

Honduran president deploys military across Central American nation



Tegucigalpa, June 21 (RHC)-- Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH) announced orders to the Honduran military Thursday to deploy to all parts of the country and stop the ever-widening protests against the neo-liberal policies of his administration. This follows an overnight emergency session with his National Defense and Security Council after a violent night of protests turned deadly.

Protests, which have been ongoing among different sectors of the nation for over a month, broke out into a frenzy Wednesday all over Tegucigalpa as well as other areas of the country when elite special police force units of the National Police, known as the Special Tiger Force, announced a strike, with some saying they would no longer "support a government that isn't worth it" and calling out violations against their rights.

In response, the Hernandez administration called for the nation's military to deploy across the nation to "guarantee freedom of movement, freedom to travel, as well as to protect private property, and to protect Hondurans from bodily harm, and their lives."

Throughout the overnight hours of Thursday morning, Honduran security forces in the capital violently tried to suppress the protests which escalated to generalized looting, burning, and violence, leaving 2 dead and 21 injured. Roads have been blocked and tires left burning at critical transit points in various cities.

Roadblocks have also appeared in cities like El Progreso, La Lima, Santa Barbara, Santa Rosa de Copan, La Ceiba, Comayagua and Danli.

Since late April, demonstrations have been taking place across the country against government measures to privatize the nation's already weak education and healthcare system and to demand JOH's resignation. Peaceful protests were being led by the nation's teacher, doctors, nurses, and students, but we met with little negotiation efforts by the government to meet their needs.

Last week, the government convened a "dialogue" to discuss the protesters' demands, but which did not include representatives for the protesters.

Additionally, Honduras has been wracked by violence on a national scale with sometimes large, grotesque massacres happening on a regular basis, which many believe to be linked to the growing consolidation of power by drug cartels funneling illicit substances from their source to consumers in the United States and Europe.

Some protesters, fed up with inaction by the government have also accused the president of being an agent of drug traffickers and seek to oust him. In November of 2018, the president's brother, Juan Antonio Hernandez was detained in Miami, Florida on charges of drug trafficking by the United States Drug Enforcement Agency.

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