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## **Honduras: Authorities must reveal identities and whereabouts of people detained today**

( Tegucigalpa ) Amnesty International today urged the Honduran authorities to reveal the identities, whereabouts and charges against all people detained on the eve and day of the presidential elections.

In one of the most worrying cases, the whereabouts of Jensys Mario Umanzor Gutierrez remains unknown. He was last seen at 2:30am this morning in the custody of a Police Patrol whose identification number was recorded by witnesses.

After finding out about the case, the Amnesty International delegation in Honduras assisted in the filing of an habeas corpus – a legal procedure to find the whereabouts and well being of someone detained by police – at the Juzgado Penal Francisco Morazan.

The Supreme Court, amongst several other courts, was closed and neither was anyone available by phone either to receive the petition. The court should have a judge or other court-appointed official available to deal with such urgent matters.

“Filing a petition to find where a detainee has been taken is an almost impossible task in Honduras,” said Javier Zuñiga, head of the Amnesty International delegation in Honduras. “The delays and barriers imposed by the authorities to find even basic information goes to show the extent of violations taking place in Honduras today, and how vulnerable Honduran citizens are to abuses by the police and security forces,” said Javier Zuñiga.

Habeas Corpus is a legal procedure by which a judge is required to demand the police reveal the whereabouts of a person who is believed to have been detained and allow the judge to see the detainee. This is a basic guarantee needed to protect people from torture, ill-treatment and enforced disappearance.

“When someone is taken by the police and nobody knows where to, that person is at serious risk of abuse such as torture. Habeas Corpus is an essential protection mechanism which cannot be suspended or denied even during a war or state of emergency,” said Javier Zuñiga.

The Amnesty International delegates also met with two men who were arrested today under terrorism charges. The men alleged they were beaten and forced to sign statements which they did not agree with. It is unclear what will happen to them.

“We are very worried about the way these two men were arrested and for their wellbeing,” said Javier Zuñiga. “We have very serious doubts about the allegations made against the individuals and their chances of a fair trial.”

In a separate incident, today at 12.30 a local human rights organization discovered 14 minors detained at Jefatura Metropolitana No.3 police station in Tegucigalpa . The minors had been arrested while they were chatting in small groups on street corners near polling stations.

During two of the multiple arrests the police asked the minors: “Why are you here meeting in groups of more than four people when there is a decree which prohibits you from doing so?”.

The police were referring to a decree issued last September which was officially annulled on 19 October. All 14 were released without charge.

Amnesty International also received information that several people have been detained across the country. In San Pedro Sula , people have reported having been beaten while participating in a demonstration and subsequently taken into custody. In one instance, demonstrators threw stones at the police, causing a journalist to be injured.

In other parts of the country, human rights organizations suffered attacks and acts of intimidation. On 28 November, Red Comal, a collective of farmers and small scale agricultural producers in Siguatepeque had their offices raided, and computers and cash seized.

“Justice seems to have been absent also on Election Day in Honduras,” said Javier Zuñiga. “It is therefore essential the whereabouts of all people detained are made public and all incidents of abuse investigated. The rule of law must fully be restored.”

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