

via fax: 011 504 239 3298 <b>Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa</b> President of the Republic of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 221 5667 <b>Sr. Luis Alberto Rubi</b> Attorney General of the Republic of Honduras
via fax: 202 966 9751 <b>Sr. Leonardo Irias</b> Consul, Embassy of Honduras	

August 26, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of leaders and members of the Federation of Teachers Organizations (FOMH), the Workers Union of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (SITRAUNAH), and the National Popular Resistance Front (FNRP), who participated in protests in cities throughout the 18 departments of Honduras. Teachers have been on strike for three weeks to spur the government to reinstate the 124 workers fired by the National Autonomous University after a 100 day hunger strike and pay the 4.6 billion lempiras (\$242 million) the state owes the teachers' pension and benefit fund, which has been in arrears since 2007.

On August 20, FNRP mobilized a three hour march in Tegucigalpa which began at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional "Francisco Morazán" (UPNFM) and ended at the Legislative Assembly. Metal barriers and military blockades near the Marriott Hotel impeded marchers from reaching the Casa de Gobierno. The Legislative Assembly building was militarized. At least one hundred soldiers with protective masks behind metal shields were armed with new barrels containing chemicals and new crates of tear gas bombs. The police used tear gas to clear out the striking teachers. At least five demonstrators were arrested during the police operation.

The FNRP reported that police and military used live bullets on protestors in Choloma, department of Cortes, which resulted in several injuries.

The United Confederation of Honduran Workers (CUTH) has rejected the government's proposal that salary increases for workers be made with bonds. Meetings of workers' organizations have been called to prepare for a general strike on September 15.

We **strongly urge** you to:

- support the reinstatement of workers fired by the National Autonomous University;
- come to an agreement with teachers to begin paying the \$242 million due to the pension and benefit fund;
- allow for peaceful protest on September 15 by avoiding involvement of the military, the use of tear gas or bullets.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: Eduardo Enrique Reina, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 1.202.966.9751  
 Hugo Llorens, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax: 011.504.236.9037  
 Gabriela Zambrano, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.2597  
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email  
 UA (FNRP) 08/2010-HONDURAS

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