
The far right and its crooked people seek ungovernability in Honduras

By: Arnaldo Musa

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A few days after taking office in a good fight, on January 27, Xiomara Castro has been betrayed by 21 of her lawmakers, who agreed to vote for a dissident parliamentarian, in collusion with the far right, to become president of the Congress, deviating from the guidelines of their left-wing party, *Libertad y Refundación* (Libre).

Newswires are quite specific about the brawl that arose in this regard, when lawmakers from *Libre* wanted to prevent the swearing-in of traitor Jorge Cálix.

"The betrayal reached its climax," the Honduran president-elect said, which reached a faction of deputies from the opposition *Libertad y Refundación* (Libre) Party, by getting the dissident deputy to be sworn in as acting president of the National Congress.

Now, as it is happening in Peru, where government is represented by a minority in the parliament, the expulsion of 18 of the 21 lawmakers who betrayed Xiomara, with Cálix as president of the Congress, the *Partido Nacional*, having been defeated at the polls, manages to maneuver and remains in control of the National Congress. The risk of ungovernability, the struggle for power as a result of a sinister mix of organized crime and corruption networks aiming at maintaining impunity are really high.

Among the deputies expelled are Jorge Cálix, Beatriz Valle, Denis Chirinos, Francis Cabrera, Mario Enrique Cálix, Mario Portillo, Samuel Madrid, Ronald Panchame, Ramón Soto, Marco Tinoco and Edgardo Castro.

Other names such as Frank Ramón Flores, Sergio Castellano, Germán Altamirano, Yahvé Sabillón, Marco Eliud, Wilmer Cruz, and Margarita Dabdoub Sikaffi are also part of the list.

But Xiomara Castro, who won the election in her third attempt against a government that, due to its spurious nature, will not be held accountable, is regarded as a warrior, a fighter, humble, outspoken, and she is ready to defend what she believes is right for the people.

Castro read a resolution on Friday that was unanimously approved at an extraordinary meeting of the Libre party, noting that the dissident deputies challenged the party's authority and failed to comply with the pre-agreement to define the leadership of the Honduran Congress.

The aforementioned lawmakers were expelled for not attending a meeting to define the party line for the election of the head of Parliament, a position the president had offered to deputy Luis Redondo.

Three of the traitors; namely, Jorge Cálix, Beatriz Valle and Yahvé Sabillón, formed an interim executive on Friday, after being sworn in as president, vice president and secretary of the Chamber, which triggered a fight with the deputies of Libre that turned physical.

Castro called on the Honduran people and the members of her party to march towards Tegucigalpa, the country's capital, and meet in the vicinity of the National Congress, to reject the traitorous deputies usurping the Legislative.

"The vigil begins on Saturday night and early Sunday, January 23, to prevent the kidnapping of the National Congress by the bipartisanship led by the dictator Juan Orlando Hernández (outgoing president of Honduras), with the direct complicity of a few traitorous deputies, elected by the people under our flag," she stressed.

Until Friday, left-wing party Libre owned 50 seats in the Parliament out of 128 deputies. After the expulsion, the party would be only represented by 32. It means Castro would not have control of the Congress, which would create a more difficult scenario for her to rule.

What corrupted people want to avoid

Xiomara Castro, the first woman to govern Honduras, will ask the UN to send a mission to support the fight against corruption, and will ask Congress to abolish the *"laws of impunity."*

Castro, 62, member of the left-wing party *Libertad y Refundación* (Libre), told Agencie France Presse that she will seek to eliminate the regulations which—in her opinion— *"have covered up all the corruption"* of recent years, alluding to the government of her predecessor, Juan Orlando Hernández.

Honduras *"needs the heart of a woman to govern this country, of a mother who feels the needs that the people have,"* she stressed.

The wife of the ousted president Manuel Zelaya (2006-2009) answered questions from AFP via WhatsApp audios, but refrained from commenting on the possible restoration of relations with China—Honduras currently recognizes Taiwan—and on her ties with the left.

59% of the 10 million inhabitants of Honduras live in poverty, and since 2018, thousands of people flee in caravans to the United States, in search of employment.

"Our commitment is to guarantee that, in Honduras, in their homeland, they may have the conditions for a decent life. Free universal education for all children and all young people and to achieve free universal healthcare," she promised.

In 2016, after questioning President Hernández, who accepted that part of the money for his campaign came from public funds, a Support Mission against Corruption and Impunity (MACCIH) entered the country, sponsored by the Organization of American States, but they left in January 2020 and did nothing, thanks to the empathy of Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the OAS, with Juan Orlando.

She also announced that her government will propose *"an initiative to Congress to abolish the laws that have sustained the dictatorship,"* as she refers to the Hernández's government.

These regulations are called *"impunity laws"* by the state Anti-Corruption Council. Among them, she mentioned the *"secret law,"* which classifies information on state purchases, *"with which they have covered up all the corruption."* The reform to the Penal Code that lowered the penalties for money laundering is also questioned.

The USA stance

Washington called for *"transparent and peaceful"* elections and followed closely the process. That nation owns a military base in Honduras since the 1980s. US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken has already shown a willingness to work with Castro, and Vice President Kamala Harris will be present at the inauguration of the future president, who limited herself to saying that the relationship with the US is cordial, although one of the main issues is migration.

"The defense of human rights, the security of migrants, especially that of children and their families, is essential," she said.

Let us remember that the coup against her husband in 2009 was under the administration of Barack Obama, of whom the current US president, Joe Biden, was vice president.

Drug trafficking has penetrated even the highest levels of the government, involving the outgoing President himself. The president's brother, "Tony" Hernández, is serving a life sentence in the United States for drug trafficking. The president denies the charges.

"Our fight will be frontal against drug trafficking. We are going to guarantee the security of our borders, both by air and by sea, so that both drug trafficking and arms trafficking have no place in our country," Castro said.

In 2013, the former ruling *Partido Nacional* promoted the creation in Congress of the Special Economic Development Zones (ZEDE), territories authorized to work autonomously within the State of Honduras.

Its goal was to promote investment, but the civil society finds it unconstitutional, *"states within the State itself,"* and may actually become shelter for those extraditable. Three of them operate at full capacity. The UN has requested Honduras to *"revise"* its compatibility. *"As soon as we take office, we are going to present to the Congress an initiative to abolish the ZEDE laws,"* Castro said.

As the first woman to govern Honduras, *"I have a commitment to ensure that women's rights are*

respected," she said, highlighting the achievements of her husband's government —overthrown by the Honduran right and the Empire— in the fight against poverty. *"In this new government (...) I will have the best adviser in the presidential house,"* she commented.

With a debt of nearly 17 billion US dollars —11 billion of foreign debt—, one of *"the first actions that we will carry out will be to readjust that debt,"* she stated.

"We are not going to impose new taxes," she pointed out, at a time when analysts predict financial difficulties due to debt and fiscal deficit.

There will still be much to write and remember about these crucial hours for Honduras. But we already had an idea about this negative reaction and the role of those behind it, who were not going to sit idly before the government program presented by the president-elect.

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