



COMMON FRONTIERS

CANADA

Prime Minister Stephen Harper
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, K1A 0A2
July 7, 2009

Dear Prime Minister Harper;

Canada stands virtually alone among the countries that make up this hemisphere in refusing to call for the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of Manuel Zelaya as president of Honduras. In 2007, when your government announced its new policy focus on the Americas, it promised to promote Canadian values such as human rights, democracy, prosperity and security for all. The recent coup in Honduras has shattered these values by putting the population there at risk, by gutting democracy, and by denying the majority of the population their hopes and dreams for leaving behind a history of poverty and neglect that were raised as a result of the modest reforms instituted under President Zelaya.

Leaders of several countries in the Americas along with the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) have been working hard to bring about an immediate end to this military backed coup and it is imperative that Canada be squarely on board with these efforts to unconditionally reinstate President Zelaya.

Common Frontiers* calls on the Canadian government to:

- Break diplomatic relations with the de facto, military-backed government of Honduras, closing the Canadian business office there, removing Ambassadorial representation from Costa Rica, requesting that the current Honduran Ambassador to Canada leave the country, and exclude Honduran military from Canada's Military Training Assistance Programme until democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya is unconditionally reinstated to his post;
- Call on the coup leaders to order the immediate return of the military to their barracks;
- Insist on the lifting of the curfew along with the immediate reinstatement of democratic safeguards and civil liberties;
- Call on the coup leaders to immediately release the more than 800 protesters and popular sector leaders that have been arrested during the coup;
- Issue a statement denouncing the rapidly rising number of civilian casualties resulting from the large scale repression unleashed by coup leaders using the military against their own people and against journalists covering the pro-democracy rallies;
- Demand an immediate return to the rule of law and call for all coup leaders to be brought to justice for acts committed against the Constitution of Honduras, and for the human rights abuses carried out against civilians under their watch;
- Respond favourably in the event that a reinstated President Zelaya were to request United Nations peace-keeping troops as an interim measure to ensure that democratic governance will not be violated anew.

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The Canadian government's unacceptable stance with regard to the military-backed coup in Honduras and its virtual silence in the face of mounting human rights abuses has been noted by journalists around the world and has put at risk Canada's reputation in the Americas. The OAS, the UN, and governments and citizens in all major countries in the Americas are all demanding a prompt unconditional return to constitutional rule in Honduras - Canada should do no less.

Sincerely,

Rick Arnold.

Common Frontiers

CC The Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)

*Common Frontiers – is a multi sectoral network of labour, human rights, environment, student, church, international development, and other social justice organizations. We propose the building of an alternative model for social and economic integration