

National Front for Popular Resistance in Honduras holds delegate assembly

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The National Front for Popular Resistance (FNRP) in Honduras held a national assembly in capital city Tegucigalpa on Feb. 26 and 27. Some 1,500 delegates represented the 18 municipal departments in Honduras and the country's "19th

department,” members of the Honduran diaspora around the world. Three members of the International Action Center’s Latin America-Caribbean Solidarity Committee attended: two observers and an elected delegate from the Honduran diaspora.

At a meeting two days before the assembly, to which the IAC Committee was invited, FNRP subcoordinator Juan Barahona told us the National Assembly for Popular Resistance must focus on three things: “unity, unity and unity.” During the assembly on Feb. 26, he said that the group’s goals were “holding a national constituent assembly, returning [exiled President Manuel] Zelaya to the country and taking political power to transform Honduran society.” (Washington Post, Feb. 26)

This was a democratic assembly, filled with debate and passion. The key issue was whether the FNRP would participate in elections in 2013. The majority voted not to participate. The FNRP did not say it would never participate in elections, but that they plan to organize in their own way.

A delegate described the “ocean” of people there: “This great multitude starts from the little creeks in the mountains, which feed into big streams in the hills and tumble into rivers in the valleys to pour into the sea of popular resistance in Honduras.”

The call for unity encompasses diverse communities in Honduras, including lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer communities and women, the Afro-Honduran Garifuna community, Indigenous peoples, peasants, union leaders, workers including teachers and lawyers, youth and students, small business owners, intellectuals and more. Waving yellow identification cards, delegates voted for resolutions to promote just inclusion and representation. They analyzed the objective conditions and planned to develop, in regional assemblies around the country, the necessary strategy and tactics to confront the oligarchy and its defenders. And they voted for Zelaya to serve as coordinator of the FNRP.

The present is history

Almost two years ago, on June 28, 2009, the Honduran military kidnapped Zelaya from his home at the behest of the country’s oligarchy. They took him out of the country through the U.S. military airbase at Palmerola in Honduras.

Though Zelaya was a man from the wealthy class, as president he was convinced by union and peasant leaders to work to improve conditions in Honduras, the poorest country in Central America. These leaders showed him how neoliberal privatization schemes were impoverishing Honduras.

Zelaya listened, promoting agrarian reform and environmentalism and raising the minimum wage. Zelaya wanted to turn the Palmerola airbase, from which the U.S. military dominates Central America, into a civilian airport. He began to talk of taking Honduras out of the U.S.-imposed Central America Free Trade Agreement, which was economically crushing the region's farmers and workers. He planned to have Honduras join the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), which promotes social, political and economic integration among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Because the country's 1982 Constitution favored foreign investors and the oligarchy, Zelaya's government planned a vote to be held on June 28, 2009, which, if passed, would take steps toward creating a new constitutional assembly. Instead, that morning the military took over. Wikileaks documents show U.S. government participation.

The resistance was born. For 214 days, thousands of fearless resistance members poured into the streets of every city and department in protest. The army and police fought the people with guns, tear gas, water cannons and truckloads of troops. Zelaya himself came back secretly, taking refuge in the Brazilian embassy.

The U.S. government set up a phony election administered by the "golpistas" (coup plotters) on Jan. 27, 2010. Pepe Lobo Sosa became president and the oligarchy stayed in power. With the help of their rich Uncle Sam, a dozen wealthy families still run the country. All of Zelaya's reforms have been canceled.

The U.S. government calls Honduras a "democracy" and ignores the growing poverty, murders and torture of hundreds of peasants, LGBTQ people, women, unionists, Indigenous people, teachers, journalists, Garifuna people and youth activists. These are the martyrs of the resistance.

At the National Assembly for Popular Resistance, speakers denounced the immunity the Lobo government tacitly grants to perpetrators of these crimes. The FNRP

dedicated the assembly to the martyrs and vowed to build real democracy in Honduras.

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