

Rights Action

'TEXT-BOOK' STATE TERRORISM IN HONDURAS: DEATH-SQUADS KILL TEACHER, BROAD DAYLIGHT, IN FRONT OF STUDENTS

BELOW

- Urgent report by Rights Action about this death squad killing
- What to do, How to support the Honduran people's movement

DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA, APRIL 17-25: Mining companies *versus* Community development, environmental justice & human rights (For information: info@rightsaction.org)

SPEAKING TOURS, ONTARIO (CANADA) & EASTERN USA: "Re-founding the Honduran society & State" & "Community resistance to harmful mining in Guatemala & Honduras" (To host an event: info@rightsaction.org)

DELEGATION TO HONDURAS, JUNE 26-JULY 4: First anniversary of June 28, 2009 oligarchic-military coup against the elected government (For information: info@rightsaction.org)

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'TEXT-BOOK' STATE TERRORISM IN HONDURAS: DEATH-SQUADS KILL TEACHER, BROAD DAYLIGHT, IN FRONT OF STUDENTS

On March 23, at the same moment that a group of seven Honduran lawyers were presenting information to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission in Washington DC concerning systematic human rights abuses being committed against the pacifist Honduran National Resistance Front (FNRP), a death squad comprised of heavily armed men wearing ski masks and civilian clothes, killed a prominent FNRP member, a teacher, in front of his high school students.

According to a communiqué issued by the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Honduras (CODEH),

"At 3pm an unknown person was spotted in front of the San Jose del Pedregal High School. The unusual presence of a stranger caused concerns among students and thirty teachers who make up the staff of teachers who work at the school. Among the teachers was Professor of Social Science Jose Manuel Flores, who worked as teacher counselor.

"Witnesses on the scene saw two pickups approach the rear of the school premises, apparently 2009 models, one green and white.

"Professor Manuel, as his friends called him, was in the back of the facility overseeing pupils, when the assassins found him. They passed the perimeter fence and fired their guns at close range.

"The teacher was on a balcony from which he fell, and they fired on him again from above. As they fled, the ski mask of one of the attackers became entangled in the razor coil over the fence which they had cut open to look for their victim. The teacher died instantly."

THIS IS STATE TERRORISM

The killing of a prominent teacher in front of his students and colleagues, in the middle of the day, a man who was active in the FNRP, participating in protests and publishing articles in alternative press, is calculated act of repression designed to terrorize other Honduras and to send a silencing message.

Among many in the FNRP, the timing of the crime – at the same time as the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights hearing held in Washington - is part of that message, reminiscent of the attack on the family lawyer Jari Dixon Herrera immediately following a CNN interview in Washington DC.

While the attackers' identity is not known, it is important to note that when current Minister of Government Oscar Alvarez served as Minister of Government, under the administration of President Maduro, he instituted a practice in which police dressed in civilian clothes and wearing ski masks (of varying types) participate in raids. Their appearance makes them indistinguishable from organized crime assassins, who operate with impunity throughout Honduras and the region.

This is the same modus operandi of state terrorism and death squads that operated in U.S. backed regimes in Honduras throughout the 1970s and 1980s, during the so-called 'cold war'.

During the eight months since the June 28, 2009 military coup in Honduras, dozens of FNRP activists have been killed, some during illegal detention by police forces, others in death squad type situations like the killing of Professor Manuel.

There is not a credible or functional justice system operating in Honduras. Proper investigation by Honduran authorities is not possible.

In reaction to the killing, teachers are holding a national strike and there is a national protest scheduled to occur March 25.

Millions of Hondurans, along with the Organization of American States (OAS) and many nations around the world, do not recognize the legitimacy of the current acting president of Honduras, Pep Lobo.

The FNRP continues to struggle for the legitimate goal of convoking a constitutional convention to create a new constitution since the current one, formulated in 1981 amidst widespread repression and militarization, does not adequately protect the rights of citizens.

The massive support the call for a new constitution enjoys among Hondurans resulted in the violent military overthrow of the elected president in June 2009 and the de facto powers are attempting to silence this on-going demand through violence such as the killing of Professor Manuel.

UNITED STATES & CANADA

The US and Canadian governments must be held partially responsible for the on-going State terrorism and repression in Honduras.

- The US and Canada indirectly legitimized the military-oligarchic regime after the June 28th military coup;
- they recognized the illegal "elections" on November 28, 2009;
- they attended the January 27, 2010 "transfer of power", when the regime of current leader Pepe Lobo took power;
- they are now promoting the "normalization of relations" with Honduras in the international community;
- both governments continue to ignore the well-documented State-sponsored killings and repression;
- both work to invisibilize the massive social movement and the call for a new constitution.

The legitimate struggle of the majority of Hondurans – peaceful and courageous - continues. They need on-going support. They also need Canadians and Americans to pressure our own governments – the main supporters of the Honduran regime – to condemn the systemic repression in Honduras; to not turn a blind eye to repression and impunity and casually maintain full political, economic and military relations with the regime.

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TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

Since the June 28th military coup, Rights Action has channeled tens of thousands of dollars of donations and grants to Honduran civil society organizations (including thousands to COFADEH) doing pro-democracy, human rights defense and emergency-repression response work.

To support Honduran pro-democracy, human rights organizations, 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>

WHAT TO DO

North Americans must send this information to our politicians, governments and media – not to the Honduran regime. We must hold our governments partially accountable for Honduras' State repression. The United States and Canada are the main governments that accepted the June 28, 2009 coup regime, that endorsed the November 29 "elections" that served to "legitimize" the June 28th coup and sweep under the rug 5 months of repression and killings. Now, the regime of Pepe Lobo continues with repression. But for the support the Honduran regime receives from the USA and Canada, it would not be able to repress with such impunity.

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HOW TO CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT IN THEIR RIDINGS:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

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