

## **Faith-based and Nongovernmental Groups Condemn Coup in Honduras; Express Concern for Human Rights Situation**

Faith-based, human rights, and activist groups in the United States today joined in condemning the coup carried out June 28<sup>th</sup> against José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the elected President of Honduras. President Zelaya was forcibly removed from his home by the military and put on a plane to Costa Rica. The coup took place on the very day that a controversial non-binding referendum about the Honduran constitution had been scheduled.

Actions by the Honduran military to arrest the President and force him out of the country cannot be accepted. The international community has called for President Zelaya's restoration; we urge the U.S. and other governments to work multilaterally to support the restoration of constitutional order. We understand that U.S. law requires the suspension of military aid in the case of a coup and urge that this suspension be fully implemented until constitutional order is restored.

President Zelaya's return will not, by itself, solve the political crisis in Honduras. Dialogue will be needed to resolve deep-seated conflicts over whether and how to revise the constitution, and strengthen a more participative political process. The poverty and marginalization that underlie all the political dynamics in Honduras, and that have stoked unrest, must be addressed. Zelaya's return is only a first step in a larger and more long-term process in Honduras.

The signers remain concerned about the safety of social and political activists, including trade union leaders, heads of organizations of small farmers and the rural poor, indigenous leaders, opposition politicians, and others. Many leaders, fearing arrest, are in hiding. Many media outlets were shuttered yesterday. We call on Honduran security forces to respect human rights and basic freedoms for all citizens.

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