



## CENTRAL AMERICAN PROVINCE OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS RESPONDS TO THE “SERIOUS SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS”

The Central American Province of the Society of Jesus and the Provincial Commission of the Social Apostolate—following the latest events that have taken place surrounding the Honduran electoral process and in light of the hard work done by the Jesuit institution ERIC-RP (Equipo de Reflexión, Investigación y Comunicación – Radio Progreso)—wish to publicly declare the following:

We congratulate the Honduran people for peacefully—and in large numbers—going to the polls to make use of their democratic right to elect authorities. This is a people that knew how to vote and how to monitor their vote.

We denounce the lack of professionalism and ethics displayed by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), by systematically delaying the delivery of results, both partial and definitive. This gross manipulation by officials is no longer just a suspicion but rather a certainty, and their actions have been influenced by the factual and obscure powers—both governmental and others—that try to disrespect the people’s will manifested at the polls. The TSE has gone to great lengths to hide an unexpected victory by the opposition over the current president, who did everything he could—legally or illegally—to be re-elected.

We denounce the repression of the Honduran people by state agencies. The Honduran people have once again given us a lesson in civility, dignity and the peaceful defense of civil rights. Just when everyone thought that coups d’état were a thing of the past, Honduras has shown us that this way of seizing power is not a settled question.

We stand in solidarity with the peaceful defense of democracy and civil rights that the Honduran people are carrying out throughout the nation. However, a large part of the Honduran people is brutally repressed for protesting a blatant electoral fraud that cannot be hidden. This fraud would have already been consolidated, had it not been for the large swath of the Honduran population that has taken to the streets to demand that the will of the majority be respected. Now it seems that the sectors in power, and some in the media, are blaming organizations and the media for provoking violence. No, those who have violated the country are those who broke the constitutional order with this coup d’état, and they are the same ones that today want to violate the popular will again.

We demand respect for the decision expressed at the ballot box and the right to freedom of expression that the Honduran Constitution itself affirms. The current government is not recognizing these rights as it has launched the Military Police and other governing bodies against the people, who have been peacefully demonstrating to defend their vote and to denounce the manipulation of the election by the TSE.

We congratulate Radio Progreso (RP) and the Equipo de Reflexión, Investigación y Comunicación (ERIC) for their informative work, analysis, reflection and defense of Hondurans’ human rights, as expressed by the Father General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., when he recently recognized the work of the ERIC-RP: *“I want to express my closeness and voice of encouragement for the work done by ERIC and Radio Progreso, favoring social justice, the transparency of public administration, the defense of human rights and the building of the rule of law in Honduras. I know that you are risking your lives through your work of denouncing injustice, through the investigations you conduct and the information you disclose. I want to encourage you to continue forward and to embody in these Honduran realities the mission that the Society and the Church have received from the Good News of the Lord.”* (letter from Fr. General Arturo Sosa to Fr. Melo and to ERIC-RP)

We appeal to the biblical message of the prophet who tells us that “Peace is the fruit of Justice” (Isaiah 32:17) and to the Gospel (Good News) that emphasizes that “the truth will set us free.” Therefore, we express our demand for transparency and respect for the popular will. We also express our support for the Jesuit institution Radio Progreso and ERIC and its apostolic work to seek the truth and justice that the same faith in Jesus asks of us.

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