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WOMEN FOR PEACE



For immediate Release

Women Mobilize Against Coup in Honduras

July 21, 2009 - In a show of solidarity, women throughout the Americas are mobilizing to pressure the US government and international organizations to take a stronger stand against the June 28 coup in Honduras. Rallies will take place Wednesday July 22, in at least 10 cities including Tegucigalpa, Honduras, San Jose, Costa Rica, Mexico City, and Washington, DC.

The Washington, DC rally begins at **10am ET in front of the White House**, and is jointly organized by JASS, CODEPINK, the Global Fund for Women, and Women of Color United – all national and international feminist organizations, along with DC-based, Hondurans for Democracy, and others.

Responding to a call to action from Honduran Feminists in Resistance, women will be speaking with one voice: – “No to the coup, no to violence, yes to democracy, yes to rule of law.”

Global Fund for Women, CEO Kavita Ramdas, notes that while coup supporters claim legitimacy for their actions, facts on the ground show otherwise. “ Civil society organizations have documented repeated violations of human rights, including the violent suppression of civilian demonstrations, military attacks on communities and detentions. This is not democracy.”

Though leaders throughout the world have expressed concern, women’s groups feel governments could be doing much more.

“We are asking feminists, as people who uphold the country’s democracy, to demand that their governments **not** recognize the illegitimate government. This is not about support for or against Mel [Zelaya]. We are against military coups, and...against the religious right who have enthroned themselves in this de facto government and who have taken measures in Congress against the most basic rights of women.” said Gilda Rivera, Center for Women’s Rights in Honduras, one of the organizers spearheading the rallies.

Medea Benjamin of CODEPINK, who recently returned from a mission to Honduras, said, “The women I met with in the marches are determined not only to get back the President they elected but also to amend the constitution to protect women’s rights.”

The rallies support the key demands of the Honduran Feminists in Resistance which include:

- A clear **condemnation by the US Government of the military-political coup against the State of Honduras;**

- The **unconditional support for the return of constitutional order** in Honduras, which implies the return of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales to Honduras;
- The **cessation of repression against organizations** protesting the coup, which is being carried out by political and military forces that are advised by retired military officials responsible for the disappearances of people during decade of the 80's in Honduras;
- **Respect for the human rights of all citizens, the suspension of the curfew** and the full restitution of individual protections;
- The **cessation of all threats of war**, promoted by the de facto regime, which are creating a climate of terror among the Honduran population;
- The **presence of international human rights observers** in the country, to gather testimonies and verify human rights violations during the de facto regime and to monitor the process of return to the rule of law;
- The **suspension of all technical or financial bilateral or multilateral aid** being currently provided to the de facto regime;
- **Condemnation of the appointment of Ms. María Martha Díaz Velásquez**, named by the de facto regime as Minister of the National Institute of Women (INAM). Also Ms. María Antonieta Bustamante, representative of Honduras before the Inter-American Commission of Women, who met the Feminists in Resistance with riot police when we demanded that they vacate the building of the INAM, which is OUR INSTITUTE.
- **The immediate removal of all those involved** in the de facto regime from the public offices they have taken and **the application of sanctions against the coup leaders.**

“Democracy is a global feminist and a woman’s agenda. For women in the Americas, democracy is a life and death issue as they struggle against impunity, the dismantling of secular states, and unchecked violence. Giving a pass to the coup and its leaders sends a message to the powerful interests operating behind the scenes throughout the region that an overthrow is an acceptable political move.” says Lisa Veneklasen, Director of JASS, Washington, DC.

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