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August 31, 2009

**By Facsimile Transmission (202) 647-2283**

The Honorable Hillary Clinton  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Sexual Violence By Honduran Coup Government

Dear Madam Secretary,

As you know from addressing our conference a few years ago, Women of Steel is an activist organization of women leaders in our union, the United Steelworkers International Union (USW). We represent working women across the United States and Canada. We write to express our grave concern for the lives and well-being of women in Honduras who are being subjected to brutal rapes, sexual violence and physical assaults by the police of the current coup regime. According to the group *Feministas de Honduras en Resistencia* ("FHR"), there have been at least 19 documented cases of rape by police officers since the June 28 coup that ousted President Mel Zelaya. According to the FHR, the police are using rape and other forms of sexual assault against women leaders of the resistance to the coup.

We are very alarmed by this information, and respectfully call upon you to denounce this violence just as you have recently denounced such violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We also believe that this underscores the need for a swift return to democratic rule in Honduras, a return which necessitates the return of President Manuel Zelaya to his position as President. We call upon you and President Obama to denounce the repression and basic human rights violations being carried out by the current illegitimate government and to take all steps necessary to restore President Zelaya, including the withdrawal of the U.S. Ambassador to Honduras; the end of all economic assistance to the coup regime, including monies granted by the Millennium Challenge Corp., and to freeze all assets of the coup leaders.

Without strong and decisive action, the wrong message will be sent to societies faced with similar abuses. As women, we ask you to speak out and stand up against this violence against women and other citizens of the world.

Thank you for your attention in this regard.

Sincerely,

The USW National Women's Committee of the United States:

Leeann Anderson, Assistant to President Gerard

Ann Flener, Director Women of Steel

Emily Jefferson, Women of Steel Support Staff

USW District 1 Michele Erwin – Ohio

USW District 2 Tonya DeVore – Michigan and Wisconsin

USW District 4 Kathy Kluczynski – New York, all North Eastern States and Puerto Rico

USW District 4 Tammie Botelho – Connecticut, all North Eastern States and Puerto Rico

USW District 7 Markeya McDaniel-Wilkerson – Indiana and Illinois

USW District 8 Fentre Graves-Neal – Virginia and all Central Eastern States

USW District 8 Karen Shipley – West Virginia and all Central Eastern States

USW District 9 Debbie Hayes-Cook – North Carolina, South Eastern States and Virgin Islands

USW District 10 Keli Vereb - Pennsylvania

USW District 11 Nan Duchene – Minnesota and all North Central States

USW District 12 Rosie Gonzalez – California and all Western and Pacific States

USW District 12 Julie Holzer – Western and Pacific States from New Mexico to Alaska

USW District 13 Julie Lidstone – Texas and all South Central States

Cc: President Obama

First Lady Michelle Obama

Vice President Biden

USW President Leo W. Gerard

Senator Barbara Boxer

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Susan M. Collins

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Senator Kay R. Hagan

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Mary L. Landrieu

Senator Blanche L. Lincoln

Senator Claire McCaskill

Senator Barbara A. Mikulski

Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Patty Murray

Senator Jeanne Shaheen

Senator Olympia J. Snowe

Senator Debbie Stabenow

Senator John F. Kerry, Chair Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Senator Christopher J. Dodd, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chair Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs Subcommittee

Representative Howard L. Berman Chair House Foreign Affairs Committee

Representative Eliot L. Engle, Chair Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Foreign Affairs

USW International Executive Board

USW Legislative Director Holly Hart

USW Women of Steel Activists