

New Wave of Anti-Government Protests Sweeps Honduras



Tegucigalpa, February 7 (RHC)-- In Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital, students and members of the opposition confronted riot police who entered the National Autonomous University of Honduras. Protests against the government have resumed after heavy repression on January 27th, when anti-government activists protested Juan Orlando Hernandez's presidential inauguration ceremony.

So far, 38 people have been killed in opposition protests since demonstrations began after the November 26th presidential elections in Honduras. Ismael Hernandez, a 40-year-old man, was killed in renewed anti-government protests against electoral fraud. Hernandez was shot dead when military police violently cleared Opposition Alliance Against the Dictatorship supporters who were blocking a main road, according to police.

The post-electoral crisis in Honduras was sparked by alleged electoral fraud that secured Hernandez's re-election after his opponent, Salvador Nasralla, suddenly lost a five-point lead. Nasralla's lead was seen as "irreversible" because 57 percent of the vote had been counted before the computerized system shut down for a number of hours.

A massive rally was held in Tegucigalpa, where people chanted "JOH (Hernandez), out you go," and "the dictatorship will fall." In Honduras' second-biggest city, San Pedro Sula, hundreds also marched. Salvador Nasralla addressed the crowd, vowing to continue to protest everyday until Hernandez gives up

the presidency. In his speech, Nasralla also accused the Organization of American States, OAS, and the United Nations of “protracting” the crisis, adding “only the people save the people.”

“I am open to dialogue, but I feel that the U.N. and the OAS are stalling,” Nasralla told the crowd. Accompanied by former President Manuel Zelaya, who was ousted in a military coup in 2009, the Opposition Alliance demanded justice for “at least 40 people” who have died during the protests and the “800 political prisoners” for whom they demanded freedom.

Nasralla had agreed to participate in a U.N.-mediated dialogue with Hernandez to resolve the post-electoral crisis, but the dialogue has yet to begin.

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