



August 23, 2012

**Letter from Rights Action to Canadian Embassy
Stop the African Palm fueled repression in the Aguan**

Ambassador Cameron MacKay
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Honduras Office of the Canadian Embassy
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Cc: Canadian government officials and elected politicians

To Whom It May Concern:

Below, an urgent action concerning the illegal detention and physical abuse – including torture – of poor campesinos, from the northern Aguan region, who were peacefully protesting.

We urge the Canadian government to take every measure possible to help stop the physical abuse and torture and have the campesinos released from this illegal, abusive detention.

Canada has a responsibility to act.

Since the June 2009 military coup, Canada – along with the USA – have been the two governments that most of maintained and even increased political, economic and military/ police relations with the post-coup regime in Honduras.

Honduras is now known as the murder capital of the world. Violence and repression have reached levels not seen since the worst years of the 1980s.

Canada and the USA are, in effect, legitimizing and empowering the Honduran regime, and must do everything possible to help put an end to the repression and impunity.

UPDATE:

Since the release of the urgent action, below, we have learned that: “The detained campesinos have been beaten and tortured. One person was able to get in to bring them food, but when she called human rights observers to report that they had been beaten and needed to go to the doctor, the officer in charged expelled her from the Tocoa police station.”

Thank-you for your immediate attention to this urgent action.

Grahame Russell & Annie Bird, co-directors
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Rights Action - August 23, 2012
HONDURAS - Urgent Action

CALL THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT/ CANDIAN EMBASSY, AND
DEMAND THEY VERIFY THE CONDITION AND DEMAND THE RELEASE OF
CAMPESINOS HELD ILLEGALLY IN HONDURAS

Today, human rights activists and lawyers report that the Honduran police intend to transfer the 27 protesters from the Aguan region in Honduras - detained and beaten yesterday – to the maximum security prison in Tamara, where they would be held without visitation rights.

This is not a pretrial detention center, and there are no charges against the detainees as they were liberated yesterday. The police are acting with extreme

violence in a manner rarely seen since the June 2009 military coup, which leads human rights activists to believe that the behavior responds to superior orders.

The protestors were demanding an end to corruption in the justice system in front of the Supreme Court.

On August 20 campesinos from the Aguan peacefully protested corruption in the courts of Honduras when, according to witness, media reports and human rights organizations, State security forces circled the families and attacked them without warning and unprovoked. Six people were injured, though none hospitalized, and five children suffered strong reactions to the excessive use of tear gas, including a 9 month old baby.

The next day, August 21, the campesinos continued the protest, but again were attacked unprovoked. Two were beaten so severely that they were hospitalized and some underwent immediate orthopedic surgery. Another 27 people were arrested, some with injuries. Slightly after midnight they were released without charges when police commissioner Bonilla arrived to what was in essence kidnap the just released prisoners. He took them to the Metropolitana 1 police station where they spent the night. Their lawyers and human rights observers were denied access to detainees, which include one of the campesinos' lawyers.

POLICE COMMISSIONER LINKED TO DEATH SQUADS

Earlier in August, the US State Department placed a hold on assistance to units that are under the command of the National Police Director Juan Carlos Bonilla, while they investigate charges he participated in a death squad, but State Department explains it will continue to channel funding to security squads not under his command and under direct US tutelage. Units that may fit this description include the special anti narcotics team that killed four bystanders in the Mosquitia in May and a new force that as a hybrid military-police force with an intelligence and population control focus currently being trained that responds directly to the Minister of Security.

PLEASE CALL/ WRITE TO

Maria Otero, Undersecretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs:

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