



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
**NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER**

*Rise Up AND Act for Justice*

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 22, 2017

## **NAC's Director to Travel to Honduras on January 24 to be in Solidarity with the People amidst Protests and Violence**

Lawrence Couch, Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, travels to Honduras on Wednesday, January 24, as part of a 50+ member Emergency Interfaith Delegation to accompany Honduran human rights defenders as they mobilize and demonstrate against the fraudulent presidential election in November.

On January 27, Juan Orlando Hernandez will be sworn in for a second term despite many questions surrounding the election and in spite of the Organization of American States' call to hold new elections.

"Since the November election, Honduras has seen widespread civil unrest and protests. Human rights and religious leaders have been threatened and the media harassed. But most in the United States have not noticed," said Couch. "I leave for Honduras to be in solidarity with its people. I carry the love and compassion of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in North America. I hope to serve as a witness and to share what I witness with the sisters and with Members of Congress upon my return."

During the 7-day trip, Couch will send back photos, thoughts and observations that the National Advocacy Center will share on its [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

The delegation was formed following an appeal to the international faith community from Jesuit Fr. Ismael "Melo" Moreno, who has accompanied the Honduran people for more than 20 years. Fr. Melo appealed: "We need you to organize delegations that will come to accompany us, to witness what is happening here and to share it with the world."

Fr. Melo has received several death threats and his Jesuit radio station, Radio Progreso, one of the last independent media in the country, was sabotaged in mid-December, its transmission tower destroyed. Thirty people have been killed in the violence; hundreds have been injured and detained.

Couch and the delegation will collect testimonies and be present to witness repression in advance of and during Hernandez's inauguration in Tegucigalpa, where they will lend support to the faith communities in Honduras.

The Good Shepherd Sisters of Honduras have maintained a presence in Tegucigalpa for more than 50 years, assisting the most impoverished and deprived women, children and their families by offering education, counseling and employment opportunities. Their principal aim is to create economic independence and sustainable livelihoods for the women.

*[The National Advocacy Center](#) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, victims of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.*

*The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in over 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.*

-30-