



Open letter to the European Union and its member states

Brussels, December 2, 2017

CIFCA and Grupo Sur express their deep concern over the situation in Honduras following the electoral process and call upon the European Union and its member states to ensure that the State of Honduras complies with all international obligations signed by Honduras regarding the holding of free and democratic elections.

The general elections in Honduras took place on November 26 with a strong presence of national and international observers, including the EU Electoral Observation Mission (EU EOM).

Throughout the electoral campaign, Honduran civil society organizations have documented alleged irregularities in the process, such as fictitious registration of political parties, lack of clearance of electoral national census, and the lack of representation of political parties in the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). Some of these could have been avoided if the State of Honduras had implemented the recommendations issued by the 2013 EU EOM.

Particularly striking is the lack of transparency, timely information, and the TSE's delay in announcing the results, which has generated numerous reactions from the public. The EU EOM has noted in several public statements, and in particular in its Preliminary Statement, that the TSE has not maintained a fluid communication with citizens as scrutiny progresses, which implies an absence of transparency and infringes the citizen's rights. In this regard, the EU EOM and the OAS Electoral Observation Mission have made several appeals to the TSE regarding their obligations prior to announcing the results.¹

Several sources have reported occurrences and acts of violence resulting from the use of force by state security forces against demonstrators since November 29. According to various sources, the events have resulted in several injuries and two deaths² There have also been reports of cases of public disorder which have led to the declaration of a state of emergency since December 1, with a duration of 10 days, which may restrict the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.³

These events are generating doubts and uncertainties within the Honduran population, in a climate of tension, and with questions of the legitimacy of the electoral results. This situation can lead to a serious political crisis in a country with an already very worrying history, such as the coup d'état in Honduras in 2009.

¹ OAS press release C-89, C-80; statements to the press of the Chief of the EOM-EU, November 30.

² Press Conference of the National Human Rights Roundtable, December 2, 2017

³ Executive decree number PCM-084-2017

In light of what has happened in recent days, we ask the Member States and the European Union to:

- **Guarantee the presence of the EU EOM in Honduras** to ensure compliance with the national electoral legal framework and international obligations subscribed by Honduras regarding free and democratic elections.
- **Request that the EU EOM issue a second preliminary report**, before the final report, to summarize findings and preliminary conclusions on issues such as the results process, the complaints and appeals processes or the post-electoral political environment.
- Upon the disagreement of any of the given parties, **request that the TSE conduct the process of complaints and appeals expeditiously, impartially, within a reasonable time and following due process**. If necessary, provide a recount of the minutes to clear up doubts and with the participation of political parties, the EU EOM in Honduras, and civil society organizations.
- **Abstain from recognizing the electoral results** until there is guarantee the State of Honduras has complied with the national electoral legal framework and of the international obligations subscribed by Honduras with respect to the holding of free and democratic elections.
- To continue international cooperation and **assist the State of Honduras in the implementation of the recommendations issued by the EU EOM** that allow for improvement of the framework and administration of elections. In particular, those to strengthen the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and ensure its depoliticizing, political neutrality and technical competence.
- To the Embassies of the European Union and the Delegation of the EU, to **urge the State to promote the right of all people in Honduras to demonstrate freely and safely**, as well as to request that national human rights organizations (CONADEH) and international organizations attend the demonstrations and ensure that the rights of the demonstrators are respected.
- **Support international and regional organizations** such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), OHCHR and other and other international protection agencies, in their recommendations to the State of Honduras on the guarantee and respect of the political rights of its population.