

Manuel Zelaya Says Honduras Now Under a Permanent Coup Regime



Tegucigalpa, April 25 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Manuel Zelaya, the leftist president of Honduras ousted in a 2009 coup, said on Friday that his country is living under a “permanent coup” regime. The former president made the comment in response to a decision by the Honduran high court to modify the constitution and allow for the re-election of presidents. The move to eliminate term limits for the office of the president was promoted by members of the ruling National Party of the current president, Juan Orlando Hernandez.

Zelaya was ousted six years ago for attempting to hold a non-binding plebiscite on whether to convene a constitutional assembly. His adversaries accused him of using the measure to try to seek re-election. The former president, who currently serves as the general coordinator of the *Libre* Party, accused members of the National Party of illegal behavior. “There is sufficient indication for one to assume that National Party extorted the magistrates so that they would repeal (the ban on re-election),” said Zelaya in a statement.

Zelaya also stated that the court's decision was illegal and that he believed only the Honduran people have the right to change the constitution. “Today, the National Party, once again, forced the Constitutional Court, in an illegal and arbitrary way, to usurp the sovereign power of the people,” stated Zelaya.

Zelaya was elected as a member of the Liberal Party, one of the two traditional parties in Honduras but took a sharp left turn once in power, aligning his country with socialist leaders in the region and joining the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of America (ALBA).

The coup was greeted with nearly universal condemnation from world leaders and was followed by months of protests. However, Zelaya never returned to power and elections that were widely seen as illegitimate were held, with Porfirio Lobo of the National Party winning the presidency. He was succeeded by Juan Orlando Hernandez, also of the National Party. The former president stated emphatically that, despite now being able to contest the presidential election, he would not seek the presidency.

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