

Trudeau's Position on Honduras Reveals Hypocrisy About Venezuela

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The hypocrisy is head spinning. As Justin Trudeau lectures audiences on the need to uphold Venezuela's constitution the Liberals have recognized a completely illegitimate president in Honduras. What's more, they've formally allied with that government in demanding Venezuela's president follow their ([incorrect](#)) reading of that country's constitution.

In November 2017 Ottawa's anti-Venezuela "Lima Group" ally Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH) defied the Honduran constitution to run for a second term. At Hernandez' request the four Supreme Court members appointed by his National Party [overruled an article](#) in the constitution explicitly prohibiting re-election.

JOH then 'won' a [highly questionable](#) poll. With 60 per cent of votes counted opposition candidate Salvador Nasralla lead by five-points. The electoral council then went silent for 36 hours and when reporting resumed JOH had a small lead.

In the three weeks between the election and JOH's official proclamation as president, government forces killed [at least 30](#) pro-democracy demonstrators in the Central American country of nine million. More than a thousand were detained under a post-election state of emergency. Many of those jailed for protesting the electoral fraud, including prominent activist [Edwin Espinal](#), who is married to Canadian human rights campaigner Karen Spring, remain in jail.

Ottawa immediately endorsed the electoral farce in Honduras. Following Washington, Global Affairs [tweeted](#) that Canada "acknowledges confirmation of Juan Orlando Hernandez as President of Honduras." Tyler Shipley, author of [Ottawa and Empire: Canada and the Military Coup in Honduras](#), [responded](#):

"Wow, Canada sinks to new lows with this. The entire world knows that the Honduran dictatorship has stolen an election, even the OAS (an organization which skews right) has demanded that new elections be held because of the level of sketchiness here. And — as it has for over eight years — Canada is at the forefront of protecting and legitimizing this regime built on fraud and violence. Even after all my years of research on this, I'm stunned that [foreign minister Chrystia] Freeland would go this far; I expected Canada to stay quiet until JOH had fully consolidated his power. Instead Canada is doing the heavy lifting of that consolidation."



In 2009 Ottawa [backed](#) the Honduran military's removal of elected president Manuel Zelaya, which was justified on the grounds he was seeking to defy the constitution by running for a second term. (In fact, Zelaya simply put forward a [plan](#) to hold a non-binding public poll on whether to hold consultations to reopen the constitution.) After the coup Ottawa failed to suspend aid to the military government or exclude the Honduran military from its Military Training Assistance Programme.

A number of major Canadian corporations, notably [Gildan and Goldcorp](#), were unhappy with some modest social democratic reforms implemented by Zelaya. Additionally, a year before the coup Honduras [joined](#) the Hugo Chavez led Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our Americas (ALBA), which was a response to North American capitalist domination of the region.

JOH's National Party won the presidency and he took charge of the national assembly in the post-coup elections, which were boycotted by the UN, Organization of American States and most Hondurans.

Since JOH stole an election that he shouldn't have been able to participate in the Trudeau government has continued to work with his government. I found no indication that Canadian aid has been reduced and Canadian diplomats in central America have [repeatedly met](#) Honduran representatives. JOH's Foreign Minister, Maria Dolores Aguero, [attended](#) a Women Foreign Ministers' Meeting Canada organized in Montreal four months ago. Recently Canadian diplomats have lauded the "[bonds of friendship](#) between the governments of Canada and Honduras" and "[excellent relations](#) that exist between both countries." Canada's ambassador James K. Hill retweeted a US Embassy statement noting, "[we congratulate](#) President Juan Orlando Hernandez for taking the initiative to reaffirm the commitment of his administration to fight against corruption and impunity" through an OAS initiative.

Con la finalidad de fortalecer los lazos de amistad entre los gobiernos de Canadá y Honduras, la cónsul del país del norte Chloé Maltais Boiswert, se reunió con el subcomisionado nacional de [#Copeco @CarlosACordero2](#), con el objetivo de conocer el funcionamiento de la institución.
pic.twitter.com/Isf84HsoKM

— COPECOHONDURAS (@COPECO_HONDURAS) [December 11, 2018](#)

While they praise JOH's fight against impunity, Canadian officials have refused repeated requests by Canadian activists and relatives to help secure Edwin Espinal's release from

prison. In response to their indifference to Espinal's plight, Rights Action director Grahame Russell recently wrote,

"[have the](#) Canadian and U.S. governments simply agreed not to criticize the Honduran regime's appalling human rights record ... in exchange for Honduras agreeing to be a 'democratic ally' in the U.S. and Canadian-led efforts at forced government change in Venezuela?"

Honduras is a member of the "Lima Group" of countries pushing to oust Nicolas Maduro's government in Venezuela. Last month Trudeau was [photographed](#) with the Honduran foreign minister at the "Lima Group" meeting in Ottawa.

To justify recognizing the head of Venezuela's national assembly, Juan Guaidó, as president the "Lima Group" and Trudeau personally have cited "[the need](#) to respect the Venezuelan Constitution." The Prime Minister even responded to someone who yelled "hands off Venezuela" at a town hall by [lecturing](#) the audience on article 233 of the Venezuelan constitution, which he ([incorrectly](#)) claims grants Guaidó the presidency.

Why the great concern for Venezuela's constitution and indifference to Honduras? Why didn't Trudeau recognize Salvador Nasralla as president of Honduras? Nasralla's claim to his country's presidency is far more legitimate than Guaidó's.

The hypocrisy in Trudeau allying with the illegitimate president of Honduras to demand Venezuela succumb to their interpretation of that country's constitution would be absurdly funny if it didn't put so many lives at risk.

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Featured image: Honduras Foreign Minister Maria Dolores Agüero with Justin Trudeau and Chrystia Freeland discussing Venezuela.

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