

# Trump Endorses Criminal Conspiracy to Crush Honduras Vote

Once again, the US saves a puppet dictator from his own people

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*Honduras is bleeding now, and Honduran blood runs from the hands of **President Trump** and **Gen. John Kelly**, long a vicar of American violence enforcing the imperial will. In their vicariously murderous way, Trump and Kelly are carrying on with a century-old, bipartisan American tradition of [oppression and human disregard](#) in the classic “banana republic” that the US Marines once kept safe for United Fruit. Trump and Kelly now are merely defending the corrupt [military coup of 2009](#), sanctioned by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ([who was OK with death squads](#)). Obama and Clinton are the godparents of the [present Honduran thugocracy](#) and its unchecked death squads that together provoked the massive emigration of Hondurans seeking safety here, thereby helping to elect Trump in 2016.*

Reliable reporting on the current outpouring of protest in Honduras is hard to come by, but it's rooted in the Honduran presidential election in November. The incumbent Honduran president, [Juan Orlando Hernandez](#), 49, of the National Party, is a direct beneficiary of the 2009 coup, which elevated him to the leadership of the National Congress. He is a businessman (coffee, hotels, media) with a master's degree in public administration from the State University of New York. He was first elected president in 2013 (with 34% of the vote) in a corrupt process during which at least 18 opposition-party candidates and supporters were murdered. Additionally, charges of fraudulent voting and corrupt campaign contributions were ignored by authorities, to the benefit of Hernandez. Once he was president, he was barred by the Honduran constitution from running for a second term. This obstacle was removed by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which is controlled by the president. Hernandez has a long personal relationship with Gen. John Kelly. Going into the election, Hernandez was considered the favorite.



Juan Orlando Hernandez

Opposing Hernandez was democratic socialist [Salvador Nasralla](#), 64, of the [Libre-PINU](#) Party (the Opposition Alliance against Dictatorship), the party of the coup-deposed **President Manuel Zelaya**. Nasralla graduated with honors from the Catholic University of Chile as a civil engineer and later earned an MBA. He was CEO of Pepsi Honduras before starting a television career in 1981. Since then, he has been harshly critical of chronic corruption in Honduras, founding the Anti-Corruption Party in 2013, when he won 13% of the vote for president. He was not expected to win the 2017 election.

As it stands now, the winner may never be known, but more than likely Nasralla won the popular vote. Among election monitors, the [Organization of American States](#) (OAS) and the European Union (EU) have rejected the results, while the US Embassy has said everything is hunky-dory. Meanwhile, the US and other anti-democratic forces are on the verge of installing their puppet Hernandez as the re-elected president of Honduras. The timeline of this stolen election illustrates just how secure the dictatorship and its allies in the US feel in their brazen criminality:

**November 26.** Apparently, something like 57% of Hondurans vote for a field of nine candidates. The Supreme Electoral Council, controlled by Hernandez, closes the polls an hour earlier than in the past, likely suppressing the vote. At first the Electoral Council releases vote totals as they come in, as is customary. Then, with Nasralla surprisingly leading, the Electoral Council suspends the count for seven hours.

**November 27.** With 57% of the votes counted, the Election Council reports that Nasralla is leading Hernandez by 5 points, roughly 45-40. These totals apparently represent mostly voting machine votes and not paper ballots. The Election Council then suspends the count again, for another 36 hours, telling the public there might be no final results until November 30.



Salvador Nasralla

**November 28.** US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson signs off on State Dept. certification that [Honduras has been improving](#) on fighting corruption and supporting human rights, clearing the way for \$644 million in US aid.

**November 28-29.** The Election Council issues sporadic new totals that claim Nasralla's percentage is shrinking and that Hernandez is pulling ahead.

**November 29.** Nasralla and Hernandez sign "a document [vowing to respect](#) the final result after every disputed vote had been scrutinized," a circumstance unlikely ever to be realized. When the Election Council again halts the count, claiming a computer glitch, Nasralla repudiates the agreement and urges his supporters to protest: "They take us for idiots and want to steal our victory." Nasralla supporters in the thousands take to the streets across the country.

**November 30.** Nasralla accuses the Election Council of election fraud. The Election Council reports 94% of votes are counted, with Hernandez ahead by less than 2 points (42.92 to 41.42%). Nasralla supporters are in the streets. Riot [police fire tear gas](#), pepper spray, and live ammunition at protestors.

**December 1.** The Election Council announces there will be no further results till all votes are counted. Hernandez declares state of emergency and announces a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew.

**December 2.** The Honduran National Roundtable for Human Rights denounces government action as state terrorism against civilians. The group also accuses the government of imposing the curfew as an act of repression to protect the electoral fraud it was perpetrating. By now government forces have killed at least 7 people and injured a score. The second night of curfew sees thousands of people banging pots and pans in protest (cacerolazos).

Substantial numbers of [National Police defy](#) the Hernandez government and [refuse to enforce the curfew](#). A member of the elite Cobra riot police reads from a statement: "Our people are sovereign. We cannot confront and repress their rights."

**December 5.** US State Dept. announces certification of Honduran [improvement on human rights](#) so that Honduras can continue to get US military assistance.

**December 6.** OAS observers cast doubt on the election results so far.

**December 9.** Hernandez government lifts state of emergency and curfew. Radio Progreso, an independent community station defending democracy, is attacked and [taken off the air](#). Journalists are arrested.

**December 10.** Thousands of Hondurans [march on US Embassy](#) in Tegucigalpa protesting US [interference in election](#).

**December 14.** The Honduran Election Council, as required by law, begins reviewing some [125 official objections](#) to the November 26 election, including four motions challenging the presidential election.

**December 15.** The Election Council has finished a recount of ballot boxes with irregularities, but has not declared a winner. Protests continue throughout the country. The death toll reaches 16, with 1,675 arrests.

**December 17.** The Organization of American States (OAS) denounces the Honduran election and [calls for a new election](#) in a statement saying: "Facing the impossibility of determining a winner, the only way possible so that the people of Honduras are the victors is a new call for general elections."

Supporting the OAS conclusions is a [detailed technical report](#) on the election by Georgetown University professor [Dr. Irfan Nooruddin](#) who writes in conclusion: "On the basis of this analysis, I would reject the proposition that the National Party [Hernandez] won the election legitimately."

At the same time, Nasralla has left Honduras to go to Washington to plead his case at the State Dept.

Taking advantage of that opportunity, the [Election Council announces](#) that Hernandez has beaten Nasralla by less than two points (42.95 to 41.42%) out of almost 3.5 million votes cast (3,476,419). There are about 6 million voters in the country of 9 million people.

[Mexico recognizes Hernandez](#) as winner, an announcement coordinated with the US. Nasralla and his supporters call for the population [to keep mobilizing](#) and keep protesting.

**December 18.** Honduran vice president **Ricardo Alvarez** rejects OAS (but not US) interference in Honduran affairs:

**This is an autonomous and sovereign country. This is a country that is not going to do what anybody from an international organization tells it to do. I will say it again: The only other election this country will have, the next one, is on the last Sunday of November 2021. There's not another election.**

**December 20.** Three [human rights experts](#) (David Kaye, Michel Frost, Edison Lanza) from the United Nations and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemn the Hernandez government for the use of [lethal force on protestors](#), and for violating basic

human rights to life, free expression, and free assembly. They write:

**“We are alarmed by the illegal and excessive use of force to disperse protests, which have resulted in the deaths of at least 12 protesters and left dozens injured. Hundreds of people have also been detained, many of whom have been transferred to military installations where they have been brutally beaten and subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment.”**

**December 21.** Honduras is one of only eight countries at the UN voting not to denounce the US plan to move its embassy to Jerusalem.

**December 22.** US **Secretary of State Rex Tillerson** has the State Dept. issue a statement recognizing Hernandez as winner, adding the absurdly hypocritical caveat that “a significant long-term effort to heal the political divide in the country and enact much-needed electoral reforms should be undertaken.”

[Congressman Jim McGovern](#), a Massachusetts Democrat, says the State Dept.’s action left him “angry and disturbed.” One of some 50 lawmakers who signed letters urging the US to support the OAS call for a new election in Honduras, McGovern states the obvious: “Very few Hondurans have confidence in the results, and the country remains deeply polarized.” McGovern then adds fairy dust: “For the U.S. government to pretend otherwise is the height of blind folly and it will surely harm our influence and undermine our priorities throughout the region.” This is real blind folly, unless McGovern or anyone else steps up to do anything about it.

Canada also recognizes Hernandez as the winner.

[Nasralla concedes.](#)

Why was the US so concerned about Nasralla? He opposes corruption, violence, law-breaking, dictatorship – are these views now seen as threats to US interests? The US doesn’t explain itself. It doesn’t have to, it’s the US. As [reporter Allan Nairn](#) said on Democracy NOW recently:

**And at one point early in December, [acting US ambassador Heide] Fulton and John Creamer, who’s a senior State Department official and a former aide to General John Kelly of the White House, met with Nasralla. And he said that the U.S. officials were urging him to stop the protests. The protests were the one popular source of leverage against the electoral fraud, and the U.S. was trying to shut them down—without success—even though Nasralla made a point of saying he wanted to be a friend of the U.S., he wanted to be an ally of the U.S. He said he wasn’t going to touch the military base, he wasn’t going to touch the multinationals. He even said he would sign every U.S. extradition order without even reading them....**

**So, they decided even Nasralla, who was promising all those things to comply with the U.S., was not good enough, was not acceptable to them, because he would represent a voting out of the coup regime. The 2009 coup, which had backing from the Pentagon and from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the time, put in a series of presidents, of whom Hernández is the latest, who back the oligarchy,**

**give the U.S. a blank check to do whatever they want militarily, and who have very little popular support.**

Remember that Honduran constitutional ban on a Honduran president being able to run for a second term? The military coup in 2009 claimed then-president Zelaya was trying to change the constitution. Eight years later, stealing an election in which the Honduran president succeeds himself is justified by changing the constitution. As long as the US puppet wins, principles don't matter any more to Trump and Tillerson than they did to Obama and Clinton.

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