

# *Honduran Leader Ousted in U.S.-Backed Coup Seeks Reelection*

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Tegucigalpa, May 26 (RHC)-- Former Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, ousted in the 2009 U.S.-backed military coup, has announced his interest in running for the country's top office in the next election, reigniting a debate on presidential term limits that has proven to be a hotly contentious issue and hallmark of conservative hypocrisy in the Central American nation.

Zelaya announced that the left-wing Libre party, founded in the wake of the 2009 coup, has given the green light to asking members at the party's internal elections whether they support the ousted president's bid for another term if the right-wing National Party puts President Juan Orlando Hernandez forward as its candidate.

The internal process is scheduled to take place October 30th, just over a year ahead of the 2017 general elections. The process will decide the party's leadership for the election year.

Though not confirmed, the ruling National Party suggested in March that Hernandez would be their presidential candidate in the next election. It was the first time a sitting or former president could propose running for a second term, given that the constitution limited the presidency to a single term until the Supreme Court overturned the ban on re-election last year.

When Zelaya was ousted on June 28, 2009, coup-backers accused him of attempting to manipulate the constitution to extend his presidency beyond the one-term limit. Zelaya, then of the Liberal Party, had showed a progressive turn during his time in office, which included opening a debate on a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution.

While Zelaya's proposed process would have asked the Honduran people to convene a popular constituent assembly to modify the constitution, which could have included eliminating presidential term limits, the Supreme Court changed the constitution last year to allow for re-election without consulting Honduran voters.

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