people of the Bay Islands for no reason whatsoever. Direct flights to Roatan from Houston, Atlanta and Miami have continued as scheduled and cruise ship port calls have not changed.

In the Trip Advisor forums, there are multiple postings from travelers relating their positive vacation experiences in Roatan. If you feel it is your responsibility to post any travel advisories in effect, we believe there is a responsibility to present the complete picture so that travelers can make their own informed decision.

There are over 1000 US citizens residing in Roatan, many of whom have contacted the Ambassador of the United States in Honduras to request that the advisory be amended to exclude the Bay Islands. This change has not yet been made, so we sincerely request Trip Advisor add a sentence to the posting of the State Department warning as follows:

“Roatan is a safe island 30 miles from mainland Honduras and has not experienced any disruption. To see postings with information from travelers that have recently vacationed in Roatan, please visit the ‘Roatan forums’ section of Trip Advisor”

We business owners are watching our employees suffer from the lack of tourism dollars to support their families, while we struggle to keep our doors open. Please help us get the true facts out there.

Thank You,

Sincerely, Penelope Leigh, [www.penelopeslandemporium.com](http://www.penelopeslandemporium.com)

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**Message sent to Rights Action by a Honduran lawyer who handles real estate deals for foreigners interested in buying property on the Roatan Island, Honduras**

To: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)  
Sender: Cesar

“Taliban and Zelaya supporters call for boycoting elections”

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**Another message sent to Rights Action**

To: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)  
Sender: Giagnocavo  
Email address:

“Don't know where you get your info, but we live in Central America. The President who was deposed should not be allowed back in the country. The USA should support Micheletti. Your emails are rabble-rousing.”

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**HOW TO SUPPORT HONDURAS' PRO-DEMOCRACY, ANTI-MILITARY COUP REGIME MOVEMENT**

**TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS** for community based groups in the pro-democracy movement, make check payable 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>  
STOCK DONATIONS, contact: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

SPEAKERS: Contact Rights Action to plan educational presentations in your community, school, place of worship, home, about the tireless and courageous Honduras pro-democracy movement.

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO CENTRAL AMERICA: Form your own group and/ or join one of our educational delegation-seminars to learn firsthand about community development, human rights and environmental struggles.

JOIN RIGHTS ACTION's LISTSERV:  
<http://visitor.constantcontact.com/d.jsp?m=1103480765269>

**MORE INFORMATION:**

Annie Bird ([annie@rightsaction.org](mailto:annie@rightsaction.org)) & Grahame Russell ([info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)),  
Rights Action co-directors