

Protests Continue in Honduras Against Hernandez Re-Election, Detention of Political Prisoners



Tegucigalpa, March 30 (RHC)-- Four months after Juan Orlando Hernandez was re-elected as president of Honduras in a dubious election filled with irregularities, the people of Choluteca took to the streets to demand his resignation, protest the rising cost of living and call for the release of several people they have deemed political prisoners.

Hernandez was sworn in as president of Honduras for a second consecutive term on January 27, despite the massive protests against him after the electoral authorities announced his victory after a suspicious system shut down. The process had so many irregularities that the Organization of American States said that the election should be redone start it again, a petition that was denied.

In Choluteca, founded in 1535 at the most southern tip of Honduras, the people united in protest against the privatization of the South Hospital, the privatization of education, the rising cost of oil and electricity prices and demanded Hernandez to resign. "This political class that violates the Constitution of the Republic can't fool the people anymore," activist and journalist Jairo Lopez repeated using a megaphone.

Lopez asked police officers accompanying the protest to remain calm, as they were seen carrying bags with tear gas canisters. In the same city police dispersed a demonstration on Saturday using tear gas with no apparent reason but repression. He said the Choluteca people would remain on the streets, despite opposition from the ruling class and security forces, because the people cannot stand human rights and constitutional violations anymore. People accused the police of recording the protest with the aim of identifying dissidents for following arrests.

At least 38 people have died, and hundreds have been arrested since protests against Hernandez sparked. "Most of the victims are being charged with common crimes like damage and starting a fire because the government wants to show the world that there are no political prisoners in Honduras.

Meanwhile, people know that the registered arrests, the trials, and imprisonments have been done due to protesting the November 26 electoral fraud," said the lawyer Tomas Andrade. Andrade pointed out that the judges have been obviously biased in their decisions, frequently agreeing with the State prosecutors who bring police officers and anonymous "key witnesses" as evidence against protesters.

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