

Rights Action
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info@rightsaction.org

Honduran Regime Kills Four School Students

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13 Year-old Soad Bustillo Murdered By Police



Greg McCain: "In the photo, Soad Bustillo, a 13 year-old girl, at a protest last week at her school "Central Vicente Cáceres". The inset photo is of her lifeless body, found in Coyamegüela this morning (March 25, 2015). Four students have been killed and 2 more wounded by police."

Police Killings of Children & Youth Who Had Participated in Student Protests

March 26, 2015, by the Honduran Committee for Freedom of Expression (C-Libre), Translated by Beth Gaglia

Four students were assassinated on March 24th in Honduras during a wave of student protests that began 12 days ago. This multiple-assassination “is an attempt to eliminate the student struggle,” different human rights organizations denounced in press releases.

The National Network of Human Rights Defenders in Honduras expressed concern and consternation to the national and international community, “for the events that have occurred in recent hours in the country against the student movement in which four middle school students had their lives taken: Soad Nicolle Ham Bustillo (13), Elvin Antonio López (19), and Darwin Josué Martínez (21). They were student activists and participants in recent protests that have demanded that the Honduran government improve conditions in schools.”

Casa Alianza also denounced the vile crime against the four students and the absence of open and democratic dialogue on part of the government. Casa Alianza’s statement states that “In response to the assassination of four middle school students in Comayaguela, and government repression against student protests, Casa Alianza Honduras wishes to make known to the national and international community, to international organizations and Honduran civil society:

“On March 24, three students were assassinated (two boys and one girl), students in night classes at Jesús Aguilar Paz Institute of Comayaguela, who had just left the school grounds after class. On the morning of Wednesday, March 25th, the cadaver of a 13-year-old girl was found wrapped in a sheet. She was a student of the first course of Common Cycle (Ciclo Común) at the Vicente Cáceres Central Institute of Comayaguela. The girl was last seen on the morning of Tuesday, March 24th leaving her house to go to school.”

“The assassination of these four students took place in the context of an organized movement for the rights of students. Therefore, these crimes cannot easily be attributed only to common crime.”

Similarly, the Association for Participatory Citizenship (ACI-PARTICIPA) expressed their consternation and solidarity with the families of students Elvin Antonio López (19), a business student at the Jesús Aguilar Paz Institute and Darwin Josué Martínez (21), two of the victims who died in the act while the other was sent to the University Training Hospital (HEU) where he died on Wednesday after individuals fired at him from a moving vehicle without saying anything.

“We stand in solidarity with the family of Soad Nicolle Ham Bustillo, 13 years old, who studied at the Vicente Cáceres Central Institute. The minor had been the victim of kidnapping for multiple hours and her cadaver was found this morning wrapped in a sheet in the La Granja neighborhood of Comayaguela.”

Globo Radio and TV showed photos of the minor Soad Ham Bustillo participating, a few days before her death, in a student protest.

More Assassinated Students

“We also denounce that, a few weeks ago, two students were gunned down near the Villa Cristina neighborhood of Comayaguela by unknown individuals who rode by in a vehicle,” says the statement from ACI-PARTICIPA.

Additionally, it states that “these assassinations happened in the context of a student crisis, where youth have protested insecurity and the attempts of the Minister of Education, Marlon Escoto, to push back class times for students and to increase class hours, as well as against the counter-pedagogical conditions within the schools, the lack of furniture, lack of student financial assistance, and the lack of teaching materials.

Tear Gas, Lies, and Death

This series of statements came out while members of the student movement were attacked in the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH). The youth were violently repressed. Some were beaten, some were detained, and tear gas was thrown at them in disproportionate quantities.

There was also report of an attack against the team of human rights defenders from the Center for Research and Promotion of Human Rights in Honduras (Ciprodeh) in the same school by police and UNAH security guards who harassed them and took their pictures. At the same time, a student from Jesús Aguilar Paz denounced scholarship offers, and threats of expulsion and death from the authorities of the Department Education Office as mechanisms to convince him to abandon the student movement.

A Genuine Struggle Stigmatized by the Ruling Government Party

The congressional representative of the ruling National Party, Lena Gutiérrez, characterized this movement as street protests with a political agenda. Similarly, the Minister of Education, Marlon Escoto, attributed the protests to interference from the Liberty and Refoundation Party (LIBRE), and directly named congressional representative Bartolo Fuentes and to Gilberto Ríos.

A leader of the LIBRE Party, Gilberto Ríos, clarified that he has never been at the protests, as Escoto suggested. He stated that near his home, in the Kennedy neighborhood, students were being repressed and the only thing that he did was to take a picture and upload it onto his Facebook account to denounce the occurrence. Ríos compared the assassination of students to recent events in Ayotzinapa.

The government, through its informational propaganda, has contributed to the stigmatization of the protests, which are characterized in some media outlets as vandalism. However, what the children are doing is exercising their right to protest. On March 26, different civil society organizations will hold simultaneous press conferences to denounce this terror strategy.

C-Libre condemns these acts and considers them to be part of a policy of repression and terror enacted to eliminate the student movement and spaces of free expression that belong to Honduran youth. We also call on educational authorities not to justify their mistakes, their intolerance, incompetence, and authoritarianism by seeking to place blame on other political and social sectors.

Military Coups, IMF “Structural Adjustments” & Repression: Four Students Killed Last Night

By Karen Spring, March 25, 2015, spring.kj@gmail.com

<http://desdeaquibajoabajo.blogspot.ca/2015/03/honduran-educational-crisis-protests-in.html>

Right now, Honduran university and high school students are protesting against various reforms the Honduran government is attempting to implement in public education. Police and military are firing tear gas at University students that have occupied the National Autonomous University (UNAH) in Tegucigalpa and the press is reporting that four students have already been arrested, some beaten. University students are protesting in solidarity with high school students that have taken to the streets and been repressed by state forces for days.

Since Monday, March 16th, high school students from various public schools in at least Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and Intibuca have taken to the streets to demand that the Ministry of Education stop the implementation of extended class times that would require the students to stay in classes until 7:00 pm in the evening. High school students are against finishing classes late in the evening given the extreme levels of insecurity in the country. The extended class times would also eliminate night classes, an essential program for students from low-income families that must work during the day to support their families and pay for their education.

In San Pedro Sula right now, normalistas (high school students training to be teachers) are protesting the closure of normales which would require students aspiring to be teachers to pay for expensive secondary school education and/or migrant to urban areas to attend university given limited access around the country.

Last week, during a protest on the streets in Tegucigalpa near the high school Vicente Caceres Central Institute, two high school students - Darío José Cabrera and José Luis Ochoa - were [shot at](#) and injured by a private security guard located near the protests.

The Honduran press is now reporting that the body of a 13-year old female student was found earlier this morning, wrapped in sheets and dumped on the side of the street. The student had been involved in the protests at the Central Institute the previous day and was found murdered after never returning to her home after the protests.

Late last night, the Honduran press reported that [three high school students](#) from the Institute Jesus Aguilar Paz in Tegucigalpa, were violently killed after leaving their night classes. Today, students from the same Institute joined others across the country protesting the deaths of their two compañeros, demanding justice and an end to the government's policies.

Military Coups, IMF “Structural Adjustments” & Repression

These reforms are fundamentally linked to privatization and decentralization efforts led by the International Financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, the InterAmerican Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and USAID.

Efforts to privatize primary and secondary education picked up pace after the June 2009 military coup in Honduras that was sparked by a "crisis" in the teacher's pension institution (IMPREMA).

In response to the "crisis", the Honduran government together with the IFIs demanded reforms to public education around the country and approved the Fundamental Education Law that significantly reduced the collective power of teachers' federations and making widespread change to public education.

The new waves of protests around the country are a sign of further consolidation of the neoliberal reforms that the government is attempting to implement. For background on the IFIs' role in education reform in Honduras and repression against teachers and students following the coup, [see here](#).

More information (in Honduras):

- Karen Spring, Honduras Solidarity Network, spring.kj@gmail.com
- Greg McCain, International Human Rights Defender, greg_mccain@yahoo.com

No End To Repression & Violence In Honduras, A Country Of Impunity & Global Business Opportunities

The extremely high levels of repression and violence in Honduras are not a "Honduran problem" – they are also a U.S. and Canadian problem. Since the June 2009 military coup, that ousted the last democratically elected government, Honduras has become the 'Murder Capital of the world', the 'Repression Capital of the Americas'.

Since 2009, the U.S. and Canadian governments have supported and legitimized a succession of illegitimate, repressive regimes. North American companies and investors, and "development" banks (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank) have increased business activities in: African palm production, maquiladora sweatshops, privatized "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 – struggling for fundamental reform to the Honduran State and society - need considerably more human rights accompaniment, funding, media attention on the harms and violations and education and activism in Canada and the U.S.

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & United States)

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