

# Rights **Action**

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December 2019

## **International racketeering, from Honduras & Guatemala to Bolivia Denouncing the U.S. & Canadian-backed military coup in Bolivia**

### **Racketeering**

- *Refers to crimes committed through extortion or coercion.*
- *Parties coordinate and participate in racketeering with the aim to obtain benefits, money and/or property from other parties, usually through intimidation or force.*
- *The term racketeering is typically associated with organized crime.*

*Dear friends,*

We are near the end of another year of support for good work and struggle in Honduras and Guatemala, even as the oppressive status quo remains entrenched in both countries that maintain full political and economic relations with the U.S., Canada and a host of international banks, investors and companies.

As we send this year-end salute and funding appeal, the U.S. and Canada have again gone all in on 'legitimizing' an illegal, violent military coup and supporting the racist, violent post-coup regime.

Sound familiar?



*"Our privileges are located on the same map as their suffering, and may – in ways that we prefer not to imagine – be linked to their suffering. As the wealth of some may imply the destitution of others."*

(Susan Sontag)

#### **TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS:**

Make checks payable to "Rights Action" and mail to the Canadian office.

**CANADA**  
(Box 552)  
351 Queen St. E  
Toronto ON  
M5A 1T8

#### **CREDIT CARD DONATIONS**

In Canada and the USA  
[www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)  
<http://rightsaction.org/donate>

#### **DONATIONS OF STOCK**

Contact [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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#### FULL-TIME STAFF

Grahame Russell

#### PART-TIME

Matthew Simpson  
Scott Wright

#### GET INFORMED/ GET INVOLVED

**Speakers:** Invite us to give presentations in your community about these issues

#### Educational Delegations:

Form your own group or join one of our educational-solidarity delegation seminars to Guatemala and Honduras to learn more about these issues and struggles

#### Daily News:

- [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)
- [www.theintercept.com](http://www.theintercept.com)
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## What does the Bolivian coup have to do with Honduras and Guatemala?

Everything! It is not an exaggeration to say that much of Rights Action's work in Guatemala and Honduras today continues to be in response to the violent, oppressive aftermaths of the 1954 U.S.-orchestrated coup in Guatemala and the 2009 U.S. and Canadian-backed coup in Honduras; and – following upon these coups – the oftentimes violent, illegal operations of numerous international companies, banks and investors in both countries in partnership with the local elites.

The coups of 1954 and 2009 mark the ends of democratic, law-abiding governments that were implementing long overdue economic, land, political and social reforms – more broadly in Guatemala (1944-1954), less so in Honduras (2005-2009). These coups mark the return of “open for global business” policies benefitting national economic elites and international companies, banks and investors in the sectors of sugarcane and African palm, bananas and pineapple, mining and privatized hydro-electric dams, tourism and “sweatshop” garment factories. These coups mark a return to endemic exploitation, evictions, human rights violations and repression in each sector of the economy.

#### Please read:

*“Shithole countries’: U.S., Canada & international community helping produce forced migrancy from Honduras & Guatemala”*

by Grahame Russell

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/shithole-countries>

## ‘Democratic allies’ in illegal regime change efforts in Venezuela

Not only are Honduras and Guatemala profitable places for their elites and international business partners, not only are the U.S. and Canadian governments responsible – directly and indirectly – for the coups that brought to power the current regimes, but most recently Guatemala and Honduras are considered ‘democratic allies’ in support of illegal U.S. and Canadian-led efforts to economically strangle, isolate and overthrow Venezuela's government.

This last point brings us back around to the U.S. and Canadian-backed coup in Bolivia.

Similar to the Venezuelan experience over the past 15 years or so, the U.S., Canada and an array of international economic interests have been wanting – quite literally – to take back control of Bolivian resources from the Bolivian people and government, ... ever since President Evo Morales and his Movement Towards Socialism party democratically took power in 2006, and began implementing the overdue economic, land, political and social reforms.

#### Please read:

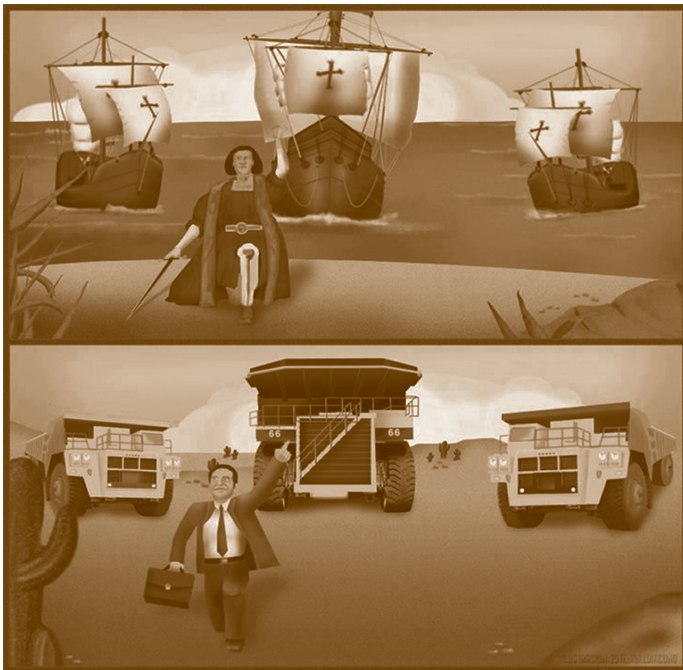
*“International racketeering in Bolivia: Denouncing & resisting the Bolivian military coup, from Honduras & Guatemala, to the U.S. & Canada”*

by Grahame Russell

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/international-racketeering-in-bolivia>

As in Venezuela, the reforms in Bolivia have been widespread, largely successful and empowering to large sectors of the historically exploited and poor majority populations. These successes came, in part, due to the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia taking control over all sectors of their economy ... which put them 'at odds' – to put it politely – with the economic self-interest of the traditional minority elites and their international economic partners.

Indeed, it was similar reforms being implemented by the government of Guatemala (1944-1954) and, to a lesser extent, the government of Honduras (2005-2009) that led to the U.S. and Canada backing military coups in both countries.



Every U.S. and Canadian-backed coup (or other case of forced 'regime change') is proof of the array of wealth and power, from the national to international levels, working in coordination against the well-being of the majority populations of Honduras and Guatemala, and now Bolivia. Every U.S. and Canadian-backed coup or 'regime change' is a reminder that the poverty and violence, racism and corruption suffered by the majorities in these countries are also U.S. and Canadian political issues and problems.

## In 2020, Rights Action will continue with the main aspects of our work

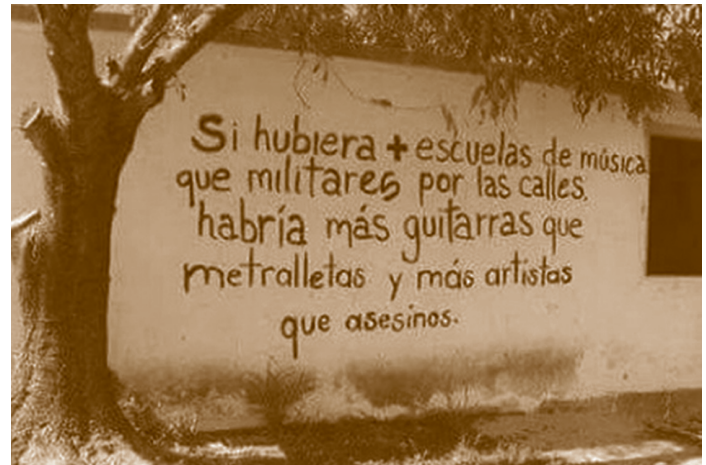
### A) Community development projects & land/ environment/ human rights defense struggles

Here, a summary of Rights Action grants made in 2019: <https://rightsaction.org/your-donations-at-work/>

#### *Education fund 2020, for human rights & environmental defenders & their children in Honduras & Guatemala*

Over the years, it has become a major part of our work to also provide scholarships for primary through high school and university studies for children of the community leaders involved in the various community defense struggles, and for some of the community leaders who have gone back to studies later in life, or taken them up for the first time.

Summary proposal: <https://rightsaction.org/education-fund-2020/>



*"If there were more music schools than soldiers in the streets, there would be more guitars than machine-guns, more artists than assassins."*

### B) Education, activism and legal actions

Rights Action relentlessly educates and is involved in efforts to hold accountable the U.S. and Canadian governments, our companies and investors, for their policies, operations and actions that contribute to and benefit from corruption and impunity, repression, human rights violations and environmental harms.

*(continued)*





### Key struggles we will continue to support in 2020

- Hudbay Minerals precedent-setting lawsuits (Canada)
- Berta Caceres assassination trial (Honduras)
- Advocacy for political prisoners and 'criminalized' community defenders (Honduras & Guatemala)
- Mynor Padilla murder and assault trial (Guatemala)
- Azacualpa community, human rights and cemetery defense struggle, related to Aura Minerals Inc.
- Territorial, human rights, environmental defense struggles related to Pan American Silver mining company (Santa Rosa-Jalapa, Guatemala); and the Solway Investment Group (Izabal, Guatemala)
- Activism and advocacy for justice and the re-building of democracy and the rule of law (Honduras and Guatemala)
- Activism and advocacy in the U.S. and Canada, to try and hold both governments accountable for policies and actions in the Americas in support of military coups, illegal 'regime changes' and in support of unjust, corrupt, repressive governments.

### Accountability and consequences for U.S. & Canadian racketeering

It is long past time for U.S. and Canadian citizens, politicians and our courts to hold our governments legally and politically accountable when they are directly involved with and/or support political criminality in other countries.

It is not enough to critique the policies and actions of the U.S. and Canadian governments, and demand a change of policies – though this is crucial.

There must be legal consequences for our policies and actions in support of military coups and regimes changes in other countries with a view to benefiting our economic and political interests.

Thank-you for your trust in Rights Action and your support for our work and for the courageous projects and struggles of our community partner groups in Honduras and Guatemala.



**Please send questions and comments my way.**  
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