

His Excellency Mr Ivan Romero Martinez
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Dublin, December 5th, 2017

Your Excellency,

We the undersigned, organisations and individuals committed to social justice and human rights, condemn in the strongest possible terms the violent tactics employed by state forces against its own citizens in the aftermath of last week's contentious election.

Numerous potential irregularities in the electoral process have been documented, including a significant discrepancy between the first official report of the Supreme Electoral Commission (TSE), showing challenger Salvador Nasralla with a commanding lead, and its subsequent communications. The total lack of transparency in the workings of the TSE, and its failure to announce a result of the election, have been criticized by the European Union electoral observation mission. These failures have engendered an atmosphere of instability and led hundreds of thousands of citizens to take to the streets seeking answers.

We are deeply concerned by the reports coming out of Honduras since the election of 26 November from international human rights organisations and media sources of systematic violations of human rights by state forces, including the use of live ammunition against unarmed citizens, the excessive use of tear gas and other extreme crowd-control measures, and the widespread use of unlawful detention.

The imposition last Friday of a state of exception which suspended civil liberties, rather than helping to peacefully resolve this situation, has instead led to increased repression and the militarization of the country. Since the imposition of the state of exception, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have received reports of 11 deaths, with human rights observers reporting that at least four of these resulted from the use of live ammunition by military personnel.

We wish to highlight the shocking murder to 19-year-old Kimberly Fonseca, who according to reports was protesting peacefully when she was shot in the head. There are also reports of almost 120 detentions, and hundreds of injuries.

The seriousness of the human rights situation in Honduras is encapsulated by the fact that the Cobra Force squadron of riot police have refused to continue participating in the violent repression of their fellow citizens.

We are also deeply concerned at the treatment of groups and individuals that are shining a light on events in Honduras, namely members of the press and human rights defenders. We are concerned by reports of the detention and deportation of members of the international media, including journalists from New Zealand, the US and England. Along with this, the

widespread harassment, intimidation and illegal detention of human rights defenders represent part of a clear strategy to silence those who would speak out about the situation in Honduras.

We call upon the government of Honduras to:

- Immediately suspend violent attacks on citizens exercising their constitutional and natural rights to peaceful protest, in particular the use of deadly force by military personnel;
- Immediately lift the state of exception and refrain from using it in this way in the future;
- Halt the illegal detention of citizens and restore civil liberties;
- Stop the targeted harassment, detention and deportation of members of the media;
- Stop the targeted harassment and detention of human rights defenders;
- Guarantee the civil and political rights of all citizens in Honduras;
- Institute a transparent vote recounting process to resolve the electoral impasse, as called for by the EU observers, the UN High Commission for Human Rights, and other international actors.

Signed:

Latin America Solidarity Centre (LASC), Dublin, Ireland

Trocaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland

Seán Crowe TD, Sinn Féin's Foreign Affairs spokesperson, on behalf of all Sinn Féin elected representatives

Sinead McGrath, PhD Candidate, University College Dublin