

Women Nobel Peace Laureates & Women's Rights Leaders Urge Secretary of State Clinton to Condemn Violence Against Women in Honduras

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--For Immediate Release--

More than 175 human rights and feminist leaders--including three Nobel Peace Prize winners and leaders of national and international women's organizations—today sent an [Open Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton](#) today, urging her to condemn widespread [violations of women's human rights in Honduras](#).

"In the lead up to the November 29 elections, we are extremely concerned about the increase in a pattern of repression and abuse of women at the hands of the de facto regime, especially women who form part of the opposition to the coup," said [Nobel Laureate Jody Williams](#). "Recent reports that the deployment of troops and police has intensified, and women opposition leaders are being targeted, should give the US government ample reason to reconsider its apparent willingness to endorse the elections as legitimate."

Williams received the Nobel in 1997 for her prominent role in the international campaign to ban the use of anti-personnel landmines and has worked extensively in Central America to promote peace and human rights.

"Given Secretary Clinton's commitment to women's rights and her pledge to fight violence against women, we are asking her to speak out about the dangerous and appalling situation faced by Honduran women, " she added.

The letter was also signed by [Rigoberta Menchu](#), who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 for her work in advancing reconciliation following Guatemala's civil war, and by [Mairead Maguire](#), who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for her efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the civil conflict in Northern Ireland.

Other signatories to the letter include [Mary Robinson](#), the former President of Ireland and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002.

Human rights organizations have noted a sharp rise in [violations against women](#) since the June 28 military coup d'état in Honduras. The letter summarizes 240 cases of violations of women's human rights recently presented before the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#). These include physical abuse, sexual abuse, rape, sexual harassment, threats, arbitrary detentions, a rise in femicides, the closure of feminist radio programs and other media, and impunity for crimes against women.

It concludes, "We urge you to condemn the orchestrated campaign of violence against women being waged by the current de facto regime. Finally,

we urge you to insist on a withdrawal of armed forces from the streets, neighborhoods, and homes of Honduras."

Honduras has national elections scheduled for November 29, which are being actively boycotted by Honduran women's groups. The letter states that free and fair elections cannot take place under current conditions.

"Hastily improvised elections—without the full participation of Honduran society, international recognition, or the reinstatement of the elected president—cannot be free or fair and do not guarantee a return to rule of law. Only a return to rule of law can reestablish legal institutions for redress of human rights violations and end the current situation of impunity for crimes against women."

Contacts:

Rachel Vincent, [Nobel Women's Initiative](#), 613-276-9030

Lisa VeneKlasen, [JASS \(Just Associates\)](#), 202-232-1211