

Honduras Military-backed Regime & Impunity Watch  
Rights Action – April 6, 2011

## **BANGING THE DRUMS OF RESISTANCE TO THE REPRESSION**

BELOW:

Photo-essay by Karen Spring, [spring.kj@gmail.com](mailto:spring.kj@gmail.com)

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## **BANGING THE DRUMS OF RESISTANCE TO THE REPRESSION**

(by Karen Spring, [spring.kj@gmail.com](mailto:spring.kj@gmail.com))

On March 28th, Miriam was shot by police in the stomach with tear gas canisters, illegally detained and threatened, during a peaceful road occupation to reject the privatization of public education being carried out by the military-backed Honduran regime.

Three days after her release, and still recuperating, Miriam was present in Tegucigalpa marching with the Garifuna people.



(Miriam Miranda, Tegucigalpa, April 1, 2011. All photos: Karen Spring)

(From a speech by Miriam Miranda, Coordinator of OFRANEH (Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras), on the streets of Tegucigalpa, April 1, 2011)

“Today we are here, present in the capital, not just so people can watch us dance. We do not want to maintain this idea that Garifuna are only useful to dance. As well, we will not be used to help legitimize a government that carried out a coup d’etat.

“We are here as Garifuna so we can make visible the problems of the Garifuna people. So that people will realize, on a national and international level, that the Garifuna people are here to reclaim their historical rights.

“We are here on the 1st of April, inaugurating the International Year of the Afro-descendants named by the United Nations.

“Today we can say that we are facing the second expulsion of our territories, that is why we’re here.

“The Garifuna people have inhabited Honduras and resisted for more than 214 years. It is not true that we are just able to dance. That is why we are here. We are here with our identity, our spirituality, our culture, because we have a culture of resistance. Even before a system that wants to eliminate all of the value of our culture. All the value that we are as Garifuna people.

We are proud to be Garifuna. The Garifuna culture is a culture of milleniums. The Garifuna people just like the Lenca people, Pech, Mosquito, and Tolipan, all the indigenous and black peoples, we have been resisting against a monoculture, one culture that they are trying to create and say that we are.

“We are here to say that we are not interested in speaking with [President] Pepe Lobo because he is not in charge. We want to tell the world that yes, we are present. We do not want them to receive us in the Presidential House ... when he [Pepe Lobo} will not dialogue with the teachers. When he is repressing the people. Because of this we are here to say we are present!”

### **THE MARCH OF THE DRUMS; 214 YEARS OF ANCESTRAL RESISTANCE; 2011 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF AFRO-DESCENDENTS**



“The sounds of our drums are symbols of resistance.” (Garifuna doctor, Luther Castillo)

In Honduras, April is a month of celebration for the Garifuna people. To inaugurate the African Heritage Month during the International Year of Afro-Descendants and 214 years since the Garifuna people arrived in Honduras (forcibly brought here by Spanish imperialists carrying out an ethnic cleansing on the island now known as San Vincent), roughly 2000 Garifuna people and 214 drums were brought from various communities on the north coast and Bay Islands of Honduras to Tegucigalpa last Friday, April 1st.



From the National Teaching University to the Central Park, the Garifuna community - joined by Lenca indigenous members of COPINH (Council of Indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras) - marched with 214 drums, many maracas while singing and dancing in the streets of the capital city.



But as Garifuna doctor, Luther Castillo said to the crowd, "We commemorate [the African heritage month] but we have nothing to celebrate." With many colourful written banners carried on the streets of Tegucigalpa, the Garifuna demonstrated the various threats to their culture and survival. All reasons why it's difficult for the Garifuna to celebrate as they are facing "a second expulsion from their territory."

Banners read:

- The Plundering of Garifuna land and Territory is racism
- In the International Year of Afro-descendants, the Robbery of African and Latin American Lands has Intensified
- The Hydroelectric Dam Decrees are Unconstitutional: We Demand the Right to Consultation
- We Demand Integral Agrarian Reform: No to Facusse-landia
- The Municipalization of Education, Water & Indigenous Land is Privatization



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## **WHAT TO DO – MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS for HONDURAS' PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT**

To make a tax-deductible donation for community based organizations in Honduras' pro-democracy movement working to defend the environment and human rights, eradicate poverty and re-found their nation-state, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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

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Thank-you.

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