

FEMINIST RESISTANCE TO THE *COUP D'ÉTAT* IN HONDURAS¹

Factsheet I: The Context of Women's Mobilization

“There is a greater degree of consciousness [in Honduras] that we can dream of dismantling the patriarchal and racist systems of domination... We are not scared to propose that women's rights be constitutional... Re-establishing the country is not only a task for a popular democratic constitutional assembly, but rather, we, the social and political movements, must also re-establish ourselves...”
~ Berta Cáceres

The coup d'état that took place in Honduras on June 28, 2009 provoked a massive popular uprising. Citizens organized street demonstrations throughout the country from the start of the coup, and continue to do so. Women represent a majority of the demonstrators; approximately 60% of those involved in daily demonstrations are women, according to various sources involved in the protests.

The diversity among demonstrators – women teachers, labor union members, *campesinas*, tenant farmers, young indigenous women, older women – is noteworthy. Key figures have emerged, among them Angélica “the pilgrim” and Agustina “the grandmother of the resistance” who at 75 years of age goes from demonstration to demonstration, sharing stories of the army's abuse of the populace.

It was in this context that a collection of Honduran organizations and activists against the coup formed **Feminists in Resistance**. The presence of this group has enriched the resistance agenda, making the women's struggle more visible and encouraging the reporting of women's rights violations.

For the women involved, resistance signifies a fight for a substantive democracy that will transform existing relationships of power and generate a new and egalitarian social pact. This goes far beyond Manuel Zelaya's return. From their perspective, struggling for the restitution of the constitutional president to his office is a condition for democracy and a point of departure for the process of re-establishing the Honduran State by recognizing diversity, citizen participation, gender equality, and human rights.

Under the slogan “No coups and no violence against women” (¡Ni golpe de Estado, ni golpe a las mujeres!), Feminists in Resistance have maintained a permanent presence in all anti-coup proceedings and have organized their own actions by and for women, including sit-ins in front of the UN building, a march to the US Embassy, occupying the National Institute for Women building, visiting hospitals and detention centers, video recording demonstrations, sending out

1 Sources: *Informe preliminar: Represión contra mujeres en el marco del Golpe de Estado* (Preliminary Report: Repression against Women in the Context of the Coup d'État). *Feminista en Resistencia* (Feminists in Resistance)/ Petateras/JASS/ RIF. Roxana Arroyo, Soraya Long, Jessica Sánchez. *Memoria del Observatorio Feminista de la Transgresión y la Jornada por los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres* (Report on Women's Transformation Watch and the Conference on Women's Human Rights). María Suárez (Petateras, RIF). *Informativos electrónicos de Feministas en Resistencia de Honduras* (Electronic Bulletins on Feminists in Resistance in Honduras). Newspaper articles from CIMAC (Gladis Torres) and SEMLAC (Sara Lovera). Elaboró (Developed): Marusia López (Petateras, JASS)

information bulletins in print and electronic form, documenting violations of women's rights, and staging demonstrations to defy the curfew.

In the National Resistance Front protesting the coup, Feminists in Resistance are a recognized and independent voice. Their participation in the National Resistance Front charts a path for transforming social movements into more democratic and peaceful processes which recognize equality for men and women.

Already strong, the broad resistance movement still faces major challenges: repression itself; sustaining both the uprising and its peaceful nature; overcoming the risk of division caused by the next elections and the autonomy of the political parties; and the necessity of developing strategies to protect citizens.

Dated: November 5, 2009

For more information contact JASS (Just Associates) at 202-232-1211 or visit http://www.justassociates.org/actions/honduras_action_coup.html.