

On the One-Year Anniversary of the Coup, Honduran Social Movement Announces General Strike

For immediate release
June 28, 2010

Contact: Liana Foxvog, SweatFree Communities, 413-320-7276

Today, on the one-year anniversary of the June 28, 2009 coup d'etat, the Honduran National Popular Resistance Front is raising awareness about the ongoing human and civil rights violations with a general strike. Fabia Gutierrez, an active member of the National Popular Resistance Front, a Honduran social movement that formed in response to the coup, said that the participation of two million people -- one quarter of the country's population -- is expected. Rallies, marches, blockades on bridges and roads, and cultural events are planned for throughout the day. The National Popular Resistance Front is calling for the return of constitutional order, a national assembly, and a new Constitution.

"For the past year we have been living in an environment of death threats and assassinations," said Gutierrez. "We ask for international solidarity and for investigations into the deaths so that we can achieve our goal of making Honduras a democratic country characterized by social justice and equity. For the past year we have been suffering under a new order in which freedom of expression and group meetings are not permitted. Telecommunications, electric, and water utilities have been privatized. Our hard-won legal increase to the minimum wage has not been granted and we are facing a variety of anti-union measures."

The coup in Honduras was the first in Central America in more than two decades. Initially international reaction was universally negative and no foreign government recognized the new president. "The United States condemned the removal of the democratically-elected president, Manuel Zelaya, as a coup d'etat; however President Obama has not denounced the illegal elections that happened a few months later," said Gutierrez. In fact, the United States has just announced \$75 million dollars in funds to help Honduras enhance its security; security forces are routinely used to restrict freedom of expression, including the nonviolent protests of the FNRP.

Fabia Gutierrez is currently on a visit to the United States to speak at religious and social justice conferences on the human rights and labor rights situation in Honduras. Her visit is hosted by SweatFree Communities, a program of the International Labor Rights Forum.