

Hondurans Show Solidarity with Hunger Strikers Against Impunity



Tegucigalpa, July 24 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Honduran human rights defenders and indigenous activists marched in solidarity in Tegucigalpa on Thursday with protesters on hunger strike to demand the establishment of an independent U.N. anti-impunity body, known as CICIH, to investigate widespread government corruption.

The peaceful demonstration moved through the streets of the capital city to the presidential palace, where some 20 hunger strikers have set up camp. Some of the activists, including indigenous people, have been on hunger strike for over a month since starting their protest on June 22.

Leader of the Lenca indigenous organization COPINH and winner of the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize, Berta Caceres, told reporters that Honduran people "are tired of so much corruption."

Berta Caceres, who has received death threats for her human rights and environmental activism, also reiterated popular calls for officials guilty of fraud in the country's massive Social Security Institute embezzlement scandal be brought to justice for their crimes.

Demonstrators also voiced support for journalist David Romero, who broke the story of the National Party receiving \$90 million of more than \$200 million stolen from the Social Security Institute.

Globo TV's Romero now faces a possible prison sentence as a result of trial for 41 charges, including slander and defamation.

The multi-million dollar Social Security Institute scandal is just one of at least a dozen corruption cases that have recently come to light in the Central American country.

President Juan Orlando Hernandez and his ruling National Party are implicated the siphoning millions from public coffers.

The high-profile corruption cases sparked the popular "outraged" movement, bringing tens of thousands to the streets in two months of weekly anti-corruption marches calling for Hernandez's resignation and the establishment of an independent body to conduct a government fraud probe, beginning with the president.

Opposition parties have proposed a national referendum on the question of establishing CICIH in Honduras.

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