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The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

I very much appreciate that the Obama Administration has taken a principled stand against the coup in Honduras, the ouster of President Zelaya and the violations of human rights and civil liberties that have taken place in Honduras since the coup last Sunday.

I believe that the time has now arrived to match these words with more concrete deeds, so that our country can stand with our allies in the region, the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and the European Union and work effectively with them to restore the constitutional order in Honduras and return President Zelaya to his elected office without preconditions.

I am very alarmed at the reports, for example from the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR/OAS), regarding allegations of arbitrary detentions; the shutting down of personal communication, phone and electricity services; the detention of buses containing indigenous people, preventing them from reaching the capital; the shuttering of a variety of media; and the suspension of constitutionally guaranteed human rights and judicial protections. I urge you to ensure that the U.S. Embassy press the coup government to provide complete information to the relevant international humanitarian and human rights organizations regarding all persons detained, in connection with the coup or in later operations to control the public order, since June 28, 2009, and to allow the IACHR to enter the country to review the current status of basic human rights and protections in Honduras.

Moving forward, no doubt there will be a continued multilateral effort to support the return of President Zelaya. In support of such initiatives, I urge you to:

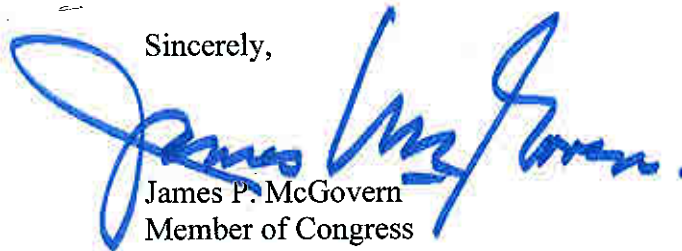
1. Call for the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of the democratically elected President, Manuel Zelaya;
2. Announce an immediate suspension of U.S. assistance to the government of Honduras until President Zelaya has been reinstated; and
3. Call on the coup government to respect the civil rights and liberties of the citizens and residents of Honduras.

I welcome the Pentagon's announcement that it is suspending joint operations with the Honduran military. But an unambiguous and united message is essential, and the United States should join the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, along with other nations, in announcing the suspension of U.S. aid programs to Honduras now.

If the Honduran authorities installed by the coup succeed in keeping the constitutionally-elected government out of office for the remainder of President Zelaya's term, then the coup will have succeeded in overturning the will of the Honduran electorate. In addition, a pressing concern is that the elections scheduled to be held this November will be cast into doubt if the current coup government remains in power for any length of time, as it is repressing both media and civic organizations, and free, fair and fully democratic elections cannot take place under such conditions.

President Obama and you have been making great strides in creating a new relationship with the Americas, but the credibility of these initial efforts to restore our nation's role and place in the region will be judged harshly should we fail to take principled actions on behalf of the people of Honduras who deserve a restoration of their democracy.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

JPM:cmb

cc: Thomas A. Shannon, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs
Dan Restrepo, Latin America Adviser, National Security Council