



The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

CC: Ambassador of Canada to Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua  
Ambassador of Canada to the Organizations of American States

December 7, 2017

**RE: Violence and irregularities in Honduras following November 26 elections**

Dear Minister:

The Americas Policy Group (APG), a regional working group of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, wishes to express its concerns regarding the political and human rights crisis currently unfolding in Honduras, following the presidential elections of November 26. The member organizations of our group have close ties to dozens of organizations in Honduras, including those that work on women's, Indigenous and labour rights as well as development projects.

We welcome your statement on December 2 in which you express concerns regarding the suspension of constitutional guarantees, and ask for electoral authorities to complete the vote count. However, we believe it is urgent that Canada do more to ensure a fair election outcome in Honduras, and to play a more public role in promoting human rights at this critical time.

As indicated in their preliminary reports, both the OAS and the European Union Electoral Observation Missions have witnessed numerous irregularities, errors, and systemic problems in the electoral process. Just yesterday, the OAS General Secretariat issued a press release noting the lack of guarantees and transparency in the election process, saying it is not ruling out the possibility of recommending a call for new elections if the "irregularities prove to be of such an extent that it makes it impossible for the process to provide certainty and security in the recount".

Meanwhile, the way the government of Honduras has handled the situation is contributing to high levels of insecurity. The Government of Honduras has responded by instituting a State of Emergency and cracking down on peaceful protests by security forces.

Fearful that democracy in Honduras will continue to be undermined, as it was with the 2009 military coup, tens of thousands of Hondurans have taken to the streets to demand that the will of the electorate be respected.

We ask that you support Hondurans, and call on you to advance democracy in Honduras by:

- Supporting an independent international commission to undertake a vote count and to conduct an investigation of the electoral process;
- Calling on the Honduran government to end the State of Emergency and carry-out an investigation into the intellectual authors of the crimes perpetrated by security forces;
- Pressing the government of Honduras to respect universal human rights, such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the right to peaceful protests;
- Denouncing the ongoing corruption and impunity in Honduras; and
- Supporting civil society, women, community and Indigenous leaders who play a vital role in protecting the land and human rights.

We thank you for your leadership in advancing a more progressive foreign policy, and hope that Canada will take this key opportunity to play leadership role and help to peacefully resolve the electoral crisis in Honduras.

Sincerely,



Rachel Vincent  
Co-Chair  
APG



Steve Stewart  
Co-Chair  
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