



AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations**

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December 7, 2017

The Honorable Don Jacobson
Director of Central American Affairs
US Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Jacobson:

I write on behalf of the 12.5 million working men and women of the American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to express our profound concern about the November 26th election in Honduras. According to a wide range of sources, the electoral process has been thoroughly tainted by lack of transparency, delays and errors in vote-counting and subsequent violent repression of the population. For the Honduran government to have credibility in the coming four years, the current government must adopt substantive measures to demonstrate its commitment to free, fair and transparent elections and guarantee the constitutional and human rights of assembly and expression of all Hondurans.

As noted by the head of the Organization of American States (OAS) election observation mission, "The tight margin, along with the irregularities, errors and systematic problems that have surrounded this election, does not allow the mission to be certain about the results." At this point, there must be a full and transparent recount of all tally sheets. The recount must be observed by all political parties, civil society organizations and international observers such as the OAS and European Union missions that have raised reasonable questions about the November 26th election, subsequent vote-counting process and violent repression of peaceful assembly and expression. Failing such a recount, Honduras must conduct a new election, after taking effective measures to address the grave problems seen in the recent election.

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Having recently certified Honduras' efforts to improve its human rights practices and consistently supported the governments that took power after the 2009 coup and have centralized power since the 2013 election, the U.S. government has a particular responsibility to condemn the violent repression by Honduras of those now exercising constitutional and human rights of association, peaceful assembly and expression. Those rights must be immediately and unequivocally restored under rule of law. As long as Honduras continues to violate these rights, the US should suspend all military assistance.

As Honduras passes through the crisis caused by the failed electoral process and lack of transparency, increased repression will not restore credibility in the democratic process in Honduras. In the last few days, that crisis has worsened, leading the OAS to add, "It is clear that it is not possible, without an exhaustive and meticulous process of verification that determines the existence or not of an electoral fraud, to restore the confidence of the population." Without that credibility, Honduras will not have the capacity in the next four years to advance as a fair and democratic society in which ordinary citizens feel they have a stake in the country's development. Without such development or respect for their rights, thousands of Hondurans face the choice of suffering in their country or being forced to leave their homes and migrate north.

Sincerely,



Cathy Feingold
Director, International Department

CF/BF/

cc: Marlon Ramsses Tábora Muñoz, Ambassador of Honduras to the United States