

OPPOSE REPRESSION OF TEACHERS AND TRADE UNIONISTS IN HONDURAS, END U.S. RECOGNITION OF ILLEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, on June 28, 2009, the Honduran military forcibly ousted the constitutionally elected president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya; and

WHEREAS, on November 29, 2009, the government that was installed by the military coup held an illegitimate election, conducted without the presence of any independent international observers, boycotted by the opposition political parties and marred by a high rate of abstention on the grounds that no fair elections could be held as long as the coup-installed government was in power; and

WHEREAS, Porfirio Lobo, elected president in the spurious election, was recognized immediately upon his election only by the United States, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama and Peru; and whereas, despite intense lobbying since November, the Lobo government has still been denied recognition by the Organization of American States, by numerous European nations, and has not been officially recognized by the United Nations (although an ambassador was seated in May 2010); and

WHEREAS, by immediately recognizing the illegitimate Lobo government, the United States has failed even to acknowledge the existence of a broad popular movement for constitutional reform; and

WHEREAS, the government of Porfirio Lobo has permitted systematic repression of trade unionists, educators, and journalists, including the following documented examples of murders of activists:

Vanessa Yamileth Zepeda, a 29-year-old nurse, was abducted and murdered on February 4, 2010, after leaving a meeting of the Syndicate of Workers of the Honduran Social Security Institute, a labor union, leaving behind three small children.

Claudia Larisa Brizuela Rodriguez, a leader of the San Pedro Sula municipal workers' union and the daughter of Radio Uno host Pedro Brizuela, was gunned down in her home in San Pedro Sula. Her two young children, ages 2 and 8, witnessed their mother's murder.

Five journalists were murdered in March 2010: Joseph Ochoa of Canal 51 television station; David Meza, a popular radio journalist; Nahúm Palacios, the director of a television station; José Bayardo and Manuel de Jesús Juárez, killed after recording a news show at Excelsior radio station.

José Manuel Flores, a teacher at San José del Pedregal High School, was murdered on March 23, 2010, at his school, while his students watched.

In total, according to the Committee of Families of the Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), at least 41 Hondurans associated with the resistance have been killed since the coup in June.

WHEREAS, violations of human rights have continued against teachers, trade unionists, and others, including kidnapping and torture, without any of the perpetrators being brought to justice; and

WHEREAS, according to COFADEH, more than 3,000 people have been illegally detained since June 28, 2009; and

WHEREAS, these acts of repression and intimidation inhibit the educational process and the free expression of political opposition; and

WHEREAS, despite the repression, a vigorous movement of resistance to the illegitimate government has nevertheless mounted continuing protests, led by trade unionists, especially teachers, public-sector workers, banana workers and bottling-plant workers; and

WHEREAS, the Obama administration has supported the illegitimately elected government of Porfirio Lobo on the premise that his election has been a positive step toward a return to democracy and national reconciliation in Honduras, despite the fact that other governments of the hemisphere have refused to recognize Lobo:

RESOLVED, that the AFT join the growing number of unions and human rights organizations calling on the Obama administration and the State Department to withdraw recognition of the Lobo government and cut ties to the Honduran military, including ongoing training at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly known as the School of the Americas), and demand the convocation of a National Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution and the celebration of new presidential elections after its ratification; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT strongly condemn the Lobo administration for continued human rights violations and call for the full return of democracy to Honduras, the protection of all education workers, trade unionists, human rights defenders and media workers in Honduras; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Federation of Teacher Organizations of Honduras, and with teachers and unionists around the world.