

Rights Action
August 14, 2012

Below:

HONDURAS: FORMER DEATH SQUAD LEADER NAMED AS CHIEF OF POLICE!

As part of the Honduran regime's efforts to appear to reform its police department, that is widely accused of killings and human rights violations, regime leader Porfirio Lobo named Juan Carlos Bonilla, a man who operated death squads in Honduras in the past, as the new National Police Chief! (See article, below)

WHAT TO DO: The human rights situation in Honduras remains dire. Please keep on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to your own Canadian and American politicians (MPs, Congresspersons, Senators) and other government officials, and to your own media. Since the June 2009 military coup, that ousted the democratically elected government of President Zelaya in Honduras, the governments of the U.S. and Canada are the governments that have most supported and legitimized the post-coup, repressive regimes of Honduras. North American companies and investors have increased their business activities in Honduras since the coup. In no small part, this illegitimate, repressive regime remains in power due to its political, economic and military relations with the U.S. and Canada.

- Please re-post and re-publish this information
- Get on/off listserv: www.rightsaction.org
- www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org

HONDURAS COOPERATING WITH US HUMAN RIGHTS PROBE

By MARTHA MENDOZA and ALBERTO ARCE

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/08/13/2950538/honduras-cooperating-with-us-human.html>

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras -- Honduran Foreign Minister Arturo Corrales said Monday that the country is cooperating with the U.S. investigation

into allegations that the new national police chief once ran a death squad and that no U.S. funds are being handled by the police chief.

It wasn't clear what police units would be affected by what the Honduran government called a temporary hold on funds while a U.S. group looks into the alleged human rights violations by National Police Chief Juan Carlos Bonilla, nicknamed "The Tiger." Honduran police units work directly with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and other U.S. law enforcement with projects inside of Honduras.

Earlier Monday, U.S. Ambassador Lisa Kubiske confirmed to the AP that the State Department is barring aid to Bonilla and anyone working under him until an investigation is complete. "We take human rights very seriously," she said. The embassy said in statement that overall aid is not being cut to Honduras.

Despite repeated U.S. criticisms that law enforcement agents have murdered and tortured people, an in-house State Department report sent to Congress Wednesday certifies that Honduras meets U.S. human rights requirements to receive all \$56 million appropriated by Congress.

But the report said no U.S. military or law enforcement aid - including \$1.3 million in foreign military assistance, and another \$1.7 million in peace and security funding - can go to anyone working under Bonilla until he is cleared.

"They have asked the Honduran government for information and we have given it. What happened a decade ago for us is something that has already been adjudicated," Corrales said. "We expect the investigation to be completed as quickly as possible."

Members of congressional appropriation committees can separately place a hold on funds if they have human rights concerns, but to date, no one has done this publicly.

Bonilla was named police chief May 21 as part of President Porfirio Lobo's efforts to reform a department that is widely accused of killings and human rights violations.

The decade-old report that resurfaced after his appointment named Bonilla in at least three killings or forced disappearances between 1998 and 2002 and said he was among several officers suspected in 11 other cases. Only one of the allegations against the now-46-year-old Bonilla led to murder charges, however, and he was acquitted in 2004.

The report said the U.S. still gives support to "special Honduran law enforcement units, staffed by ... personnel who receive training, guidance, and advice directly from US law enforcement and are not under Bonilla's direct supervision."

Earlier this year the DEA assisted the Honduran national police in a series of controversial cocaine raids that led to seizures of more than a ton of cocaine and several deaths, including four people who locals said were innocent civilians traveling in a river at night. The raids were part of aggressive new enforcement strategy in Honduras, a major transshipment point for drugs heading to the United States.

U.S. Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said it was "prudent" to limit aid until questions about Bonilla are resolved, according to Kerry's press secretary Jodi Seth.

Congressman Jim McGovern, D-Mass, who in past years introduced legislation pressing for human rights in Honduras, "strongly believes that those who have committed - or allegedly are currently committing - human rights abuses should not receive any form of U.S. assistance until they have been fully investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted," said his spokesman Scott Zoback on Monday.

Honduran historian Rodolfo Pastor in June drafted a letter eventually signed by more than 300 academics and advocates demanding the U.S. cut funding to Honduran law enforcement agents. On Monday, speaking by phone from his home in San Pedro Sula, he said he was pleased with the U.S. stance. "No one in Honduras was going to demand Bonilla be cleared," he said. "It's important that the American government, for whatever reason, is taking a position on this, forcing this to happen."

RIGHTS ACTION: Since 1995, Rights Action has been funding and working to eliminate the underlying causes of poverty, environmental destruction, repression, racism and impunity in Guatemala and Honduras, as well as in Chiapas (Mexico) and El Salvador. The Canadian Rights Action Foundation, founded in 1999, is independent from and works in conjunction with Rights Action (USA) that was founded originally in 1983. Since 1995, Grahame Russell and Annie Bird have been co-directors of Rights Action; Grahame is founder and director of Rights Action (Canada).

TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS (in Canada and the U.S.) for courageous community-based organizations in Honduras and Guatemala, working and struggling for community controlled development, the environment, human rights and justice, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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

CANADA: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS can be made (in Canada and U.S.):

<http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>

DONATIONS OF STOCK can be made: info@rightsaction.org

EDUCATION – GET INFORMED / GET INVOLVED

- **SPEAKERS:** Contact us to plan educational presentations in your community
- **EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO GUATEMALA & HONDURAS:** Form your own group or join one of our delegations to learn first hand about community development, human rights and environmental struggles
- **DAILY NEWS:** www.democracynow.org / <http://therealnews.com/t2/> / www.upsidedownworld.org / www.dominionpaper.ca /
- **BOOKS:**
 - Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America"
 - Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States"
 - James Loewen's "Lies My Teacher Told Me"
 - Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine"
 - Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"
 - Dr Seuss's "Horton Hears A Who"

Please re-post and re-publish this information
Get on/off listserv: www.rightsaction.org
www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org