

# Honduran Police State Repression

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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On June 28, 2009, Obama colluded with Honduran fascists. With US approval and support, they ousted Honduras' democratically elected president.

Manuel Zelaya was arrested at home. Security forces confronted him at gunpoint.

Junta rule replaced him. Porfirio (Pepe) Lobo Sosa heads Honduras' government. It's illegitimate.

State terror is policy. The infamous CIA-created Battalion 316 was reactivated. In the 1980s, death squads disappeared, tortured, and murdered regime opponents.

A state of siege exists. Human rights violations are horrific. Killings, beatings, disappearances, and intimidation are commonplace.

Human rights workers, trade unionists, journalists, and other regime opponents are targeted. Honduras is Latin America's murder capital. It's a virtual free-fire zone. It's unsafe to live in.

For decades, Honduran officers have been trained at the School of the Americas. It's now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISEC). State terror techniques are taught.

Instruction includes ways to kill, maim, torture, oppress, exterminate poor and indigenous people, overthrow democratically elected governments, assassinate targeted leaders, suppress popular resistance, and solidify hard-right rule cooperatively with Washington.

The [Honduras Solidarity Network](#) (HSN) struggles for social justice. It denounces human rights violations. It opposes US intervention.

In December 2012, it wrote World Bank president Jim Yong Kim, saying: "Stop Funding Merchants of Death in Honduras."

"The problem in Honduras is not the human rights defenders," it stresses. It advocates active resistance. It works cooperatively with likeminded groups.

[Rights Action](#) believes ordinary people matter. They make a difference. Change depends on them. On March 17, it highlighted continued Honduran repression, violence and impunity.

Human rights violations are deplorable. Targeted killings are commonplace. So are other repressive acts.

Against long odds, human rights workers, teachers, LGBT people, campesinos, students,

unionists, and independent journalists work peacefully for democratic rule of law justice.

In June 2011, a new LIBRA party was formed (Libertad y Refundacion). The National Popular Resistance Front (FNRP) founded it.

Manuel Zelaya heads it. His wife, Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, will be its November presidential candidate.

Rights Action believes if open, free and fair elections were held, LIBRE would win decisively. Dark forces have other ideas. Democracy's verboten. Rule of law principles don't matter.

Severe repression continues. Conditions remain dire. Monied interests control things. Washington's involvement is longstanding. It dates from the end of the 19th century.

America's long arm made Honduras the original banana republic. It's politically unstable. It's unsafe to live in. It's a repressive kleptocracy.

Wealth is disproportionately shared. Ordinary people are exploited and persecuted. Corrupt government officials work cooperatively with criminal gangs and business interests. Gangsterism is policy. Freedom is a four-letter word. Wealth and power matter most.

In February, Rights Action co-director [Annie Bird](#) headlined "Human Rights Violations Attributed to Military Forces in the Bajo Aguan Valley in Honduras."

She documented targeted killings and abductions. Campesino organization members are vulnerable. Death squads are linked to Honduras' military, police, and private security firms.

Bajo Aguan's a virtual killing field. Dozens of campesinos perished. They're murdered at home, work, in transit, while demonstrating, during evictions, or abducted and later found dead. Many are tortured and abused before dying.

Bird's report is troubling. It reveals longstanding repression. It suggests no end of it in sight. It explains wealth, power and privilege prioritized over human rights and life.

Honduras' economy is troubled. Exports are vitally important. Demand for African palm oil is significant. Bajo Aguan's ideal for cultivation.

It's used to produce biofuel. It's also a food additive. Latifundistas conflict with campesinos. Peasants want control of their own land.

Large plantation owners want their holdings enlarged. Murder and other terror tactics are used to do so. According to Bird:

"Impunity surrounding violations is so prevalent that it appears to constitute a policy of the state."

"Security forces apply the law unequally, criminalizing campesinos while providing protection to the local businessmen, some reported to engage in drug trafficking."

"High-ranking government officials have distorted the nature of the conflict, accusing campesinos of engaging in criminal activities and claiming that an armed movement is operating in the region, unsubstantiated accusations that wrongly position campesino

movements as the object of anti-terrorism and anti-narcotics operations just as regional security initiatives are being promoted by the international community.”

Drug wars provide cover. They let powerful interests accumulate wealth and solidify power. Eye witness testimonies explain. Washington supports agribusiness and corrupt government officials.

Financial aid and military training are provided. Targeted killings are commonplace. Bajo Aguan farm organization members are vulnerable.

The World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and other international lending organizations are complicit. They finance Dinant Corporation.

Miguel Facusse owns it. He controls three large African palm oil plantations. He employs Orion Private Security Organization thugs.

They’re hired guns. They terrorize and kill. They target campesinos, human rights workers and unionists. They’ve got plenty of blood on their hands. They remain unaccountable.

Bajo Aguan’s out-of-control. It reflects conditions nationwide. State terror is policy. So is state-sponsored murder. Human rights violations are commonplace. Bird explains, saying:

“The violence directed towards the campesinos in the Bajo Aguan represents a fraction of the violence, torture and harassment reportedly undertaken by the Honduran police and military against human rights defenders, trade unionists, peasant groups, and others.”

Lobo’s government bears full responsibility. Bird discussed Rep. Jan Shakowsky’s (D. IL) petition.

It urges Congress and the State Department to “suspend all police and military aid to Honduras until the Lobo Administration ends state-initiated violence and impunity, investigates and prosecutes members of the police and military responsible for human rights abuses, monitors the activities of private security companies, and provides basic protective measures for campesino activists, human rights advocates, members of the opposition, and other targeted populations, including trade unionists.”

Prioritizing Bajo Aguan is urgent. Killings, disappearances and torture continue. Accountability and justice are nowhere in sight.

“Agro-oligarchs” control much of Honduras’ arable land. They want what’s left. Campesinos own it. They’re doing whatever it takes to get it.

Honduras reflects a nationwide land grab. Peasants are being violently displaced. Lobo prioritizes agrofuels, mining, hydroelectric dams, tourism, forestry, and other business interests.

In January, the Honduran Congress passed a Charter Cities law. It revised an earlier version. It did so after Honduras’ Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional. Four High Court judges were replaced. A new law was enacted.

It divides the country into autonomous municipalities. Corporations run them. Foreign

investment is encouraged. "Uninhabited," indigenous, ancestral lands are targeted.

Agro-oligarchs want control. Peasant wars are waged to get it. Death squad terror reflects policy.

Violence persists. Washington supports it. Campesinos are targeted. They're displaced. They're driven from their own land. Others disappear or die. The mainstream media don't explain.

Friends of the Earth International, Global Forest Coalition, Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Urgewald, Rights Action, Rettet den Regenwald/Rainforest Rescue, Global Justice Ecology Project, and Biofuelwatch condemned World Bank's International Finance Corporation.

At issue is funding Dinant.

Seventeen other NGO's expressed outrage. They demand ending support for a company with blood on its hands. It's responsible for dozens of murders.

It's complicit with Honduras' military and private hired guns. Annie Bird said:

"It is a serious indictment of World Bank's role in Honduras's land conflicts that their International Finance Corporation admits to directly engaging with the training of Grupo Dinant's paramilitary 'security guards.' "

"It is not clear whether this engagement is a response to concerns over human rights abuses but retraining paramilitaries implicated in killings is never an acceptable response."

"The World Bank must cease such engagement and stop supporting Grupo Dinant at once."

In 2011, German development bank DEG cancelled a Dinant loan. It cited serious human rights abuses doing so.

The World Bank ignores clear evidence of wrongdoing. It's complicit in Dinant crimes.

NGOs demand canceling further funding. They demand accountability. They demand what hasn't been done before. They're likely to be disappointed.

*Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net).*

*His new book is titled "Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity."*

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### About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net). His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com). Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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