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Ms. Benita FERRERO-WALDNER, European Commissioner for External Relations  
Mr. Fredrik REINFELDT, Prime Minister, Sweden  
Mr. Carl BILDT, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden  
Mr. Miguel Ángel MORATINOS, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain  
Mr. Jan KOHOUT, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic  
Member states of the European Union

Brussels, November 26, 2009

### **Re: The EU should not recognize Honduran elections**

The elections to be held in Honduras on Sunday November 29, 2009 are being held under a *de facto* government installed through a *coup d'état* on June 28, 2009. The *coup d'état* has been unanimously condemned by the international community, including the European Union. **Given the situation of serious human rights violations and that elections are held under an illegitimate and unconstitutional government, APRODEV<sup>1</sup> urges the EU not to recognise the elections.**

In a report<sup>2</sup> presented only days before the elections, eight Central American human rights organisations conclude that minimum guarantees of transparency, democracy and security are not in place for the elections. There are no guarantees that citizens will be able to freely exercise their vote and that their vote will be respected. Rather than contributing to a solution of the conflict, which the *de facto* government claims, holding elections under a *de facto* government, in a context of militarisation, breakdown of constitutional order and threats of violence risks a deepening of the conflict.

The human rights organisation CEJIL emphasises that, under the current circumstances, the elections will consolidate the coup, legitimise the breaking of constitutional order and validate a number of human rights violations.<sup>3</sup>

Since the coup there have been numerous reports<sup>4</sup> on the human rights violations carried out after the coup, including: arbitrary detentions, excessive use of force and beating of

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<sup>1</sup> APRODEV is an association of 17 European development and humanitarian aid organisations that work in coordination with the World Council of Churches.

<sup>2</sup> GAM, FESPAD, CODEFAM, CIPRODEH, CODEH, CENIDH, ILCO and CONADEHUPA, with the technical coordination of the Central America Program of the World Lutheran Federation. Nov 24, 2009: [http://www.gam.org.gt/public/comunic/2009/nov/Elecciones\\_Honduras.pdf](http://www.gam.org.gt/public/comunic/2009/nov/Elecciones_Honduras.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> CEJIL. Nov 24, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> See for example IACHR, Amnesty International, FIDH, Human Rights Watch and Honduran human rights organizations CIPRODEH, COFADEH, CODEH and CDM.

protestors by police and military, torture, killings of protesters and political opponents, and violations of freedom of association, assembly and expression and intimidation of human rights defenders. The repression against young people and women should be especially highlighted - half of the number of persons arbitrarily detained were minors, and a number of cases have been reported of police raping and sexually abusing women.

The attacks on the right to freedom of expression and of the press in Honduras since the coup have been denounced by international human rights organisations and institutions, such as Amnesty International<sup>5</sup> and IACHR<sup>6</sup>. Violations include the closing down of media criticizing the coup, cancellation and censoring of programs, threats, persecution and violence towards journalists and illegal detentions. As a consequence of a decree issued by the *de facto* government on October 7, three radio programmes have been cancelled, including two programmes by women's organisations who have pronounced themselves against the coup. According to Amnesty, this curtails the Honduran population's access to information and has caused an atmosphere of increased fear and intimidation for journalists. At the end of last week the broadcasting of the TV channel 36 Choluteca Sur was once again interrupted.

Concern has been expressed by human rights organisations over the decision of the *de facto* government to declare a national state of emergency for all the activities related to the electoral process, as well as calling in 5,000 people from the military reserve to support the work of the armed forces for as long as it is considered necessary.

The lack of minimum conditions to carry out a free and transparent electoral process has led a number of candidates from different parties opposing the coup to resign. Also, those opposed to the coup have called for a boycott of the elections.

The political implications for other emerging Latin American democracies of legitimising elections that have been imposed by a *de-facto* regime after an illegal *coup d'état* should not be underestimated, not least because of the very weak institutions which characterise many Central American countries.

Several countries have already indicated that they will not recognise the elections. We hope and expect that in order to defend democracy and human rights, the EU will take a clear position and will not recognise the upcoming elections in Honduras.

Yours respectfully,



Rob van Drimmelen  
General Secretary APRODEV  
Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe

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<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International. 27 Oct, 2009: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/honduras-radio-journalists-dealt-further-blow-freedom-expression-20091027>

<sup>6</sup> IACHR. Nov 13, 2009: <http://www.cidh.oas.org/Comunicados/English/2009/78-09eng.htm>