

Rights Action  
February 5, 2014  
[info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

## **Canadians: Say No To Canada's "Free Trade" Agreement With Honduras**

Below: "Canadian Colonialism in Honduras: The 'Banana Coast' and the Canadian 'Porn King'", article by OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Garifuna and Black Peoples of Honduras)



(2013 photo of "Micos Beach and Golf Resort", being built on ill-gotten and violently acquired Garifuna lands, Tela Bay, Caribbean north shore of Honduras)

The indigenous Garifuna people of Honduras are in a survival struggle to defend land and community from the onslaught of the global tourism industry. Canadian investors and political supporters - including Randy Jorgensen, known in Canada and Honduras as the 'Porn King', and Senator Gerry St. Germain - are playing a harmful role in illegally (and sometimes violently) pushing Garifuna people off their Caribbean coast lands to make way for time-share condos and homes, cruise ship docks, and enclave tourism hotels.

Share this information with your elected MP and encourage them to speak against Bill C-20, the "Canada-Honduras Economic Growth and Prosperity Act", and in favour of community controlled development, defense of the environment and the rights of the Garifuna people.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Canadian Colonialism in Honduras: The "Banana Coast" and the Canadian "Porn King"**

By OFRANEH (Translated for Rights Action by Rosalind Gil)

The destruction of Río Negro, Trujillo, an indigenous Garífuna community on the north coast of Honduras (one of the founding communities of the country) represents, for our people, a clear signal of the future offered us by “development” projects imposed by foreign investors and approved by the government in power.

Months before the 2009 military coup d’etat, Randy Jorgenson, a Canadian citizen known as the “Porn King”, began to acquire land illegally in Garífuna communities located in Tela Bay. Then, after the coup d’etat, he obtained questionable environmental permits and put pressure on local inhabitants of the Garífuna community of Río Negro to sell their lands and threatened them with forced expropriation by invoking an obsolete 1913 law.

Besides destroying the community of Río Negro, the Porn King has taken over lands located in the mountains of Trujillo, Santa Fe and Guadalupe, where he has constructed a development known as Life Vision (<http://lifevisionproperties.wordpress.com/>), which offers villas for sale to foreign investors. The site of the development is actually a buffer zone for the Capiro and Calentura National Park.

The Life Vision project has led to the construction of urban developments in the mountains south of the Garífuna communities of Santa Fe and San Antonio. This project went into operation very fast and without the consent of the local communities. There are plans for similar projects in the foothills of the Guadalupe mountains. The characteristics of the ferruginous soil of the Serranía Nombre de Dios and the removal of sediments caused by construction, as well as the instability caused by deforestation and building of access roads will put coastal communities in danger.

The State of Honduras, controlled by an illegitimate government that seized power through a 2009 military coup d’etat, gave the pertinent environmental permits to Life Visión in January, 2010. Local communities voiced their opposition to the project but no one listened to them. The Garífunas of Guadalupe, in particular, have been denouncing illegal sale of their community lands since 2009. They possess a communal land title that has been recognized by the State of Honduras since 1887.

### **Of Cabbages and Kings, Banana Republics and the Destruction of Trujillo Bay**

After he destroyed the Garífuna community of Río Negro, the Porn King began construction of a development project called Banana Coast (<http://www.bananacoast.com/>), just a few meters from where American writer O’Henry set the banana terminal in his novel “Cabbages and Kings” (1901), in reference to the colonial slaves created in Central America by transnational fruit companies that ended up controlling the fate of the weak Central American republics.

As well as using intimidation to get hold of the communal lands of Río Negro, the Porn King presented a questionable environmental impact report which fails to mention where they will put the more than 800 thousand metres of sediment that will be extracted from the bottom of the bay to make it possible for mega cruise ships to go all the way up the bay to Trujillo.

Garífuna communities were targeted by government projects to auction off land when the administration of Porfirio Lobo promoted the transfer of areas of national land to foreign investors to create zones known as “model cities”.

The end of 2010 saw the beginning of the process of transferring 24 Garífuna communities to foreign investors. Land was put aside for model cities in the area between Guadalupe and el Rio Sico, which is considered to be the cultural homeland of our people. The model cities were to have their own government, laws and security. They would be quasi independent enclaves, reviving, as such, the banana republics of the 20th century.

### **Canadian Senators, the ‘Porn Kin’ and Honduras’ Illegitimate Congress**

In July 2011, Canadian Senator Gerry St. Germain, along with Porn King, Randy Jorgenson and a group of possible Canadian investors participated in a session of the National Congress held in Gracias, Lempira. At this session, with no further debate, the RED (Special Development Regions) Bill was passed. It can be said, thus, that Canadian interests participated in the conversion of our ancestral territory into so-called model cities.

In October 2012, the RED law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. In 2013, the law was re-introduced under the name of ZEDE (Special Economic Development Zones), with essentially the same intent as the model cities law. In July, 2013, the Lobo regime introduced a “Mortgage Law” which allows for auctioning off of communal lands, opening them to mining and forest exploitation.

The collapse of respect for human rights in Honduras since the 2009 coup d’etat, along with the spiral of violence, have paved the way for a regime of terror in which there is only a fine line between organized crime and State institutions. With no State law, the population refrains from exercising their right to denounce and protect their own good. They have nowhere to turn for their survival.

In the Trujillo case, on December 13, 2011, the community of Cristales initiated proceedings against the Porn King for illegal appropriation of communal lands. To date, the Public Ministry has not emitted a request for indictment, letting it be known again that foreign investors are untouchable by Honduran law.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Background video and article:**

<http://rightsaction.org/action-content/honduras-tourism-repression-and-corruption-vs-garifuna-people-earth-our-mother-sea>

### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)**

To support the community, environmental and indigenous rights defense work of OFRANEH, 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 (Canada & U.S.): <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>

- Be a monthly donor (Canada & U.S.)
- To donate stock: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

## **In Honduras, Repression, Violence, Impunity And Corruption Are Policy**

Americans / Canadians: Keep on, keep on, keep on ... sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to your politicians (MPs, Congress members and Senators) and media. Since the June 2009 military coup, that ousted the last democratically elected government, Honduras has become the 'Murder Capital of the world'. Repression has reached the levels of the worst years of the 1980s.

Since 2009, the U.S. and Canadian governments have legitimized a succession of illegitimate and repressive regimes. North American companies and investors, and "development" banks (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank) have increased business activities in African palm production, sweatshops, "model cities", tourism and mining. The Honduran regime remains in power due in large part to its political, economic and military relations with the U.S. and Canada and the "development" banks. Across Honduras, community based organizations in the pro-democracy movement need considerably more human rights accompaniment, funding, media attention on the harms and violations and education and activism in Canada and the U.S.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Comments / Questions: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)*

*Get on/off our listserv: [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)*

*Follow us on facebook: [www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org](http://www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org)*

*Please re-post and re-publish this information*

\*\*\*\*\*