



Nicaragua-United States

## Friendship Office of the Americas

October, 2010

Dear Friends,

This summer has been one of new developments and opportunities which we are excited to share with you. As you know, our program expanded in response to the ongoing crisis in Honduras following the June 2009 military coup d'état. Your support, participation in delegations and advocacy are deeply inspiring. You strengthen us to stand firmly with the people of Honduras during this difficult and dangerous time for them and all of Latin America.

In July, we announced that Tom Loudon was asked to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Commission of Truth in Honduras, an autonomous, independent commission which was inaugurated on June 28, 2010 the first anniversary of the coup d'état. It will be an intense year ahead as the Commission works to fulfill its mandate:

*"to make sure that the collective voice of the people of Honduras is not overcome by forgetting and silence, that impunity does not reign over justice and to build structures that ensure that the shadow of coup d'états never again falls over Honduras."*

Over a year after the coup in Honduras, heavy repression continues to destroy lives, families and human rights; levels of impunity, militarization and para-militarization create what partners describe as a state of war against the people. In this context, the broad based, non-violent resistance movement continues to grow; sustaining pressure on a government considered to be illegitimate and charting a course towards a Constituent Assembly as a way to address profound structural inequalities and refund the country.

On Independence Day, over 1.3 million Hondurans publicly presented their signatures calling for the Constituent Assembly, in defiance of a ruthless campaign of state terror directed at them. In San Pedro Sula, military and police attacked a peaceful concert with over 40,000 in attendance; beating people with batons, dropping tear canisters, shooting water cannons and other chemicals into the crowd. Ten journalists have been killed this year for attempting to tell this story.

The Honduras Accompaniment Project is committed to providing international accompaniment for human rights defenders, communities and social movement leaders working for systemic change in this context of political repression. In August, Caitlin Power Hancey joined our team as Coordinator of the Accompaniment Project in Tegucigalpa, bringing invaluable experience from Guatemala where she has done international accompaniment.

Nicaragua stands in marked contrast to the repression and militarization we witness in Honduras and the deadly spirals of violence in El Salvador and Guatemala. This summer we reflected with friends and partners on this lasting legacy of Nicaragua's revolution which dismantled repressive state structures, death squads and places of torture. We also reflected on the need to keep historic memory alive in Nicaragua and look forward to sharing those ideas with you in the near future.

Just as new statistics were released finding that Nicaragua has achieved a significant reduction in extreme poverty, unrelenting, torrential rains, widely attributed to climate change, have dealt a heavy blow. Crops, homes, roads and bridges are destroyed, cutting off communities and directly impacting and estimated 300 thousand people due to flooding.

The work of FEDICAMP takes on renewed urgency during these times of environmental turmoil, increasing capacity of vulnerable communities and lands to withstand extreme weather patterns. FEDICAMP trees literally hold the land. The promoters we support are working with communities to devise emergency food production strategies including water tolerant tubers and a fast yielding native bean variety to plant in December when the rains have waned.

However, local efforts can literally be washed away without binding global policies. Last spring we journeyed to the heart of the Andes to attend the "World Peoples Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth" in Bolivia. It was an honor to help organize a delegation of 200 people from the United States, largely indigenous people and communities of color who joined 20,000 people from around the world, to insist that policies address the structural causes of climate change. In November, thousands will gather again at Climate Change talks in Cancun, Mexico to carry these policies forward.

Our program expansion and new developments come at a time of discernment for the Quixote Center regarding future directions. In order to ensure a solid platform for our work in Honduras, Nicaragua and Latin America the Quixote Center Board of Trustees approved the transfer of program work to the Nicaragua-U.S. Friendship Office, founded in 1991 by Rita Clark D'Escoto to sustain the strong ties of solidarity between the peoples of our countries developed during the decade of the 1980s.

We are excited about this new opportunity and grateful for your steadfast support. Please consider a gift to help us to accompany, seek the truth and pursue policies of peace and friendship.

In hope and solidarity,



Rita Clark



Jenny Atlee



Tom Loudon



Caitlin Hancey Power

*P.S. Our new website will be launched soon-[www.friendshipamericas.org](http://www.friendshipamericas.org). Please visit for reports and updates on our work.*