

Not-so-soft coups and the use of blackouts in Honduras

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Honduran President Xiomara Castro. Photo: Al Mayadeen

These days, we are entering a new phase in Honduras in the attempt of the right to provoke a color revolution.

This time, the issue seems more organized: power stations that turn off their generators, constant blackouts, people who become enraged, go out to protest in various parts of the country, and even enter frenzies by firing at electrical power transformers.

Faced with allegations of commercial sabotage made by the progressive government, and while the president completed a successful tour of the People's Republic of China, the Honduran fascist right-wing notes that Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro also condemned attacks on the Venezuelan energy grid in recent years. They raise this point in order to claim that this condemnation is a ploy used by the left. The video in which Donald Trump confessed that during his administration, he brought Venezuela to the brink of collapse with the intention of stealing all its oil does not circulate much in the Honduran media.

Perhaps unintentionally, the Honduran right is undergoing a radicalization towards fascism, ideologically directed by the Miami virus and driven by an elite that controls everything, including the electrical grid. All this is multiplied by the fact that this elite does not pay taxes of any kind. If capitalism is just a crude theoretical plot to enable systematic looting, what happened in Honduras demonstrates the terrible reality that the rich can only accumulate wealth if they steal from those who have less. While they make money without contributing anything, society subsists on the taxes of the majority.

In fact, the electrical companies that are causing the blackouts belong to four families who have dedicated themselves to speculating and getting rich through lucrative business with the state. Since the first big blackout in 1994 forced the privatization of the national electricity company, these families enjoyed extensive exemptions in order to fulfill the role of the neoliberal policy, which left everything in the hands of private companies and strengthened speculative financial capital without investing in the development of the country.

Mysteriously, these companies stopped generating electricity, claiming that they must maintain their machines just when peak demands are reached in the country in the midst of an unprecedented drought. In Honduras, these companies buy fuel without paying taxes, and their operations are indirectly aided by a fuel subsidy that has been in force since President Xiomara Castro took over the leadership of the country in 2022.

In brief, there are four families that do not pay taxes, that benefit from subsidies, and that are at the top of the 25 families that concentrate more than 80 percent of all the country's wealth. These families concentrate in their hands more than 90 percent of the media, which, as is easy to suppose, did not stop for a single day its incessant attack against the government of President Castro, which is never forgiven for its sovereign determination and independence.

The energy crisis occurs at the same time that Honduras has received attention from China, which offers a different model of relating to a poor, backward, highly indebted country for which none of the members of its ruling class is willing to give up on anything. For right-wingers, sowing violence is not complicated. They have manuals for it and compete to hurl the most serious insults and provocations at the president and her officials.

Now, there are signs that they seek to create sources of unrest, using humble people who do not notice the fact that these businesspeople are responsible for the problem—those who sell the most expensive electricity on the continent. In Guatemala, for example, electricity costs about \$0.04 per kW/h, while in Honduras, prices often reach \$0.26 per kW/h.

In addition, it is important to note that many of the predatory contracts awarded to these companies were awarded at the end of 2021, just after the dictatorship had already lost the elections. The narrative of the right aims to relativize the class nature behind this phenomenon of looting and extortion against the left government,

which is nothing more than a direct aggression against the people of Honduras, whom the right-wingers hope will become so enraged that they will burn down the country.

It is common to hear political spokespersons with secure links to drug trafficking, organized crime, human trafficking, and many other crimes appear on television, speaking about the Sao Paulo Forum as if it were a diabolical sect with a deranged plan of world domination. These politicians are grouped in various opposition parties, all right-wing, but with little political training. They repeat the scripts of Miami without even having to know what they are talking about. In this, all the Latin American right-wing movements are very similar.

In Honduras, these groups have not given up on the idea of a coup but are no longer expected to try to make it a “soft” coup. It is more likely that they will try to repeat the experience of Venezuela’s *guarimbas* or the coup attempt in Nicaragua in 2018. The point is that the steps that the government is taking under the leadership of President Castro are getting closer and closer to solving many problems of society, and this could be a factor that spoils the plans of the Honduran schizophrenic oligarchy. Hence, the rush and fascist anxieties increase.

It is possible that the right predicted the dramatic change in Honduras’ government in mid-2022. For that reason, they set up numerous traps at the level of state management, e.g., more than 200 trusts that emptied the state’s funds and basically made it impossible to access funds to tackle the country’s most pressing social problems. Today, a combination of factors drives them to remove all masks, opposing any hint of potential development. Time plays against them, which is why they have high hopes that the energy crisis will help them get their Honduran Spring.

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