

October 1, 2009

via fax: 011 504 239 3298  
Mr. Roberto Micheletti  
*De facto* President of Honduras

Dear Mr. Micheletti:

We are extremely concerned about the mounting tension and escalating violence since the return to Honduras of deposed President Manuel Zelaya on September 21. On September 22, police officers shot and killed 18 year-old José Jacobo Euceda Perdomo in the city of San Pedro Sula. Four people died in Tegucigalpa, including a 65-year-old man who died of gunshot wounds received during a demonstration. Many demonstrators against the *de facto* authorities have been beaten and some shot by security forces. There are reports of wide-scale arbitrary detentions.

September 22 and 23, police entered poor residential neighborhoods of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, searching for opponents of the *de facto* authorities who had taken part in demonstrations. During the several hours they remained in the neighborhoods they fired live ammunition and tear gas, entered homes without warrants late at night, beating and detaining many individuals. Young people appear to have been particularly targeted in these raids.

Some of those detained in Tegucigalpa were taken to the main police stations while others may have been held in the residential neighborhoods. Such irregular methods of detention place individuals at risk of grave human rights abuses, since they may never be formally registered as being in detention. While many are believed to have been released, it is possible that others remain detained in unknown locations.

Since September 21 curfews have been imposed sporadically and often with little notice, leaving people with few opportunities to buy food and fuel.

We are deeply concerned that using excessive force, ill treatment and mass detentions to repress dissent will serve only to inflame further tensions and lead to serious human rights violations. Force must be employed only in the most extreme circumstances and not as a method to prevent people's legitimate right to peacefully demonstrate.

Therefore we **strongly urge** that the *de facto* authorities

- stop using excessive force against protestors and respect freedom of expression and association;
- immediately release all detainees, unless they are charged with a recognizable criminal offense and are immediately granted access to lawyers and relatives.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

cc: Eduardo Enrique Reina, Honduran Embassy in the US ~ via fax: 1-202-966-9751  
Ambassador Hugo Llorens, US Embassy in Honduras ~ via fax: 011-504-236-9037  
Rebecca Valerin, Desk Officer for Honduras, US State Department ~ via fax: 1-202-647-2597  
Christopher Webster, Director of Office of Central American Affairs, US State Department ~ via fax: 1-202- 647-2597  
Paolo Carozza, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 1-202-458-3650  
US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email  
US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Sutton, Wilson, Space ~ via email

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**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**