

# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – August 2018

This month, Honduras was under international scrutiny, at least for a few days, during an official visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. While the long-term impact of the visit will not be known for a while, the short-term impact could have been better. Even during the presence of the IACHR commissioners state security forces did not hold back and injured two students, a journalist and a human rights defender on August 1. The remaining days of August then showed that this was only the first of several acts of state repression in a month that ended with a national day of protest demanding the end of the JOH regime. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

## Executive Summary

August started with a visit by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Already before its first meeting with civil society representatives, the JOH regime tried to stop family members of victims of the post-electoral human rights violations to participate. Even before the visit was officially over, one IACHR representative already spoke to the press, expressing concerns about the failure by the State to comply with recommendations made by the IACHR. When the visit concluded after five days, the IACHR stated that "structural impunity and the corruption have eroded trust in public institutions".

It was another dark month for Honduras' journalists. Already on August 1, the first journalist suffered from violent repression by state security forces and over the next 30 days, there were about a dozen more attacks and threats against social communicators and journalists. August saw also another murder of a lawyer, Rubén Mateo Galán, as well as an environmental defender, Hernán Méndez. The Berta Cáceres case stalled for almost the whole month and only on August 31, the first day of the evidentiary hearing took place. At that moment, the MP still had failed to share evidence with the legal team of Berta's family and COPINH.

Two mining conflicts took a turn for the worse this month. In Azacualpa, the mining company launched a defamation campaign against the human rights organizations accompanying the peaceful protest by the local communities. In Guapinol, armed groups linked to the mining company showed up in the communities and threatened the peaceful protesters. A small victory regarding a hydroelectric project was celebrated in Pajuiles as a court ordered the municipality of Tela to stop the construction work. But the mayor ignored the ruling and the month ended with more police repression against peaceful protesters.

The Pandora corruption case made headlines this month when ATIC started to seize properties and goods linked to the case. Especially the intervention of the headquarters of both the National and Liberal Party caused some surprise. By the end of the month, the buildings are still under control of the state agency OABI. The sectors trying to impede effective investigation of corruption cases continued their work this month. Their main focus has been Article 184 of the Criminal Procedure Code. They would like to abolish the possibility of pre-trial detention for accusations linked to corruption. The Supreme Court announced a ruling for September.

After 16 rounds of pre-dialogue, the National Dialogue finally took off this month, i.e. it started and immediately stopped again, before effectively starting on August 27. It has four sub-groups, e.g. one on the post-electoral human rights violations. Most civil society organizations are still very critical and the main opposition party Libre is not present at the dialogue.

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## Abbreviations

ASJ	Association for a More Just Society
ATIC	Technical Bureau for Criminal Investigation
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CDM	Center for Women's Rights
CEDOH	Document Center of Honduras
CIPRODEH	Center for Human Rights Research and Promotion
CMH	Medical Association Honduras
CNA	National Anti-Corruption Council
COFADEH	Committee of Families of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras
COIPRODEN	Coordination of Private Institutions for Children's Rights
CONADEH	National Human Rights Commission
COPINH	Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras
FEPRODDHH	Special Public Prosecutor Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators
FOSDEH	Social Forum on the External Debt of Honduras
FOSDEH	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IACtHR	Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ILO	International Labor Organization
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights
MACCIH	Support Mission against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras
MADJ	Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice
MP	Attorney General's Office
OACNUDH	UN Human Rights Office in Honduras
TSC	Supreme Audit Court
UFECIC	Anti-Corruption Unit of the Attorney General's Office
UNAH	National Autonomous University of Honduras
ZEDE	Zone for Employment and Economic Development

# Human Rights and Their Defenders

## Visit of the IACHR

A delegation by the IACHR traveled for a five-day visit to Honduras on August 30. About 20 national and international human rights organization published a press release to denounce the grave human rights crisis in Honduras to the IACHR. One of their key demand is an international investigation of the post-electoral human rights violations.<sup>1</sup> On the first day, the IACHR organized a meeting with released political prisoners and family members of victims of the post-electoral crisis. Pasos de Animal Grande denounced that the JOH regime tried to stop them from going to the meeting by sending the presidential guards.<sup>2</sup> HRDs accompanying the family members had to call the IACHR commissioners in support. When leaving the hotel after the meeting, the participants were once more intimidated by state security forces.<sup>3</sup>

On day two of the visit, COFADEH, CEJIL and FSAR presented five cases of impunity from 2009 and 2010 to the IACHR delegation.<sup>4</sup> One of the cases presented was the murder of the journalist Nahúm Palacios Arteaga. He was assassinated on March 10, 2010 in Tocoa, Colón.<sup>5</sup> On the night of his murder, Palacios Arteaga was accompanied by Yorleni Yadira Sánchez who also suffered gun wounds and died two days later in the hospital. Defensores en Línea spoke to her father.<sup>6</sup> Also on day two, the executive secretary of the IACHR, Paulo Arbão, shared some first impressions. He expressed concern about the failure by the State to comply with recommendations made by the IACHR.<sup>7 8</sup>

During their last day in Honduras, the IACHR delegation shared some preliminary findings with the public. They found that the "structural impunity and the corruption have eroded trust in public institutions". Furthermore, they expressed worries about the misalignment of power between the three pillars of state power. One evidence of this was the illegal re-election of the Attorney General, which the IACHR also questioned in their report. The IACHR reiterated their demand that the Honduran State make progress in the investigation into the post-electoral human rights violations and that they will closely observe this process. Their presentation ended with 25 recommendations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The Presidential Minister Ebal Díaz reacted to the findings by speaking of historic and structural reasons causing problems in the country that need time to fix, cynically overlooking that it was the regime-of-the-day that ordered the state security forces to shoot into the protesting crowds during

1 <https://reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2018/07/31/personas-defensoras-denuncian-grave-crisis-de-derechos-humanos-ante-la-cidh-y-piden-creacion-equipo-de-investigacion-internacional-que-audite-al-ministerio-publico/>

2 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2231-cuerpos-represivos-tenian-orden-de-impedir-que-victimas-de-la-crisis-postelectoral-denunciaran-arbitrariedades-ante-la-cidh>

3 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/743-en-medio-de-un-cerco-policial-militar-la-cidh-escucha-a-presos-politicos-y-victimas-post-fraude-electoral>

4 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/tras-nueve-anos-de-impunidad-victimas-buscan-justicia-internacional/>

5 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/745-nahum-palacios-otro-comunicador-asesinado-que-no-encuentra-justicia-en-honduras>

6 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/padre-de-yorleni-mi-hija-sobrevivio-al-ataque-pero-murio-dos-dias-despues-de-salir-del-hospital/>

7 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/la-cidh-impactada-con-los-testimonios-de-victimas-de-la-crisis-post-electoral/>

8 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2928-cidh-insiste-a-gobierno-hondureno-protger-grupos-vulnerables>

9 <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2018/171.asp>

10 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/monitoreo-de-compromisos-internacionales/item/2237-gobierno-de-joh-sale-muy-mal-parado-ante-la-cidh-en-su-visita-in-loc>

the post-electoral protests.<sup>11</sup> The Human Rights Secretary Karla Cueva reacted to the recommendations by spreading the responsibility to implement them as wide as possible.<sup>12</sup>

A few days after the visit, MADJ wrote an open letter to the IACHR. They thanked them for coming, emphasizing the importance of international preoccupation about the human rights situation in Honduras. "However, despite this recognition we must indicate in an honest and constructive manner that we are concerned about the absence of some important topics, the generic nature and, in some cases, the unfounded and confusing assessments and recommendations issued by the IACHR in its preliminary observations on the on-site visit to the country."<sup>13</sup> Two days later, the Human Rights Roundtable held a press conference to comment on the visit and the presentation of their preliminary findings. They highlighted some "inaccuracies" that they would also share with the IACHR for their final report, e.g. praising JOH for the creation of the Human Rights Secretary is highly questionable given that it was his administration that closed it in the first place in 2013.<sup>14</sup> The month ended with El Pulso publishing three interviews with HRDs further commenting on the visit and the resulting recommendations.<sup>15 16 17</sup>

## National Day of Protest

On August 30, the national day of protest organized by the Alignment against the Reelection took place.<sup>18</sup> They chose the date, as it is also the International Day of the Forcefully Disappeared. It was presented as a protest against the JOH regime, against his illegal reelection and they demanded the investigation of the post-electoral human rights violations as well as the release of the remaining five political prisoners. The JOH regime tried to intimidate possible participants by threatening to repress the protesters.<sup>19</sup> But it did not work and Hondurans took to the streets in great numbers.<sup>20</sup> At the final rally of the protests, Padre Melo announced a plebiscite for the coming months in all regions of Honduras to return to a constitutional order. After three months of preparation, it should take place in November and include three questions on restoring the constitutional order; the economic model of extractivism, and whether JOH should stay in power.<sup>21</sup>

COFADEH together with about a dozen other human rights organizations published a statement demanding the immediate resignation of JOH, the release of the five remaining political prisoners and that all the charges are dropped against all of the criminalized protesters. They further demanded justice for the 34 victims documented by them during the post-electoral repression.<sup>22</sup>

11 <http://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/informe-de-la-cidh-reconoce-los-problemas-estructurales-que-tiene-honduras-segun-ebal-diaz.html>

12 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/06/muchas-recomendaciones-de-la-cidh-pasan-por-la-voluntad-del-congreso-secretaria-de-dd-hh/>

13 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/07/Intrascendente-visita-in-loco-de-la-CIDH-Carta-abierta-del-MADJ>

14 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/763-observaciones-de-la-cidh-tienen-algunas-imprecisiones-denuncia-mesa-de-ddhh>

15 <http://elpulso.hn/vemos-que-las-recomendaciones-son-mediaticadas-wilfredo-mendez/>

16 <http://elpulso.hn/lo-que-en-nicaragua-es-bueno-aqui-es-malo-berta-oliva/>

17 <http://elpulso.hn/esas-comisiones-de-la-oea-son-una-ficcion-juan-almendarez/>

18 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/786-convergencia-contr-a-el-continuidismo-se-movilizo-a-un-solo-grito-fuera-joh-y-convoca-un-plebiscito-popular>

19 <https://twitter.com/Conexihon/status/1034995819605319680>

20 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/convergencia-contr-a-el-continuidismo-se-movilizo-masivamente/>

21 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/30/masiva-movilizacion-en-honduras-contr-a-el-regimen-de-hernandez/>

22 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/7739-2/>

## Assassinations

On August 18, the environmental defender Hernán Méndez was found murdered in La Ceiba.<sup>23</sup> Four years ago in August, HRD and campesina leader Margarita Murillo was assassinated. She is one of the 15 HRDs who should have benefited from special protection measures by the IACHR, but who has been murdered, nonetheless, since 2009.<sup>24</sup>

## Lawyers

For the third month in a row, a lawyer was murdered in Honduras. On August 6, Rubén Mateo Galán, was assassinated in his office in San Pedro Sula.<sup>25</sup>

## Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

Human rights defenders in the Bajo Aguán were especially in the crossfire this month.<sup>26</sup> On August 3, the HRD and social communicator Irma Lemus was threatened with death by a local business leader.<sup>27</sup> According to Lemus, the threat was linked to her accompanying local communities in resistance against a mine by Minera Inversiones Los Pinares (see Mining section below). The same day, soldiers of the military base in Puerto Castilla evicted Marcial López, HRD and president of a cooperative belonging to MARCA, from his house.<sup>28</sup> López is supposed to benefit from special protection measures granted by the IACHR.<sup>29</sup> On August 15, three campesinx organization denounced in a joint press release that through the use of fraud and corruption they have been robbed of their land.<sup>30</sup> On August 29, the social communicator and MUCA leader Vitalino Álvarez was physically attacked by soldiers when he covered the eviction of the San Isidro farm.<sup>31</sup>

The situation was not better for HRDs in other parts of Honduras. In El Progreso, the secretary of the campesinx organization CNTC, Francisco Godínez, received threats by mobile phone.<sup>32</sup> Germán Chirinos, who coordinates MASSVIDA, a network of popular organizations in Honduras' south had to leave Honduras after months of criminalization and threats, ending in a death threat directly to his phone. After three months abroad, he returned this month, but as the situation remains tense, it is not clear if he can stay.<sup>33</sup> Further in the south, the human rights organization ADEPZA emitted an alert denouncing the criminalization of the inhabitants of Puerto Sierra by the landowner Jorge Luis Cassis Leiva.<sup>34</sup>

23 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/lider-ambientalista-era-hombre-encontrado-sin-vida-en-la-ceiba.html>

24 <http://wp.radioprogreso.net/margarita-murillo-a-cuatro-anos-de-su-asesinato/>

25 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1205070-466/sicario-forcejeo-con-el-abogado-mateo-galan-antes-de-asesinarlo>

26 <http://movimientom4.org/wp-content/docs/la-lucha-por-la-defensa-de-sus-territorios.pdf>

27 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/amenazas/882-comunicadora-social-y-defensora-de-ddhh-denuncia-amenazas-a-muerte>

28 <http://www.hondurastierralibre.com/2018/08/honduras-militares-de-la-fuerza-naval-de.html>

29 <http://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/captura-en-bajo-aguan-de-beneficiario-de-medidas-cautelares-de-la-cidh-denuncia-plataforma-agraria.html>

30 <http://reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2018/08/15/a-traves-de-fraude-y-corrupcion-se-les-despoja-de-sus-tierras-denuncian-campesinos-del-aguan/>

31 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/29/comunicador-social-es-agredido-por-militares-en-el-bajo-aguan/>

32 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/secretario-de-la-cntc-el-progreso-denuncia-amenazas-por-su-labor/>

33 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/defensor-de-ddhh-estuvo-en-peligro-de-muerte-por-denunciar-proyectos-de-energia/>

34 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/aumenta-la-criminalizacion-en-zacate-grande/>

## Indigenous Peoples

August is the month which includes the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples,<sup>35</sup> but Honduras' indigenous peoples had nothing to celebrate. Already on August 1, family members of a young indigenous Miskitu man, Espodium Júnior Taylor, denounced that their loved one has been tortured and murdered inside a police station in La Ceiba.<sup>36</sup> A week later, OFRANEH made public that the JOH regime plans to use a protected area to build a thermoelectric power plant in La Ensenada, La Ceiba.<sup>37</sup>

Feminist and women's rights organization held a press conference in which they discussed the first months of the illegal second term of JOH. Among other things, they highlighted the lack of attention towards the specific challenges of indigenous women by the government.<sup>38</sup> Their situation is even made worse by government policies, such as the regime's intention to force through a disputed consultation bill (see FPIC section). The organization Las Hormigas estimates that there are some 6000 environmental defenders criminalized in the country, 1700 of which are women.<sup>39</sup> The Nationalist government harms indigenous peoples not only through laws, but Nationalist congresswo/men also directly harm them. On August 8, COPINH published an alert that "a group of at least 15 armed men, led by the murderous Rios family, protected by nationalist congressman Mario Perez, have just evicted an affiliated group of Copinh whose members maintain their camp inside the land that rightly belongs to them."<sup>40</sup> Four days later, an indigenous woman, María Irene Benítez Gonzalez, was murdered in Santa Elena, La Paz. The coordinator of the indigenous Lenca organization MILPAH and brother of the victim denounced that the supposed assassin belonged to a group forcing through a hydroelectric dam on the Chinacla River and he linked them to the Nationalist congresswoman Gladys Aurora López.<sup>41</sup>

## The Case of Berta Cáceres

In the last few months, the case of Berta Cáceres had stalled in Honduras' courts as trial dates were repeatedly postponed. This month, the evidentiary hearing should have taken place, but once more it was postponed. It finally started on August 31 and it spanned over four days in court, so that it will be subject of the next monthly report. In the weeks up to evidentiary hearing, COPINH denounced on various occasions that the MP failed to hand over evidence to them.<sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup> Even though the court had ordered them to do so, the MP did not comply on 35 occasions.<sup>44</sup> The IACHR also expressed concerns regarding this in its presentation of the preliminary findings (see section on the

35 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23429&LangID=E>

36 <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-misquito-fue-ultimado-dentro-de-jefatura-policia-de-la-ceiba/>

37 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2018/08/09/areas-protegidas-en-la-republica-mafiosa-de-honduras/>

38 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/35-mujeres/770-las-mujeres-indigenas-no-importamos-al-gobierno>

39 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2246-gobierno-de-joh-militariza-los-espacios-publicos-y-ha-profundizado-la-violencia-hacia-las-mujeres>

40 <https://copinh.org/2018/08/alerta-hace-unos-momentos-fueron-desplazados-de-sus-tierras-los-companeros-de-la-comunidad-de-san-juan-somolagua/>

41 <https://reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2018/08/15/femicidio-en-santa-elena-la-paz-habria-sido-cometido-por-acosador-de-indigenas-opuestos-a-represas/>

42 <https://copinh.org/2018/08/se-vence-el-plazo-del-ministerio-publico-para-entregar-informacion-del-caso-de-berta-caceres/>

43 <https://copinh.org/2018/08/el-ministerio-publico-de-honduras-perpetua-la-impunidad-en-el-crimen-de-berta-caceres/>

44 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/procesos-legales/883-un-total-de-35-ocasiones-se-ha-negado-informacion-sobre-asesinato-de-bertha-caceres>

IACHR visit).<sup>45</sup> MADJ which accompanies COPINH and Berta's family in legal matters rightly asked: "Who is the MP protecting?"<sup>46</sup>

Several political analysts published comments on the trial this month. The historian Edgar Soriano explained how the JOH regime tries to "manage" the murder of Berta Cáceres and the resulting trial so that it does not threaten its neoliberal and neo-extractive development model.<sup>47</sup> Lahura Emilia Vásquez Gaitán reminded us not to mistakenly see the "case" and "cause" of Berta Cáceres as one: "[T]he prosecution is directing the trial towards "Berta's case" and not towards "Berta's cause". "Berta's case" focuses on trying to judge who shot the gun that ended her life; however, "Berta's cause" goes beyond murder. It means understanding the origin of the struggles that, for several years now, various social movements have undertaken against extractive, mining, hydroelectric and wind projects in Honduras."<sup>48</sup>

As August came to a close, some more details on the withheld evidence came to light.<sup>49</sup> "More than two dozen electronic devices seized in related raids as far back as 2016 were never subjected to analysis, according to an official response to Cáceres's relatives from the Office of the Prosecutor for Crimes Against Life, a document that has not yet been made public."<sup>50</sup> Ten international and national human rights organizations wrote a public letter to the illegally re-elected Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla denouncing this as well as further irregularities.<sup>51</sup> A week later, over 50 regional and international human rights organizations published another press release expressing their concern about "the persistent negligence of the Honduran authorities in the investigation process".<sup>52</sup>

## FPIC

OFRANEH: "After more than two decades since the ILO Convention 169 was ratified and a decade after the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples was approved, the State of Honduras is imposing a Law of Prior Consultation for indigenous peoples with which it seeks to "comply" with the commitments made, while also dismantling the consultation to turn it into a mere administrative procedure."<sup>53</sup> The Observatory of the Human Rights of Honduras' Indigenous Peoples (ODHPINH) held a well-attended assembly this month. Six of Honduras' indigenous peoples were present (Maya Chortí, Lencas, Pech, Miskitus, Tolupanes and Garífunas) and together they rejected the proposed Consultation Bill.<sup>54</sup> <sup>55</sup> (see the reports from May to July for more information on this topic).

45 <https://copinh.org/2018/08/cidh-expreso-su-preocupacion-por-la-falta-de-acceso-a-la-informacion-en-el-caso-de-bera-caceres/>

46 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/08/%C2%BFA-qui%C3%A9n-protége-el-Ministerio-P%C3%ABAblico-Causa-Berta-C%C3%A1ceres>

47 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/57-pueblos-indigenas/767-pretenden-borrar-historia-de-bera-manteniendo-el-caso-en-secreto>

48 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/14/el-caso-y-la-causa-de-bera-caceres/>

49 <https://copinh.org/2018/08/fiscalia-no-ha-analizado-prueba-a-un-mes-del-juicio-por-el-asesinato-de-bera-caceres/>

50 <https://truthout.org/articles/honduran-prosecutors-withhold-evidence-in-bera-caceres-murder-case/>

51 <https://copinh.org/2018/08/organizaciones-denuncian-irregularidades-en-el-proceso-por-el-asesinato-de-bera-caceres/>

52 <https://www.cejil.org/es/honduras-organizaciones-internacionales-denunciamos-negligencia-estatal-caso-bera-caceres>

53 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2018/08/15/la-consulta-previa-y-su-secuestro-ideologico-a-manos-del-estado-de-honduras/>

54 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/57-pueblos-indigenas/774-pueblos-indigenas-de-honduras-rechazan-anteproyecto-ley-de-consulta>

55 <https://tiempo.hn/ley-de-consulta-libre-garifunas/>

## LGBTI

To better understand the social, political and economic circumstances of trans women in Honduras, Expediente Abierto surveyed 46 trans women in the North of Honduras. Their report "Trans Community in Honduras: A Permanent Struggle to Live" was published this month.<sup>56 57</sup> One particular challenge for the LGBTI community is attempts by state and international actors to divide them. The Sexual Diversity Committee of Honduras, a network of various LGBTI organizations, published a press release this month condemning the smear campaign against one of its members, the LGBT Association Arcoíris. The denounced that state actors try to split the LGBTI movements.<sup>58</sup> Organized religion can be a further source of problems. According to the Pew Research Center, Honduras has become the most Protestant and second least Catholic country in Latin America. This development led to one of "the most fervent conservatisms in the continent" which especially the LGBTI community has suffered from disproportionately. Expediente Público spoke with the feminist pastor Ana Ruth Garcia about this situation.<sup>59</sup>

## Freedom of Expression and Journalists

August started with a brutal attack against the journalist Kency Gissel Grandez Durón by the police.<sup>60</sup> Grandez Durón was covering a student protests at the moment of the attack.<sup>61</sup> The violent reaction by state security forces led to two more students and a human rights defender being hurt.<sup>62</sup> The National Police reacted with a press release speaking of a supposed aggression even though there exists a video of the attack.<sup>63</sup> A group of human rights defenders presented an official complaint at the MP against the police agents.<sup>64</sup> El Pulso denounced that the supposedly purged National Police Force still has not understood the work of journalists.<sup>65</sup> C-Libre then reported that a second reporter was attacked by the police while covering the same protest on August 1. Emilio Flores who works as a cameraman denied handing over his camera to the police and was physically attacked as a response.<sup>66</sup> August saw further attacks against journalists. On August 16, the journalist Ely Vallejo was attacked by a police agent, again when covering a student protest.<sup>67</sup> Since 2015, more than 255 complaints of attacks against journalists have been presented, more than 99% rest in impunity.<sup>68</sup>

56 <http://expedientepublico.org/index.php/derechos-humanos/100-comunidad-trans-en-honduras-una-lucha-constante-por-vivir>

57 <http://expedientepublico.org/index.php/comunidad/92-las-vidas-a-contracorriente-de-las-trans-en-honduras>

58 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2259-ante-campana-de-desprestigio-organizaciones-lgbti-de-honduras-dan-contundente-respaldo-a-asociacion-arcoiris>

59 <http://expedientepublico.org/index.php/perfiles/95-la-pastora-feminista-que-lamenta-que-honduras-sea-tan-religiosa>

60 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/agresion-fisica/879-policias-golpean-y-roban-celular-a-periodista-durante-cobertura-noticiosa>

61 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/748-brutalidad-policia-contra-periodista-de-conexihon>

62 <https://tiempo.hn/agentes-antimotines-agreden-a-periodista-de-c-libre-en-toma-de-la-unah/>

63 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/01/pese-evidencias-policia-pone-en-duda-agresion-de-periodista/>

64 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/02/defensores-presentan-denuncia-penal-contra-policias-que-agredieron-periodistas/>

65 <http://elpulso.hn/nueva-agresion-a-la-prensa/>

66 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/agresion-fisica/880-antimotines-golpean-a-camarografo-que-realizaba-cobertura-a-manifestacion>

67 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/agresion-fisica/889-mujer-policia-golpea-y-dana-su-equipo-de-trabajo-de-periodista>

68 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/02/mas-del-99-de-las-agresiones-contra-periodistas-en-honduras-permanecen-en-impunidad/>

It is not just the police that is attacking journalists. "I don't give a fuck if you are a journalist". A soldier assigned to the National Defense Secretariat told this to the journalist Dasaev Aguilar who filmed outside the secretariat. He wrongly told him that it is forbidden to film there.<sup>69</sup> On August 30, the organization Free Press Colón (PLC) filed a complaint against soldiers for abuse of authority and threats against journalist<sup>70</sup> during the eviction of the San Isidro cooperative.<sup>71</sup>

When state security forces are not physically attacking journalists, they still find other ways to stop them from doing their work. On August 1, journalists and cameramen at UNE-TV denounced that the JOH regime continuously impeded their journalistic work.<sup>72</sup> The same day, the journalist Jorge Estrada was denied access to cover an event by the Health Secretariat. Just a day before, state security forces tried to keep journalist Cesar Silva away from a meeting with IACHR commissioner Edison Lanza. Another tactic is to take journalists of the air. Jairo López denounced that his television program was arbitrarily shut down and he blamed the Electric Energy Company (EEH) to be behind it. López had regularly reported on questionable behavior by the company as on corruption in general.<sup>73</sup> Sometimes, the JOH regime does not even have to close uncomfortable programs, because journalist start to auto-censor themselves. "We decided to be silent because we can not touch issues such as corruption where some officials and local authorities of this department are involved because if we mention these issues we run the risk of losing our lives and endangering our family." Journalists in La Paz, La Paz, shared this somber view with Pasos de Animal Grande.<sup>74</sup>

Back in 2015, Honduras was examined by the UN Human Rights Council as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Member states made various recommendations to Honduras regarding freedom of expression and the work of journalists. Pasos de Animal Grande spoke with María Soledad Pazo, the representative of OACNUDH, regarding the office's follow-up on these recommendations.<sup>75</sup> According to Pasos de Animal Grande, there are several legal figures in force in Honduras that need to be abolished for violating freedom of expression according to the IACHR.<sup>76</sup> Instead of abolishing them, new bills are in the pipeline. Nationalist congressman Marco Velázquez presented a worrisome bill demanding the creation of "a strategy to control popular protests".<sup>77</sup>

August ended with a new wave of threats against journalists working for Radio Progreso. In less than a week, OACNUDH published two press releases. On August 21, Sandra Maribel Sánchez received a death threat by phone.<sup>78</sup> OACNUDH expressed its "profound concern about the threats against the Radio Progreso journalist and human rights defender Sandra Maribel Sánchez."<sup>79</sup> In the

69 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/obstruccion-informativa/895-militar-obstruye-labor-informativa-de-periodista>

70 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/30/periodistas-de-colon-denunciaran-militares-por-abuso-de-autoridad-y-ataque-contra-la-prensa/>

71 <https://tiempo.hn/desalojo-en-tocoa-colon-honduras/>

72 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/censura/878-politica-de-censura-gubernamental-contra-une-tv>

73 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/17/cierran-espacio-televisivo-a-periodista-critico-de-choluteca/>

74 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2264-el-silencio-ahoga-la-informacion-en-la-paz-y-los-periodistas-caminan-sobre-arenas-movedizas>

75 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/monitoreo-de-compromisos-internacionales/item/2239-representante-residente-de-oacnudh-amenazas-contra-la-prensa-en-honduras-tiene-efectos-multiplicadores-que-impactan-en-los-demas-periodistas>

76 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2238-que-figuras-penales-que-atentan-contra-la-libertad-de-expresion-debe-derogar-honduras-segun-la-cidh>

77 <https://tiempo.hn/mocionan-en-el-congreso-nacional-para-crear-una-estrategia-que-controle-las-protestas/>

78 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2260-hija-de-la-gran-pu-no-sabes-como-quedan-las-boconas-le-dicen-por-llamada-a-periodista-sandra-maribel-sanchez>

79 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/23/oacnudh-expresa-su-preocupacion-ante-amenazas-contra-la-periodista-sandra-maribel-sanchez/>

second press release, it expressed its concern about the threats and denigration campaigns against Radio Progreso and especially its director Padre Melo.<sup>80</sup>

## Protection Mechanism

The case of journalist Jairo López may turn into one of the emblematic cases to show the limits of the protection mechanism in Honduras. In the newest deterioration this month, the Preventive Police Force negated him police protection even though the protection mechanism had ordered it.<sup>81</sup>

## Political Prisoners

"Honduran political prisoners Edwin Espinal and Raúl Alvarez, criminalized on trumped up charges related to protests against election fraud, have been in jail for nearly seven months. This week [August 11], from inside the La Tolva maximum security prison, they wrote open letters with messages of hope, thanks, and commitment to the struggle."<sup>82</sup> At the end of August, Libre presented a bill in Congress which would grant amnesty to the political prisoners held since the post-electoral crisis.<sup>83</sup>

## Extractive Industries

While some extractive projects in Honduras have made negative headlines for months or more (see the two sub-sections below), a new one causes grave concerns in the affected communities. With the beginning of the dredging of the Henécan harbor, aquaculture producers and artisan fishermen from the Gulf of Fonseca fear an economic and social crisis.<sup>84</sup> While the privatizing body Coalianza, which promotes the project, claimed that there would not be any environmental damage that could not be mitigated, the Energy, Natural Resources and Mining Secretariat (MiAmbiente) later conceded that they hadn't received any environmental impact study on the construction.<sup>85</sup> El Pulso published an interview with Saúl Montúfar of CODDEFFAGOLF, who fears that the construction leads to permanent damage to the fishing communities in the region.<sup>86</sup>

## Hydroelectricity

The month began with some good news from MADJ. The human rights organization successfully filed a legal challenge against the hydroelectric project Los Planes by HIDROCEP. The court ordered the municipality of Tela to stop the construction work.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, the municipality

80 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/oacnudh-preocupada-por-campana-de-desprestigio-contr-el-padre-ismael-moreno/>

81 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2258-no-son-cuentos-policia-se-revela-ante-el-mecanismo-de-proteccion-y-abandona-patrullajes-para-periodista-jairo-lopez>

82 <https://freedwinespinallibertad.blogspot.com/2018/08/political-prisoners-edwin-and-raul-send.html>

83 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/presentan-decreto-de-amnistia-para-liberar-presos-politicos-encarcelados-por-protestar-contr-el-fraude-electoral/>

84 <http://elpulso.hn/pesca-artesanal-dragado/>

85 <http://elpulso.hn/dragado-golfo-de-fonseca-2/>

86 <http://elpulso.hn/dano-permanente-pesca-golfo-de-fonseca/>

87 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/03/Parar-las-obras-de-HIDROCEP-ordena-juzgado-en-amparo>

ignored the ruling and the inhabitants set up a protest camp at the mayoralty.<sup>88</sup> MADJ denounced that the municipality's "ineffectiveness borders on complicity" with HIDROCEP.<sup>89</sup> On August 14, the municipality of Tela finally reacted. It announced that the construction work by HIDROCEP must stop and that the MP would guarantee this.<sup>90</sup> But again, the Nationalist mayor of Tela, Darío Munguía, did not follow up on his promise. As a consequence, the communities from Pajuiles occupied the highway CA-13.<sup>91</sup> COBRA special forces violently dispersed the protest.<sup>92</sup>

The pressure continued to rise on the local community and the human rights defenders accompanying them. Radio Dignity, affiliated with MADJ, was threatened with closure and its staff was threatened by people linked to HIDROCEP.<sup>93</sup>

## Mining

In the last couple of months, we witnessed almost every month that a community declared itself free of mining. In August, it was the turn of La Bisina in Tocoa, Colón.<sup>94</sup> For the remainder of the month, mining was mainly in the news for the worrisome situations in Azacualpa as well as in Guapinol.

In May, we reported the good news that a court ordered a stop to the exhumations promoted by the mining company MINOSA in Azacualpa. But as previous court ruling, the company also ignored this one. The attacks against the local inhabitants protesting against the company continued.<sup>95</sup> Even worse, MINOSA started a defamation campaign against human rights organizations accompanying the local people.<sup>96</sup> The former Attorney General Edmundo Orellano felt inspired to use it as an example of how the mining sector in Honduras is detrimental to the wellbeing of the public.<sup>97</sup> As a response to the situation in Azacualpa, six European solidarity organizations wrote an open letter to the Honduran authorities expressing their concerns about the non-respect of court rulings by MINOSA and they demanded an end to the defamation campaign.<sup>98</sup>

As the month proceeded, more human rights organizations emitted press releases condemning the behavior of MINOSA.<sup>99</sup> <sup>100</sup> ConexiHon published a helpful article on the situation there going back to 2012, when the protests initiated. Back then, MINOSA first expressed its intention to expand its mining concession to the cemetery of Azacualpa. Over the years, in collusion with local authorities,

88 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/08/Con-campamento-le-exigen-a-la-municipalidad-cumplir-sentencia-y-parar-obras-de-HIDROCEP>

89 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/12/En-5-puntos-La-complicidad-e-inoperancia-de-la-Municipalidad-de-Tela>

90 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/14/La-digna-resistencia-de-Pajuiles-triunfa>

91 <https://www.movimientoamplio.org/single-post/2018/08/15/Pobladores-de-Pajuiles-se-toman-carretera-CA-13-en-Tela-exigiendo-el-cumplimiento-del-paro-de-labores-del-proyecto-hidroel%C3%A9ctrico-los-planes>

92 <http://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/incumplen-fallo-que-ordena-detener-hidroelectrica-hidrocep-en-el-sector-de-pajuiles-tela/>

93 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2255-radio-dignidad-opera-bajo-amenazas-de-grupos-poderosos>

94 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/05/pobladores-de-la-abisinia-en-tocoa-colon-dicen-no-a-la-mineria/>

95 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/07/agresiones-contra-defensores-de-cementerio-en-azacualpa-estran-a-la-orden-del-dia-por-oponerse-a-la-mineria/>

96 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/09/red-europea-de-solidaridad-con-honduras-exigen-se-paren-exhumaciones-en-cementerio-de-azacualpa/>

97 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/13/el-calvario-de-azacualpa-la-union-copan/>

98 <http://honduras-forum.ch/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/carta-abierta-Azacualpa.pdf>

99 <http://www.fosdeh.com/2018/08/pronunciamento-de-solidaridad-con-asonog/>

100 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/estigmatizacion/886-campana-de-estigmatizacion-contra-organizaciones-de-ddhh>

the company had 26 community leaders criminalized.<sup>101</sup> In a further press release, ASONOG, CIPRODEH and MADJ, the three human rights organizations denigrated by MINOSA, denounced that extractive companies control and manipulate State institutions to force through their projects.<sup>102</sup>

As in Azacualpa the situation in Guapinol took a turn to the worse this month. The resistance against the mining company Minera Pinares of Lenir Pérez, son-in-law of Miguel Facussé, grew further. Inhabitants of more than 10 communities protested that the mining project contaminates their water.<sup>103</sup> The Coordination of Popular Organizations of the Aguán (COPA) also reported on a meeting with state bodies to complain that the mining concession affects the main area of the Carlos Escaleras Mejía National Park.<sup>104</sup> But instead of taking up the complaints of the protesters, a representative of the state secretariat MiAmbiente tried to blame the inhabitants of Guapinol, Colón if something were to happen to them.<sup>105</sup> A week later, something did happen. Armed groups showed up in the communities and threatened the peaceful protesters.<sup>106</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

Honduras has various current corruption cases that are discussed in the media and among the public. While this was also the case this month, another case made unexpectedly headlines in August. Out of the blue, a higher court revoked the alternative measures to imprisonment for the former members of the Judiciary Council and ordered their preventive imprisonment. Their work at the Judiciary Council was summarized as a “history of the abuses and pressures” by El Pulso.<sup>107</sup> Their legal teams reacted with presenting new appeals with suspensive effect.<sup>108</sup> But their strategy failed. On August 8, the anti-corruption judge Vera Barahona confirmed the suspension of their alternative measures to imprisonment.<sup>109</sup> The former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana called this decision historic.<sup>110</sup> The Nationalist congressmen Mario Pérez and Antonio Rivera Callejas, meanwhile, expressed solidarity with them.<sup>111</sup>

Among the accused is the former president of the Supreme Court, Jorge Rivera Avilés, who faces no less than 191 charges.<sup>112</sup> The former Libre congressman Rasel Tomé comments on his arrest: He stopped being useful to the powerful.<sup>113</sup> Their defense teams continued to present appeals, but they had no delaying effects anymore and the accused remained in prison<sup>114</sup>, i.e. in a military prison

101 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/772-azacualpa-poblacion-en-defensa-del-derecho-a-vivir-y-morir-en-paz>

102 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/21/companias-extractivistas-controlan-y-manipulan-instituciones-del-estado-para-desarrollar-sus-proyectos-asonog/>

103 <https://tiempo.hn/honduras-crece-resistencia-a-mina-alutech/>

104 <http://www.hondurastierralibre.com/2018/08/honduras-comunicado-publico-la.html>

105 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/gobierno-responsabiliza-a-pobladores-de-guapinol-si-se-da-una-batalla-campal-por-oponerse-a-minera/>

106 <http://movimientom4.org/2018/08/comunicado-copa-en-defensa-del-agua-y-la-vida-campamento-guapinol-por-la-dignidad/>

107 <http://elpulso.hn/la-historia-de-un-consejo-de-la-judicatura/>

108 <https://tiempo.hn/presentan-amparo-ante-la-csj-exconcejales/>

109 <https://confidencialhn.com/mandan-a-la-carcel-al-expresidente-del-poder-judicial-y-sus-exconcejales-de-la-judicatura/>

110 <https://confidencialhn.com/efiscal-general-ve-como-historico-que-manden-presos-a-un-expresidente-del-poder-judicial/>

111 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/08/diputados-nacionalistas-se-hacen-un-nudo-alrededor-del-expresidente-de-la-corte/>

112 <http://wp.radioprogreso.net/por-delitos-de-corrupcion-dicta-prision-preventiva-a-expresidente-de-la-corte-suprema-de-justicia/>

113 <https://confidencialhn.com/expresidente-del-poder-judicial-dejo-de-ser-util-a-los-grupos-de-poder/>

114 <https://tiempo.hn/admiten-recurso-amparo-a-favor-de-exconcejales/>

away from any other inmates.<sup>115</sup> The month ended with some sobering news regarding the case. The president of the Supreme Audit Court (TSC), Jose Juan Ponedá, declared that the process against them should rather be of administrative instead of penal nature.<sup>116</sup>

August produced also reports on new corruption cases, e.g. one involving the Family Support Program (Práf). Two companies and an NGO are being investigated for supposedly stealing \$3.1 million from Práf between 2011 and 2014.<sup>117</sup> The former judge Liz Núñez Cardona will face trial for favoring two cousins linked to organized crime of the former vice-president of the Judiciary Council, Teodoro Bonilla.<sup>118</sup> She was found guilty of abuse of authority but not for breach of legal duty (prevaricato) and, therefore, does not have to await her sentencing in prison.<sup>119</sup> There is also potential for many future corruption cases. FOSDEH denounced that there are currently 67 trusts managing some 18 billion Lempiras without much oversight.<sup>120</sup>

While corruption cases continue to make headlines, this is not the case anymore for the MACCIH. Since it got a new spokesperson, the international anti-corruption body is less in the news. The spokesperson Luiz Antonio Guimarães Marrey spoke to the press this month after complaints had been voiced about a perceived lack of communication. He declared that he would not be a "media personality" and that he would only talk if they had concluded an investigation and not in advance while an investigation was still being conducted.<sup>121</sup> In the same interview, he insisted on the approval of the Efficient Collaboration Bill<sup>122</sup>, as had done his predecessors on many occasions. This bill has become some kind of a litmus test to show that there is still no political will in Honduras to fight corruption. For more information on the MACCIH, the Center For Latin American & Latino Studies published its fifth edition of the MACCIH Monitor covering the time of May 1 to July 31, 2018 by.<sup>123</sup> Another book on corruption in Honduras was published this month by the Document Center of Honduras (CEDOH): "Impunity, Corruption and Insecurity in Honduras: Democratic Challenges for the New Government 2018-2022".<sup>124</sup>

## The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

The month started with a trip by UFECIC's Luis Santos to the US, meeting among others with the State Department.<sup>125</sup> There, he denounced that powerful actors actively undermine the fight against corruption in Honduras.<sup>126</sup> The US Chargé d' Affaires in Honduras, Heide Fulton, reacted on Twitter, voicing words of support for UFECIC.<sup>127</sup> One such attempt to undermine corruption investigation

115 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/aislan-por-seguridad-a-exconcejales-de-judicatura-en-recinto-militar.html>

116 <https://confidencialhn.com/acusacion-contr-exconcejales-de-la-judicatura-no-ameritaba-persecucion-penal-tsc/>

117 <http://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1204619-410/corupcion-robo-praf-honduras-programa-asignacion-familiar-ong-empresas-anticorupcion->

118 <https://confidencialhn.com/enjuician-a-exfuncionaria-judicial-que-permitio-liberacion-de-primos-mafiosos-del-exconcejal-bonilla/>

119 <http://www.proceso.hn/nacionales/9-nacionales/condenan-por-abuso-de-autoridad-y-la-absuelven-por-prevaricato-a-exjueza-liz-maria-nunez.html>

120 <https://confidencialhn.com/fosdeh-denuncia-uso-oscuro-de-18-mil-millones-distribuidos-en-67-fideicomisos/>

121 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/09/no-sere-un-personaje-mediatico-vocero-de-la-macch/>

122 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/09/la-macch-insta-a-los-hondurenos-exigir-la-aprobacion-de-la-ley-de-colaboracion-eficaz/>

123 <https://www.american.edu/centers/latin-american-latino-studies/upload/MACCIH-Monitor-5-English.pdf>

124 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/08/cedoh-presenta-libro-sobre-impunidad-corupcion-e-inseguridad-en-honduras/>

125 <http://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/jefe-de-la-ufecic-se-reune-con-funcionarios-de-departamento-de-estado-en-washington.html>

126 <https://confidencialhn.com/jefe-de-ufecic-se-queja-en-washington-por-la-conspiracion-del-poder-sobre-casos-de-corupcion/>

127 <https://confidencialhn.com/habla-ee-uu-jefa-diplomatica-reitera-respaldo-a-la-ufecic-y-cuestiona-sutilmente-al-poder-judicial/>

was seen shortly after Santos' US trip. The Nationalist president of Congress, Mauricio Oliva, called on the Constitutional Chamber to protect him from a corruption investigation. The court accepted the request. But as the Constitutional Chamber did not decide unanimously, the request will go to the plenary session of the Supreme Court.<sup>128</sup>

Honduras court system play a dubious role in fighting corruption in Honduras. Gabriela Castellanos, the director of the CNA, denounced that the Constitutional Chamber has shown time and time again that its rulings were not based in the law but rather aligned with political interests.<sup>129</sup> If one judge tries to deviate from this, he or she may be punished. ConfidencialHN reported on a questionable rotation inside the Judicial Power. The judge that ordered the release of the seized possessions belonging to Ramón Matta Waldurruga was rotated to another position.<sup>130</sup> Political analysts told El Tiempo that this undermined judicial independence.<sup>131</sup>

A further prominent attack on the fight against corruption involves Article 184 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The article regulates for which crimes someone can be held in custody while awaiting trial. It made headline news this month because officials accused of corruption in the Pandora case wanted to get rid of it and they got unexpected support by the IACHR. After its visit to Honduras (see above), they presented a list of recommendations, among them a reform of Article 184.<sup>132</sup> The article itself is rather recent and was established in 2013 when JOH was president of Congress. The article by ConfidencialHN offers an overview. Reinvigorated, Nationalist congressman Mario Pérez demanded that only "crimes of blood" can lead to preventive imprisonment.<sup>133</sup>

On August 21, Congress' Human Rights Commission presented a bill to reform Article 184.<sup>134</sup> The MACCIH reacted immediately warning that such a reform would weaken the fight against corruption.<sup>135</sup> The MP followed with a statement the next day saying that the article does not violate constitutional nor international law ratified by Honduras.<sup>136</sup> The statement came just hours after the US embassy, i.e. its chargé d'affaires Heide Fulton, tweeted that they are closely observing Congress and its attempt to reform the Article 184.<sup>137</sup> The tweet also seemed to influence the position of the National Party. Before the tweet, Congress' president Mauricio Oliva told the press that the reform represents a sovereign decision by Congress.<sup>138</sup> Then afterwards, both he and the National Party seemed to take a step back speaking of consulting various sectors before taking a

128 <http://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/sala-constitucional-admite-recurso-a-favor-de-mauricio-oliva-pero-debe-ir-a-pleno.html>

129 <https://tiempo.hn/gabriela-castellanos-sala-de-lo-constitucional-blinda-procesos-de-funcionarios/>

130 <https://confidencialhn.com/purga-de-guante-blanco-rotan-a-juez-que-desembargo-bienes-asegurados-a-matta-waldurruga/>

131 <https://tiempo.hn/analistas-trasladados-en-el-poder-judicial-pone-en-precariedad-independencia-de-jueces/>

132 <https://confidencialhn.com/comision-de-ddhh-de-la-oea-aconseja-anular-catalogo-de-delitos-porque-viola-presuncion-de-inocencia/>

133 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/08/solamente-en-delitos-de-sangre-debe-existir-la-prision-preventiva-mario-perez/>

134 <http://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/presentan-iniciativa-para-reformar-articulo-184-del-codigo-procesal-penal.html>

135 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2947-alarmada-macch-por-diputados-que-buscan-blindaje-manoseando-codigo-penal>

136 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/23/articulo-184-no-vulnera-la-constitucion-ni-tratados-internacionales-sobre-dd-hh-ministerio-publico/>

137 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/eeuu-sigue-de-cerca-reforma-al-articulo-184-y-advierte-evaluar-consecuencias.html>

138 <https://confidencialhn.com/las-reformas-al-articulo-184-son-una-decision-soberana-del-congreso-nacional/>

decision.<sup>139</sup> By months end, Oliva seemed to have changed his mind once more speaking out in favor of a reform.<sup>140</sup>

## The Case against the Former First Lady Rosa Elena de Lobo

The former First Lady Rosa Elena de Lobo tried once more, unsuccessfully, to end her pre-trial detention.<sup>141</sup>

## The Case against Congresswo/men

Just about three months ago, Congress made negative headlines due to widespread corruption in the use of departmental funds. As a reaction, Congress eliminated the Departmental Development Fund on July 12. In August, just a month later, Nationalist congressman Mario Pérez introduced a bill asking once more for the creation of a departmental fund.<sup>142</sup>

## The IHSS Case

In August, the individualization of the penalty against three accused in the IHSS corruption case started. The MP demanded the maximum penalty of 35 years for Mario Roberto Zelaya Rojas and José Ramón Bertetty Osorio and 15 years for Juan Carlos Maradiaga Ortiz.<sup>143</sup>

## The Pandora Case

Since the revelation of the Pandora corruption case, dozens of articles on it have been published changing between hope that some powerful actors finally will be held to account and resignation that not much will change. The month started with an Op-Ed by the former attorney general Edmundo Orellana.<sup>144</sup> His comment on the case as "selective justice" belongs to the second camp. This resignation was fueled by a ruling in July that allowed 24 accused to leave prison and await the trial in freedom. On August 3, the MACCIH announced that they support the appeal by UFECIC against the ruling.<sup>145</sup> According to both the MACCIH and UFECIC, the accused should continue to be accused of money laundering and not just concealment.<sup>146</sup>

Since its revelation, more sub-cases were added to the overarching Pandora case which initially involved 38 people. One of the new sub-cases involves the current First Lady who received \$60'000 through checks emitted by one of the companies linked to the main Pandora case.<sup>147</sup> On August 28,

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139 <https://tiempo.hn/presidente-del-cn-no-someteremos-a-votacion-iniciativas-orientadas-a-reformar-el-articulo-184-del-cpp/>

140 <https://confidencialhn.com/presidente-del-parlamento-admite-excesos-en-ley-de-privacion-de-dominio-y-articulo-184-penal/>

141 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2952-la-rosa-ofrecio-hoy-16-millones-para-ser-juzgada-en-libertad-juez-no-acepto>

142 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/21/diputado-mario-perez-presenta-proyecto-de-ley-para-que-se-restablezca-el-fondo-departamental/>

143 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/solicitan-pena-concreta-a-condenados-en-caso-ihss-jc-maradiaga.html>

144 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/01/justicia-selectiva/>

145 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/03/la-maccih-apoya-la-apelacion-presentada-por-la-ufecic-contra-resolucion-en-caso-pandora/>

146 <http://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1203818-466/caso-pandora-maccih-respalda-a-la-ufecic-tras-presentar-recurso-contra-resoluci%C3%B3n>

147 <http://expedientepublico.org/index.php/corrupcion/96-que-se-abra-mas-la-caja-de-pandora-en-honduras>

a joint effort by UFECIC<sup>148</sup> and the MACCIH<sup>149</sup> led to the seizure of 46 properties, 9 companies and various goods linked to the case.<sup>150 151</sup> The seizure made prominent headlines, because ATIC, the body conducting the seizures, also sought out the seats of both the National and the Liberal Party.<sup>152</sup> The political analyst Víctor Meza portrayed this as something unprecedented reflecting a new US priority to combat corruption in Honduras.<sup>153</sup> Time will tell if this is really the case. So far the fight against corruption has fallen short of any meaningful convictions.

## State Security Forces

The Special Commission for the Purge and Transformation of the National Police of Honduras (“Purging Commission”) presented this month the new Police Career Bill.<sup>154</sup> Their work was supported by the Association for a More Just Society (ASJ) and the US (see further below). The new head of the MACCIH, Luiz Antonio Guimarães Marrey, announced to support the purge of the National Police Force.<sup>155</sup> The month ended with the committee announcing to purge another 78 police officials.<sup>156</sup>

Back in July 2016, Congress announced to create the Investigative Unit of the Violent Deaths of Women at the MP as well as an accompanying inter-institutional commission.<sup>157</sup> Nothing happened for over two years, as feminist and women’s rights organizations continued to push for it. On August 16, the JOH regime finally installed the inter-institutional commission. It consists of ATIC, the Public Prosecutor for Crimes against Life, the Security Secretariat, the Human Rights, Justice, Governance and Decentralization Secretariat, the National Office for Women, CONADEH as well as three civil society organizations, the Women’s Studies Center Honduras (CEM-H), the Women’s Movement for Peace “Visitación Padilla” and the Quality of Life Association.<sup>158</sup> August once more has shown how important such a commission, if effective, is for Honduras. ContraCorriente published the tragic story of Yeni Ferrera - a femicide which could have been averted, had the Honduran State just acted upon receiving her cry of help as a victim of domestic violence.<sup>159</sup>

## Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations

"More than six months after security forces in Honduras killed numerous protesters during a violent post-election crackdown, not a single indictment has been filed against the perpetrators of what the

148 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/3364-juez-ordena-se-aseguren-bienes-y-se-congelen-cuentas-bancarias-a-involucrados-en-caso-pandora>

149 <https://www.oas.org/es/sap/dsdme/maccih/new/docs/MCH-006.18-MACCIH-colabora-con-UFECICMP-aseguramiento-bienes-origen-ilicito-valor-equivalente-Caso-Pandora.pdf>

150 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/28/conozca-la-lista-de-los-bienes-asegurados-por-caso-pandora/>

151 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/oabi-administrara-78-bienes-y-1-9-5-millones-por-caso-pandora.html>

152 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2954-caso-pandora-juez-ordena-quitar-bienes-y-congelar-cuentas-bancarias-incluye-a-partidos-nacional-y-liberal>

153 <https://confidencialhn.com/intervencion-de-partidos-politicos-es-una-fase-mas-en-la-desaparicion-del-tradicionalismo-victor-meza/>

154 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1204372-466/depuradora-aprobar%C3%A1-1-reglamento-para-ley-de-la-carrera-policial>

155 <http://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/maccih-se-compromete-a-respaldar-el-proceso-de-depuracion-y-transformacion-de-la-policia.html>

156 <https://confidencialhn.com/anuncian-la-purga-de-unos-78-oficiales-de-la-policia-nacional-de-honduras/>

157 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2253-mujeres-piden-al-gobierno-aplicacion-decreto-de-comision-investigadora-de-los-femicidios>

158 <http://www.proceso.hn/nacionales/9-nacionales/gobierno-instala-comision-interinstitucional-para-investigar-muertes-violentas-de-mujeres-y-femicidios.html>

159 <https://contracorriente.red/2018/08/20/un-femicidio-que-el-estado-pudo-evitar/>

UN high commission for human rights has described as extra-judicial executions."<sup>160</sup> During these times, the young Jesús Bautista Salvador was forcefully disappeared and so far his family accompanied by COFADEH has unsuccessfully searched for him.<sup>161</sup>

## Repressions

A school teacher was stopped by the Military Police while protesting with a "Fuera JOH" sign. They took his identity card and then asked him to give them money to hand the card back to him.<sup>162</sup> Near Tela, COBRA special forces violently dispersed a protest against the mayor of Tela.<sup>163</sup> The Nationalist mayor, Darío Munguía, had ignored a court ruling to stop the construction of a hydroelectric plant (see section on Extractive Industries).

ConexiHon got access to state documents proving that state intelligence forces spied on on the student movement MEU last year. ConexiHon feels reminded of the dark days of the National Security Doctrine in the 80s in Honduras.<sup>164</sup> More acts of aggression and repression by state security forces in August have been highlighted in the three sections on Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment, Indigenous Peoples, and Freedom of Expression further up.

## Militarization

Five years ago, the Military Police was created and has since been responsible for various assassinations, threats and acts of repression. Nevertheless, El Heraldo offered its commander Tito Livio Moreno Coello a platform to praise the institution. Moreno Coello even wants the Military Police to grow even further and take up new tasks.<sup>165</sup> JOH also praised the internationally criticized institution.<sup>166</sup>

## International Community

The JOH regime continues to sign international cooperation agreements as if the human rights violations during the post-electoral crisis had never happened and Honduras had been “normalized”<sup>167</sup>. First, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) granted Honduras a \$412 million loan, 60 million will be dedicated to security.<sup>168 169</sup> Second, the Honduran Central Bank signed a cooperation agreement with the World Bank regarding the National Survey of Household Incomes and Expenditures (ENIGH).<sup>170</sup> Third, the Human Rights Secretariat with the support of

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/17/honduras-post-election-killing-families-wait-in-vain-for-justice>

<sup>161</sup> <http://defensoresenlinea.com/ocho-meses-y-aun-no-hay-respuesta-de-que-paso-con-manuel-de-jesus-bautista-salvador/>

<sup>162</sup> <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/criminalizacion-de-la-protesta-publica/884-dirigente-magisterial-se-refugia-en-estacion-radial-para-evitar-ser-detenido-por-escribir-fuera-joh>

<sup>163</sup> <http://wp.radioprogreso.net/incumplen-fallo-que-ordena-detener-hidroelectrica-hidrocep-en-el-sector-de-pajuiles-tela/>

<sup>164</sup> <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/investigaciones/785-inteligencia-policia-monto-vigilancia-por-siete-meses-al-meu>

<sup>165</sup> <http://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1208520-466/tito-livio-moreno-coello-la-policia-c3%ADa-militar-ha-sido-un-c3%A9xito-pese>

<sup>166</sup> <https://tiempo.hn/joh-policia-militar-aniversario/>

<sup>167</sup> <http://wp.radioprogreso.net/honduras-un-pais-normalizado-10-agosto-2018/>

<sup>168</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/mas-deuda-bid-prestara-a-honduras-400-millones-de-dolares/>

<sup>169</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/bid-anuncia-prestamo-de-400-millones-de-dolares-para-honduras/>

<sup>170</sup> <http://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m-c3%A1s-noticias/bch-y-bm-firman-convenio-de-cooperacion-para-desarrollo-de-encuesta-de-hogares.html>

UNICEF installed a body to monitor the recommendations made to Honduras regarding the rights of children.<sup>171</sup> Further agreements were signed with US and European bodies as listed below.

## US

The above section on corruption highlighted how the topic continues to make headlines in Honduras. The US helped in this endeavor this month. Back in 2012, the US Congress approved the so-called Magnitsky Act directed at Russia which in 2016 was expanded to the Global Magnitsky Act allowing the US Government to sanction foreign government officials implicated in human rights abuses. A Democratic and a Republican congresswo/man requested to have a group of Central-American congressmen added to the list, among them the Nationalist Óscar Nájera.<sup>172 173</sup> He reacted by blaming civil society leaders for speaking badly about Honduras abroad. This denigration of human rights defenders has a sad tradition in Honduras.<sup>174</sup> The former General Attorney Edmundo Orellana believes that some of the accused in the Pandora corruption case could be included in the US Global Magnitsky list.<sup>175</sup>

This month, Democratic US congressman Jim McGovern traveled together with various US mayors to Honduras to get to know the country a bit better and to understand why people flee from it to the US. During their stay, they met with Radio Progreso as an act of solidarity.<sup>176</sup> In a press conference, the US mayor of Somerville, Massachusetts, Joseph Curtatone, said that US president Trump wanted to make the US believe that the situation in Honduras has improved in order to justify abolishing the Temporary Protection Status (TPS): "But as almost everything he says...it was a lie."<sup>177</sup>

The Clean Politics Unit signed a cooperation agreement with the US National Democratic Institute (NDI).<sup>178</sup> The MP under its illegally reelected Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla signed a cooperation agreement with USAID with the aim of promoting justice and reduce impunity.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the US State Department supported the Honduran purging commission in the elaboration of the Police Career Bill.<sup>180</sup>

The month ended with an important call by PBI USA: "In the coming weeks, the U.S. State Department will decide whether to certify that Honduras has met a number of conditions required for the release of full funding under the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act. One of these conditions is that Honduras is taking effective steps to

171 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/presentan-informe-sobre-recomendaciones-internacionales-ddhh-en-la-ninez-hondurena.html>

172 <https://tiempo.hn/senado-de-ee-uu-pide-investigar-a-diputado-nacionalista-oscar-ramon-najera/>

173 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/members-us-congress-sanctions-lاتم-elites/>

174 <https://confidencialhn.com/esos-mal-nacidos-que-se-vayan-de-honduras-parlamentario-se-defiende-de-acusaciones-de-ee-uu/>

175 <https://confidencialhn.com/efiscal-general-augura-que-implicados-en-pandora-podrian-ser-incluidos-en-ley-magnitsky-de-ee-uu/>

176 <http://wp.radioprogreso.hn/en-visita-a-radio-progreso-congresista-y-alcaldemocratas-se-comprometen-a-seguir-defendiendo-al-pueblo-inmigrante/>

177 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/14/delegacion-estadounidense-busca-apoyo-legal-y-legislativo-para-migrantes-centroamericanos-y-los-titulares-de-tps/>

178 <http://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/unidad-de-politica-limpia-y-ndi-fortalecen-transparencia-de-fondos-politicos.html>

179 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/15/mp-y-usaid-firman-convenio-para-promover-acceso-a-la-justicia-y-reducir-la-impunidad/>

180 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1204372-466/depuradora-aprobar%C3%A11-reglamento-para-lev-de-la-carrera-policial>

protect the ability of human rights defenders, opposition party members, journalists, and other civil society activists to work without interference. The U.S. State Department is likely to claim that Honduras is complying; never has the State Department done otherwise. But international human rights experts and Honduras' own governmental human rights office, CONADEH, have consistently found that the work of human rights defenders and other civil society activists has been impeded in Honduras, often directly by government agents. Various international organizations have called out the U.S. government's continued certification of Honduras as a direct interference into the work of defenders and civil society activists who are facing egregious levels of violence for the work that they do."<sup>181</sup>

## EU

JOH met the Spanish president of Congress, Ana Pastor, this month to discuss among other things the controversial construction of the Palmerola airport. The construction company belongs to Lenir Pérez, the son-in-law of the deceased palm oil magnate Miguel Facussé.<sup>182</sup> Pérez possesses various companies, among them a mining company which made negative headlines these last months (see in the Mining sector).

The Dutch Institute for Multi-Party Democracy announced a collaboration with Honduras' Clean Politics Unit.<sup>183</sup> In the same month, the same unit had already announced a collaboration with the US National Democratic Institute (NDI) (see above).

## Drug Trafficking

Expediente Público published an interesting interview this month with a former employee of the Anti-Drugs Unit of the National Police. Granting the person anonymity, they speak about the failings inside the police force.<sup>184</sup>

## Varia

### The National Dialogue

While there was only little substantial news in July about the national dialogue, this changed again this month. Radio Progreso offered a helpful dialogue about what the different sectors really think when they use the word dialogue. They conclude: "We would like to believe and trust that the dialogue opens doors to removes masks. However, in a country as convulsed and unstable as ours, nothing will be achieved only at dialogue tables. It is absolutely necessary that the citizens

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181 <https://pbiusa.org/content/us-should-not-sign-violence-honduras-1>

182 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/turismo-aeropuerto-de-palmerola-y-cooperacion-aborda-hernandez-con-jefa-del-congreso-espanol.html>

183 <http://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/instituto-holandes-para-la-democracia-ratifica-apoyo-a-unidad-de-politica-limpia.html>

184 <http://expedientepublico.org/index.php/seguridad-y-violencia/93-el-abc-del-narcomenudeo-en-honduras>

contribute to the recovery of the lost democracy through mobilization and social, conscious, peaceful and organized pressure."<sup>185</sup>

One controversy that accompanied the discussions about the dialogue since the beginning was its legal character: would the resolutions be binding or not?. This month, JOH claimed that he signed an executive decree making the dialogue binding.<sup>186</sup> On August 14a after eight months of preparation, 16 rounds of pre-dialogue, the official dialogue started...and was immediately suspended once more due to political disagreements.<sup>187</sup> The Liberal Party accuses the National Party of not wanting an inclusive dialogue preferring a divide and conquer strategy. The Opposition Alliance denounced that the National Party wanted, as the only one, double the amounts of seats at the table because they represent both the party and the government.<sup>188 189</sup>

While the UN representative promoting the dialogue, Igor Garafulic, continued believing in it, criticism about the dialogue kept growing.<sup>190</sup> In a press conference at COFADEHs's, the Alignment against the Reelection (CCC) highlighted the need to return to a constitutional order before sitting down for a dialogue. "The current political dialogue will not arrive at that solution and much less will it find the necessary consensus that will lead to the construction of a country of justice, democracy and welfare for all, because the regime only bets on its consolidation, therefore it seeks to legitimize and legalize its crime of treason."<sup>191</sup>

Deaf to such criticism, the UN pushed forward and on August 27, the dialogue started a second time. Discussions will be held at four round tables: i) the 2017 electoral process and the reelection; ii) human rights, iii) constitutional reforms and strengthening of the rule of law, and iv) electoral reforms. Criterio denounced that JOH will in the end be the one to have to recognize the agreements coming out of the dialogue.<sup>192</sup> ConfidencialHN published the agreement signed by the parties present at the dialogue. It also lists the topics the parties want to discuss at the above mentioned round tables. The National Party and the Executive Power do not mention the assassinated protesters, rather they want to investigate the threats against and deaths of police agents and soldiers.<sup>193</sup> This fit with later statements by JOH in a radio emission. He announced the importance to investigate the presence of organized crime during the election.<sup>194</sup> He had already used this in November, unconvincingly claiming that Maras supported the Opposition Alliance.

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185 <http://wp.radioprogressohn.net/el-dialogo-en-manos-de-politicos-09-agosto-2018/>

186 <https://tiempo.hn/joh-firma-acuerdo-y-dice-que-assume-la-categoria-de-compromisos-de-gobierno/>

187 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/14/fracasa-dialogo-politico-en-honduras/>

188 <https://tiempo.hn/no-hay-acuerdo-para-iniciar-el-dialogo-nacional-y-el-pn-pide-cuatro-sillas-en-la-mesa/>

189 <http://wp.radioprogressohn.net/empantanado-están-intenciones-de-dialogo-politico-en-honduras/>

190 <http://wp.radioprogressohn.net/de-dialogos-y-sorderas-23-agosto-2018/>

191 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/convergencia-contras-el-continuisimo-no-puede-haber-dialogo-si-antes-no-se-retorna-al-orden-constitucional/>

192 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/28/hermanez-sera-quien-reconocera-los-acuerdos-del-dialogo-que-se-instalo-hoy-en-honduras/>

193 <https://confidencialhn.com/asistentes-al-dialogo-politico-firman-acuerdo-para-respetar-resultados-de-negociaciones/>

194 <https://confidencialhn.com/hermanez-reitera-que-se-tiene-que-analizar-la-infiltracion-del-crimen-en-las-elecciones-de-2017/>

## Student Protests

The strike in the transport sector ended last month as their leaders betrayed the public by agreeing with the JOH regime to raise the price for public transport instead of lowering fuel prices (see last month's report). Students took up the struggle this month demanding both lower fuel and public transport prices.<sup>195 196</sup> They even started to partly occupy the UNAH again as they had done during last year's protests.<sup>197</sup>

On August 8, C-Libre denounced that one of the protests was shot at from an unknown attacker from a car.<sup>198</sup> As with previous protests, state security forces used heavy force to repress them.<sup>199</sup> But the students continued and younger high schools pupils joined the protests, taking place at different schools in Tegucigalpa.<sup>200</sup> State security forces responded with more repression violently evicting protesting students in three Honduran cities.<sup>201</sup> Once more, a civilian shot at the protesting students<sup>202</sup> and as in 2017, state authorities started to threaten protesting students with expulsion.<sup>203</sup> Education Minister Marcial Solis announced "re-educative and disciplinary measures" further criminalizing the protests.<sup>204</sup>

On August 22, two students were beaten and arrested. CIPRODEH further denounced that the police did not even let the public prosecutor see the students to receive complaints for mistreatment.<sup>205</sup> A day later, COIPRODEN demanded that the Honduran State should listen to the demands of the protesting students rather than having state security forces attack them and the legal system criminalize them.<sup>206</sup> The regime did not listen and its security forces once more went after protesting students.<sup>207</sup>

## Poverty

August saw another increase in Honduras' already high-priced basket of basic goods.<sup>208</sup> The former head of Honduras' Central Bank, Hugo Noé Pino, warns that 2018 may come to a close with both higher inflation and higher poverty rates.<sup>209</sup> The current drought could further worsen the

195 <https://confidencialhn.com/prosiguen-tomas-en-la-unah-por-exigencia-de-rebaja-a-combustibles-se-reportan-escaramuzas/>

196 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2250-estudiantes-de-educacion-media-amenazados-con-expulsiones-por-demanda-de-bono-de-transporte>

197 <https://confidencialhn.com/estudiantes-toman-edificios-de-la-unah-ante-fracaso-para-exigir-rebajas-al-transporte/>

198 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/amenazas/885-desconocidos-disparan-contra-movilizacion-estudiantil-de-la-unah>

199 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/criminalizacion-de-la-protesta-publica/887-represion-a-colegiales-que-protestan-contra-el-alza-al-transporte-publico>

200 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/15/colegios-de-tegucigalpa-en-paro-por-bono-de-transporte/>

201 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/criminalizacion-de-la-protesta-publica/890-nuevamente-fuerzas-policiales-reprimen-protestas-de-estudiantes-de-secundaria>

202 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/alertas/agresion-fisica/888-civil-dispara-contra-colegiales-que-realizaban-manifestacion>

203 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2256-dirigentes-estudiantiles-que-conducen-tomas-de-colegios-están-amenazados-por-activistas-del-partido-nacional>

204 <https://confidencialhn.com/funcionario-pide-sanciones-para-los-que-interrumpen-clases/>

205 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/22/policia-golpea-salvajemente-a-dos-estudiantes-del-instituto-central-vice-caceres/>

206 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/23/estado-de-honduras-debe-atender-las-peticiones-y-no-criminalizar-la-protesta-de-los-estudiantes-coiproden/>

207 <https://confidencialhn.com/policias-y-estudiantes-se-enfrentan-en-batalla-campal-en-una-populosa-zona-de-tegucigalpa/>

208 <https://tiempo.hn/cuarenta-lempiras-aumentaron-los-productos-de-la-canasta-basica-en-honduras/>

209 <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-cerrara-2018-con-mayor-inflacion-y-desempleo/>

situation.<sup>210</sup> This does not square well with the high salaries by some public officials in Honduras as denounced by FOSDEH this month.<sup>211</sup>

Expediente Público published an analysis on how economic growth so far failed to help the poor in Honduras. In 2017, Honduras' economy grew by 3.9%, the fifth fastest growing economy in Latin America. At the same time, Honduras is the third most unequal country in the world and it is estimated that more than 6 million people live in poverty. The cost of their monthly basic goods has grown from 69\$ in 2001 to 106\$ in 2017. As a consequence, only 26% of parents believed in 2013 that their children will have it better than them, back in 2004, the number was 59%.<sup>212</sup>

## Public Health

August started with a strike by employees at the San Felipe Hospital. They denounced the lack of payment and that the hospital hired Nationalist activists for senior positions instead of hospital personnel.<sup>213</sup> The National Party further arbitrarily deducts a percentage of the salaries of doctors hired ad-interim and those without a permanent employment as denounced by the Medical Association Honduras (CMH).<sup>214</sup> Further strike actions were announced as a response to the low stock of pharmaceuticals in most medical centers.<sup>215 216</sup>

Honduras public health system sufferers from various challenges, but the CMH highlighted this month that the general crisis of the system is government-induced to prepare the grounds for privatization.<sup>217</sup> This became evident when JOH announced the creation of a Special Commission to Transform the Health System.<sup>218 219</sup> It is called the National Health Commission and the former UNAH dean Julieta Castellanos was announced as one of its members.<sup>220</sup> The commission is headed by the Secretary of Health, Octavio Sánchez. Castellanos's nomination raised some question, as the body responsible for the University Hospital, one of the most obvious cases of the failings of public health in Honduras, is administrated by UNAH.<sup>221</sup> The former director of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Carlyle Guerra de Macedo, commented on the intervention body: "The centralization process of bureaucratic power, so common in our region, is not accidental. It is, in fact, an expression of the need to concentrate the power of the elites, a way of preventing social participation in political decision making."<sup>222</sup>

210 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/08/1017712>

211 <https://confidencialhn.com/funcionarios-de-la-nacion-mas-pobre-del-mundo-tienen-sueldos-de-europa-fosdeh/>

212 <http://expedientepublico.org/index.php/seguridad-y-violencia/99-mas-inversion-en-seguridad-y-defensa-mayor-pobreza-en-honduras>

213 <https://confidencialhn.com/empleados-del-hospital-san-felipe-paralizan-labores-por-nombramiento-de-activistas-y-falta-de-pago32/>

214 <https://tiempo.hn/cmh-denuncia-pn-retiene-dinero-a-empleados-de-salud-contrato/>

215 <http://radiohrn.hn/2018/08/19/asambleas-informativas-con-plantones-a-nivel-nacional-realizaran-las-autoridades-del-cmh/>

216 <http://radiohrn.hn/2018/08/19/sitramedhys-se-unira-a-las-acciones-de-protesta-del-cmh/>

217 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/20/crisis-en-salud-puede-ser-jugada-del-gobierno-para-privatizar-los-servicios-medicos/>

218 <https://confidencialhn.com/publican-decreto-para-intervenir-el-sistema-sanitario-de-honduras/>

219 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/presidente-herandez-crea-comision-para-la-transformacion-del-sistema-de-salud.html>

220 <https://criterio.hn/2018/08/21/julieta-castellanos-integra-comision-interventora-de-salud/>

221 <https://confidencialhn.com/responsabilizan-a-exrectora-de-la-unah-e-interventora-sanitaria-por-crisis-en-el-hospital-escuela/>

222 <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/194997>

## Economy

The former president of the Honduran Economists Association, Liliana Castillo, questions the promised economic success by JOH's 20/20 program. According to her, job creation has not lived up to the promises and foreign direct investment stalled and is mainly in the form of rollovers and not fresh capital.<sup>223</sup>

## Sexual Violence

Doctors without Borders published a new report this month in which they highlight Honduras as the country with the highest rate of rape in Latin America.<sup>224</sup> Honduras further suffers from a lack of sexual and reproductive rights as the Center for Women's Rights (CDM) exposed in a public forum.<sup>225</sup> Women's rights organizations especially denounced the prohibition of emergency contraceptive pills.<sup>226</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

Sadly, nothing came to mind this month...

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223 <https://confidencialhn.com/cuestionan-falta-de-inicio-del-programa-gubernamental-de-generacion-de-empleos/>

224 <https://tiempo.hn/honduras-numero-uno-en-casos-de-violacion-en-america-latina/>

225 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2946-prohibir-pastilla-de-emergencia-viola-derechos-reproductivos-en-honduras>

226 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2257-la-falta-de-una-firma-del-ministro-de-salud-imposibilita-el-uso-de-la-pae-en-honduras>



### **Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland**

#### Past Activities:

Everyone seemed to have fled Switzerland's summer heat and it was a quiet month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland.

#### Upcoming Activities:

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