

JOURNALS POSTED ON DECEMBER 12, 2018

Reflection # 1: Militarization, Violations of Human Rights and the Honduran Exodus



RICARDO MAYOL-
BRACERO



SUPPORT PLEDGED



[Léalo en español](#)

The first reflection highlights the militarization and violations of Human Rights in Honduras as the cause of the Honduran exodus.

The Escape to Egypt

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him..." When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

Matthew 2:13 New International Version (NIV)

In the Mesoamerican Forum Alba in Movements, held at the National Autonomous University of Honduras of Tegucigalpa, 425 people from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Brazil and Honduras participated in 12 working groups. I participated in 2 tables: 1) Militarization and Violations of Human Rights and 2) Church and Grassroots Christian Movements. I use the topics covered in the first table in this reflection and in the next one, I will draw from the second table discussion about church in my third reflection.



Foro Mesoamericano Alba Movimientos

Murderous Regime

At the table Militarization and Human Rights Violations, they shared the Report on Forced Disappearance in Honduras of the Committee of Detained Relatives in Honduras and the Report of the Truth Commission, the authoritative voice of the victims . The lucid analysis of the long history of the absence of civility, the dissolution of institutionalism in the country and the consequent violations of human rights, sheds light for understanding the Honduran exodus.

In the eighties, the poor, afflicted and dispossessed people expressed their discontent with the government of the powerful elites, asking for an inclusive, fraternal and supportive state for all in Honduras. The response to this demand was war, and it was accompanied by horrendous crimes: They kidnapped and took to places without law the union leaders, academics, peasants, students, religious and all who expressed their dissatisfaction with the military regime. In those hidden spaces, they were shamed under torture with electric touch, deprivation of food and water, isolation, sexual violations, immersion in water with feces, hanging, prolonged nudity; they forced them to torture other detainees, they simulated their execution, they threatened to kidnap their family, and in the end they were executed and buried in common graves in clandestine cemeteries. In those times, the death squads created by state security were financed and trained by the United States. Without law, without institutionalism, in total impunity, Honduras lived through those sad years. In the nineties, the war ended, and the people believed that life would flourish. However, all illusion vanished. On June 28, 2009 everything went back to what was before. That day, the army gave a coup d'état to President Manuel Zelaya and suspended the constitutional rights of personal freedom, of association, of assembly and movement, and again arbitrarily and disproportionately imposed military and police force in the streets to repress the demonstrations in support of Zelaya.

The people sighed and insisted on expressing their will through voting, and it was again run over. Fraudulently, the State crushed their will expressed in 2 electoral processes. In 2017, the second of these two elections, the then President Juan José Hernández (JOH) dismissed the prohibition of the constitution for presidential reelection and was ratified as a candidate. Despite that gross regulatory violation, the people went out to vote. Advanced the counting of votes, the irreversible callout that would give the victory to Salvador Nasralla of the party called Alliance of Opposition against the Dictatorship was announced. Then, without explanation, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal announced JOH as the winner. Offended the people, expressed their dissatisfaction, and the usurping government responded by introducing curfew and ordering police and military attacks on social protests.

Instead of the good life coming, militarization increased in Honduras. Murders and enforced disappearances continue, especially for those who defend rights and oppose land grabbing. The extermination continues, justified in the alleged fight against drug trafficking, organized crime and the war against crime that the United States finances. The military continues monopolizing the control of security and hurting Hondurans. The Tegucigalpa declaration of the Mesoamerican Forum says that the national armies, not only in Honduras, in entire Mesoamerica, have become a transnational crime corporation that has its epicenter in Washington.

This is how Honduras lives today
What was yesterday is still today
Hurts the wound,
it does not heal,
it wanted to cure,
they macheted it again.

Some people say, why do Hondurans want to invade the United States? The question is the reverse: Why did the United States finance and advise on such a bloody war, and why does it continue to invest resources that poison with violence, when instead it could change the weapons of war into instruments of humanization? Micah 4: 3b-4a

Failed Attempt to Repair

President Manuel Zelaya, affirming the sovereignty of his country, sought to respond directly to that history of malice and cruelty: 1) He recognized the responsibility of the State in the violations of human rights and crimes against humanity committed during the application of the Doctrine of National Security, and expressed willingness to deduct responsibility from the perpetrators and compensate the victims and their families through the creation of a National Reparation Program. 2) He opposed the request of the United States Ambassador, Charles Ford, to grant Luis Posada Carriles exile status, considering him a terrorist for having planted a 1976 bomb in a Cuban plane in which 73 people died. 3) He expressed his intention to convert the US military airport Soto Cano in Palmerola into a commercial airport.



Manuel Zelaya en el Foro Mesoamericano

Obviously, these facts bothered the army, the Honduran business elite and the United States, and together in the US embassy they planned and perpetrated the coup. The then US Ambassador, Hugo Lloren, brought together businessmen, parliamentarians, judges, the military and the media, and all together agreed to remove Zelaya from circulation.

Calls to Straighten Roads

The Honduran exodus shouts:

- Respect for civility and strengthening of institutionalism
- Protection of physical and moral integrity of people
- Protection against torture
- Legal rights that avoid arbitrary detentions by State bodies
- Civil and political rights: respect for the will of the people expressed in elections
- Freedom of thought, press and assembly
- Sovereignty and free self-determination

The Honduran exodus requires that:

- We demand the demilitarization of Honduras and the cessation of military agreements between Honduras and the United States.
- We extend our hands to the Honduran migrant population and shelter them with the rights of international protection.
- We confess accomplices of the interference that resulted in perverse violations of human rights.

We are sent to preach: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."*

We are sent to be:

*"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"*

Matthew 3: 1-3

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