



## BOND Latin American and Caribbean Group

Rt. Hon. David Miliband MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

24 July 2009

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Re: Human rights violations in Honduras**

You will recall that we, the BOND Latin American and Caribbean Group, wrote to you on 9 July expressing our strong condemnation of the 28 June military coup in Honduras and the events following it. We are gratified to learn of the UK government's support of the UN General Assembly of 30 June 2009 and the series of EU Declarations on the issue, particularly the declaration of 7 July welcoming the mediation of President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica.

However, in the wake of the failure of the talks, held in Costa Rica and mediated by President Arias, between President Zelaya and Sr Roberto Micheletti, we would now like to follow up that letter with an urgent request for the UK government to express publicly, keep up, and extend if possible the action it has taken so far condemning the coup as a violation of the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Although the mainstream national press and media have attempted to paint a picture of normality in the country, our partner organisations in Honduras are continuing to report repressive measures by the police and army against peaceful demonstrators in various places in Honduras, active persecution of officials and employees of the Zelaya government, and the suspension of two women's radio programmes. All these actions have been a clear violation of the Honduran people's rights of association and organisation, freedom of movement, of speech and of the press, and the right to protest. All of these rights are guaranteed in the Honduran Constitution and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Civil society organisations, particularly women's organisations, are requesting the presence of human rights observers from the international community. They tell us that, since there is a strong gun culture in the country and opinion is highly polarised, unrest following the collapse of the talks and the non-return of President Zelaya could easily escalate into generalised violence and even civil war.

In the light of the failure of the Zelaya–Micheletti talks, we request that the UK government take the following measures:

- Support all initiatives to find a peaceful solution and reinforce diplomatic efforts to obtain the calm withdrawal of the soldiers to barracks and the safety and protection of civilians from any reprisals. A mechanism will need to be put in place to monitor this process;



- Use its different mechanisms to send human rights observers immediately to Honduras to monitor the situation particularly as regards the protection of the human rights of civil society organisations, and most especially women's organisations;
- Ask the UN Security Council to consider sending a UN mission to the country in the event of the failure of the Honduran State to protect its citizens, as per current early warnings, and in particular to monitor the impact of the coup and its aftermath on women, in the framework of UNSCR 1325.

On 9 July we also asked the UK government to '... freeze all trade and aid from the UK to the government of Honduras until the crisis is resolved, and support the process of freezing such aid and trade in the European Union'. Could you inform us as to whether the UK government has taken any action in this respect, and if so, what action?

We are pleased to note that the European Commission has postponed the 8th round of negotiations of the EU–Central America Association Agreement scheduled for 6–10 July in Brussels. We would however, ask the UK government to support the EU in any further postponements of these negotiations that may be necessary until there is clear evidence that Honduras is complying with the terms of the democracy and human rights provisions incorporated in the agreement.

Finally, we would like to repeat our request for a meeting with you or your officials at any convenient time to discuss in more detail the implications that this alarming rise in violence and repression in Honduras could have for the work of some of our partners, many of whom are supported by the British government, and for the majority of the people of Honduras.

Yours sincerely,

**Gaia Gozzo**

Chair of BOND Latin American & Caribbean Group

Cc.

Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander MP, Secretary of State for international Development  
Baroness Gibson Chair All-Party Parliamentary British-Latin America Group  
Charlotte Atkins MP, Chair Inter-Parliament Group for Central America  
John Battle MP, Chair All-Party Parliamentary Group on Overseas Development  
Ann Clwyd MP, Chair All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group