

# Lutheran churches urged to pray for Honduras

News

February 15, 2011

San Pedro Sula, Honduras, February 15 (ENInews)--The Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (ICLH) has urged sister churches around the world to pray for an end to the wave of violence that continues to plague the Central American country.

Sunday, 13 February was a day of prayer and fasting and the Honduran church's president, Rev. Jose Martin Giron, asked for the solidarity of churches in the global Lutheran communion.

In a recent letter addressed to church organizations, including the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Honduran church described the current environment:

"Children don't go outside to play, neighbors rarely visit each other and women spend their days trapped inside their humble homes."

Honduras has been torn by political turmoil since a 2009 coup ousted then-president Manuel Zelaya. Last year, a report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights cited numerous human rights violations, including murder, kidnappings, arbitrary detentions and illegal searches, mainly aimed at opponents of the coup and human rights activists. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists last year said the Honduran government's failure to investigate the killing of seven journalists had "fostered a climate of lawlessness."

The church said the violence is affecting its pastoral care with some congregations unable to offer services in affected regions. La Colonia La Union community of San Pedro Sula is particularly affected. One congregation was unable to celebrate Christmas services because of killings that took place on the street where the church is located, forcing church members to close the building.

"These are areas where every day is one of death and survival. That reality is hitting various neighborhoods of San Pedro Sula really hard, where [organized] groups

continue to control individual blocks or entire groups of streets. Everyone who lives there knows what is happening. They see it but don't speak up out of fear for their lives," the ICLH stated.

LWF member churches in the Latin American and Caribbean region and the ecumenical family have expressed solidarity with the ICLH by offering prayers and support and visiting with the church.

The ICLH has expressed gratitude to the Episcopal (Anglican) and Reformed churches in San Pedro de Sula for inviting the Honduran Lutheran church to use their premises for worship. "The ICLH is thankful for this offer," said Giron.

The ICLH has 1,500 members in 10 congregations and five mission points. It works with marginalized groups in the country, utilizing a community-based approach. The church's work is focused on lay leadership development, children and youth ministry, preventative health care, HIV and AIDS awareness, micro-enterprise projects for women, environmental education and disaster prevention and response. The Honduran church joined the LWF in 1994.