

Declared climate of fear for human rights violations and political persecution in Honduras.

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal must order the political persecution to cease.

The Centre of Justice and International Law (CEJIL), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico (CIFCA), the Institute for Human Rights “José Simeón Cañas” of the Central American University (IDHUCA) and the Collective of Lawyers José Alvear Restrepo, forming part of the **Mission of the International Observatory on the Human Rights Situation in Honduras** (OISDHHN), hereafter referred to as “the Observatory” , speak out against the climate of terror, the violations of human rights and the political persecution that persist in the current pre-electoral phase. The statement is based on the following information:

1. On the 22nd October through a written communication, a Major of the Army requested, from numerous municipal authorities, the name and location of the members of the resistance who were “bringing unrest to the community”. In the same document, it was indicated that the military would soon visit the communities, which indeed took place in the following weeks. The Observatory has confirmed, through interviews with a wide range of people, the regular presence of soldiers in the communities of Gualinga, Soloara, Monte Copado, Quizcamote, Opalaca, Tapuimán, Guasores, and Olanchito. Those people have described these soldiers as transiting heavily armed, detaining members of the Resistance without motive, and at times even physically assaulting them.
2. The authorities of the de facto regime, including the Attorney General's office, are threatening to press criminal charges against those people encouraging abstentions during the elections of the 29th November. The Observatory has confirmed the use of paid advertisement in the main written media warning about the risks of not voting on the Election Day. In practice, the Armed Forces have brought criminal charges against Andrés Pavón, president of the Human Rights Committee in Honduras (CODEH), on the basis of calling for Honduran people “not to vote” ; and have attempted to justify the annulment of the naturalisation of the renowned environmentalist leader and priest, José Andrés Tamayo Cortez, as well as his expulsion out of the country. The Observatory reminds that these attacks are contrary to exercising freedom of expression and constitute direct attacks that obstructs the defence of human rights.
3. The Observatory expresses great concern over the harassment and threats suffered by journalists, and the interference with the transmissions of media communications critical to the conduct of the de facto government, such as Radio Globo, Choluteca South and Canal 36. Since Friday 20th of November, unknown persons have jammed satellite and local signal of Canal 36, pulling them entirely off the air. The National Council of Telecommunications (CONATEL) has recognised such assault but it has not taken any steps to cease such illegitimate measure. These are open acts of harassment, which are against the fulfilment of the precautionary measures bestowed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The systematic aggression against the media and journalists critical to the coup d'etat during the last months, was recognised in the meeting

held by the Observatory and the Attorneys office for human rights, and is a clear demonstration of the de facto's government policy against freedom of expression.

4. Finally, it is alarming the conduct of the Supreme Court of Justice against various independent judges. On the 25th of November, the Judge of the Appeals Chamber, Tirsia Flores, received a Communiqué, which opened a disciplinary process against her on the basis of her critical position towards the coup d'etat. Her case can be added the other processes brought against the judges: Osman Fajardo, Guillermo Loez Lones, Luis Alonso Chevez de la Rocha y Ramon Enrique Barrios. These lawsuits intend sending a message to the judiciary so that they maintain a submissive attitude to the Supreme Court, who is clearly linked to the de facto government.

These incidents are preceded by thousands of arbitrary detentions, numerous complaints of violations to personal integrity, deaths in suspicious circumstances, which follow a lack of effective protection by the judicial powers.

The Observatory confirms the generated **climate of terror** that affect particularly people linked to the Resistance; the **human rights violations** yet to cease; and the prevailing **restrictions on the freedom of expression**. This demonstrates the **lack of conditions for citizens to exercise their right to a free vote without obstacles of any kind**.

The Observatory makes a call to the Supreme Electoral Court, the organ now heading the security forces, to cease all forms of political persecution and – in particular- any act of harassment, intimidation, threat and attack against persons exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Tegucigalpa, November 26, 2009