



German judges visit Honduras

### **Deep concern for the state of the constitution**

At the invitation of the Honduran association of judges, 'Asociación de Jueces por la Democracia' (AJDH), the new association of judges, 'Neue Richtervereinigung' (NRV) visited Honduras for 14 days. The delegation comprised Ingrid Heinlein longtime Honduran expert, Ruben Franzen, federal board member of the NRV and Thomas Guddat, board member of the European judges association 'Magistrats Européens pour la Démocratie et les Libertés' (MEDEL) and Dirk Behrendt, the sitting member of the Berlin Parliament.

The delegation held talks with a member of the Supreme Court, with representatives of the ministry of justice, the chairman of the human rights committee of Congress, a representative from the department responsible for the prosecution of human rights breaches and numerous human rights organizations. In addition, they met with representatives of feminist organizations, judges of different courts and female workers from textile factories.

Thomas Guddat offers his impressions : "If I were to describe the condition of the Honduran judiciary in one sentence, I would use the words of Joseph Conrad: 'There is never a God in a country where the people do not help themselves' (Nostromo). Honduras does not protect its citizens, in particular the poorest ones. Only when the whole society frees itself from corruption. can one succeed in winning the fight against pervasive violence and human rights violations. For this one needs a strong system of justice with courageous and incorruptible judges. Honduras cannot afford to do without upright and independent judges such as Tirza Flores Lanza, Luis Chévez de la Roche, Adan Guillermo López Lone. Honduras, however, dismissed

these judges for exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and freedom of assembly and for defending the Honduran constitution”.

Ruben Franzen adds: "We share the concern of our interviewees about the catastrophic situation concerning human rights in Honduras. In particular, the impunity available for murder means the surrender of the rule of law in favour of unchecked violence. A first step in the right direction would be the reinstatement of dismissed colleagues, who were discharged because of their commitment to bring about change. As long as those who seek enlightenment and transparency are silenced by losing their jobs and are threatened with death, nothing will change for the better in Honduras. "

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