

Honduran coup hits home

by Randy Robinson


News of a June military coup in Honduras wasn't just a headline to Mary Cory.

Cory, who sits on the OPSEU Social Justice Committee, had just come back from the Central American country in February.

"It's one thing to read about things happening in another country, but when you know people who are affected it really brings it home," says Cory, a member of Local 714 in Thunder Bay. "The people of Honduras are struggling to survive as it is. They don't need more political repression added to their economic woes."

The average Honduran earns less than \$1,000 US a year, and the majority do not have a grade six education.

Cory traveled to Honduras as part of a tour organized by Horizons of Friendship, a development organization based in Cobourg, Ontario. The OPSEU Social Justice Fund has committed to support Horizons, which runs more than two dozen grassroots projects in Central America. The February tour visited projects concerned with rural development, HIV/AIDS, women's rights, and migrant workers. It also met with the Garifuna Emergency Committee of Honduras. The Garifuna are descendants of shipwrecked slaves who built a unique society in a remote part of the Caribbean.

OPSEU joins governments and organizations around the world in condemning the overthrow of Manuel Zelaya, the democratically-elected president of Honduras. 



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Mary Cory, of the OPSEU Social Justice Committee, chats with a baby in the Garifuna village of Guadalupe on the north coast of Honduras.

Photo: Randy Robinson



Photo: OPSEU files

Mary Cory and OPSEU Senior Communications Officer Randy Robinson pose with José Román Hernández. José's wife (labour leader Virginia García de Sánchez) was traveling with Rosa Altagracia Fuentes (general secretary of the Workers' Confederation of Honduras) in 2008, when they were killed by six masked gunmen who opened fire on their car. No group has claimed responsibility for the murders, but many suspect the two were targeted for their organizing work with Honduras' maquiladoras — free-trade zones where labour laws do not apply.