



Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – November 2020

WTF...two hurricanes hitting Honduras within two weeks during a still spreading corona pandemic. Instead of finally living up to the task, the JOH regime and its allies see it as a new opportunity to access international funds and play fire with, the already dysfunctional, democracy by considering postponing the coming elections. Overshadowed by this, two more human rights defenders were murdered, a political prisoner was stabbed and the Berta Cáceres trial was postponed three more times. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

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ASJ	Association for a More Just Society
ATIC	Technical Bureau for Criminal Investigation
BID	Inter-American Development Bank
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CDM	Center for Women's Rights
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
FPIC	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
UFERCO	Special Prosecuting Unit against Corruption Networks
UNAH	National Autonomous University of Honduras
ZEDE	Zone for Employment and Economic Development

The hurricanes Eta and Iota

November started with the hurricane Eta threatening Central America. On November 1, the storm reached the level of a category 3 hurricane¹ and on November 2, even category 4.² El Tiempo made a comparison between Eta and Mitch.³ But for the first two days, the JOH regime insisted that Honduras still try to enjoy the so-called Morazán Holidays (see last month).⁴ Only when news broke that it could be even a category 5 hurricane, the JOH regime finally canceled the holiday.⁵

On November 3, Eta was downgraded again to a level 2 hurricane, nevertheless, it remained strong⁶ and the first devastating effects were already seen with at least one person dying.⁷ COPECO declared red alert for seven departments⁸ and in four departments highways were closed down.⁹ Both Criterio and El Libertador denounced that the JOH regime did not take previous warnings about the storm seriously.^{10 11} Radio Progreso spoke to risk management expert Ramiro Lara. "Honduras is facing a hurricane with catastrophic characteristics dragging along structural problems, because governments have been unable to pay attention to the serious vulnerability the country is experiencing."¹²

And then Eta hit Honduras. It was accompanied by heavy rain. Bridges collapsed.¹³ Rivers spilt over.¹⁴ People had leave their homes.¹⁵ Airports were closed.¹⁶ The JOH regime declared a national emergency (the second in place due to the corona pandemic).¹⁷ When Eta had passed over Honduras, it left behind it devastation. Flooding and landslides continued for the coming days. ¹⁸ There were massive evacuations in the north of Honduras¹⁹ – again, after the fact even though the JOH regime had been warned over a week before.²⁰ Even worse, there were several reports that they actively undermined popular organized rescue and aid efforts.^{21 22} And then, there is also the fact

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- 1 <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/11/extremely-dangerous-hurricane-eta-may-cause-catastrophe-in-central-america/>
 - 2 <https://tiempo.hn/huracan-eta-en-honduras-alcanzaria-categoria-5-alerta-se-disparan/>
 - 3 <https://tiempo.hn/eta-y-el-huracan-mitch-que-similitud-hay-entre-ellos/>
 - 4 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2377-urgente-huracan-eta-ya-llego-a-honduras-gobierno-insiste-con-feriado>
 - 5 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-suspende-semana-morazanica-y-eta-por-alcanzar-categoria-5/>
 - 6 <https://proceso.hn/eta-entraria-como-tormenta-tropical-pero-conservara-su-agresividad-dice-experto/>
 - 7 <https://criterio.hn/una-menor-muerta-decenas-de-damnificados-y-repunte-de-enfermedades-produce-eta-hasta-ahora-en-honduras/>
 - 8 <https://confidencialhn.com/copeco-declara-alerta-roja-en-siete-departamentos-de-honduras-por-llegada-del-huracan-eta/>
 - 9 <https://confidencialhn.com/anuncian-cierre-de-carreteras-en-horarios-nocturnos-en-cuatro-departamentos-bajo-alerta-roja-por-eta/>
 - 10 <https://criterio.hn/centro-de-huracanes-indica-que-honduras-descontinuo-alertas-y-advierte-sobre-peligro/>
 - 11 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2384-urgente-eeuu-gobierno-de-honduras-no-esta-vigilando-al-devastador-eta>
 - 12 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/honduras-se-enfrenta-a-un-huracan-catastrofico-arrastrando-problemas-estructurales-senala-experto/>
 - 13 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/fotogalerias/1420219-468/derrumbes-puentes-caidos-y-hundimiento-estragos-provoca-huracan-eta>
 - 14 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/a-su-nivel-maximo-los-rios-del-valle-de-sula/>
 - 15 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/11/03/lluvias-por-huracan-eta-dejan-cientos-de-damnificados-en-el-valle-de-sula/>
 - 16 <https://criterio.hn/cierran-aeropuertos-de-honduras-por-huracan-eta/>
 - 17 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-de-honduras-declara-alerta-roja-en-todo-el-pais/>
 - 18 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1420558-410/eta-sale-de-honduras-dejando-muertes-y-graves-da%C3%B1os>
 - 19 <https://proceso.hn/ordenan-evacuaciones-masivas-en-el-norte-de-honduras-en-proximas-horas/>
 - 20 <https://criterio.hn/respuesta-tardia-del-gobierno-de-honduras-sacude-las-redes-sociales/>
 - 21 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-que-gobierno-obstaculiza-ayudas-de-voluntarios-que-desean-auxiliar-a-damnificados/>
 - 22 <https://criterio.hn/estalla-indignacion-por-manejo-de-ayudas-y-donativos-por-parte-de-copeco/>

that the JOH regime tasked Invest-H, of pandemic fame, with hiring companies for the clean up after the hurricane²³ and to buy temporary bridges.²⁴

By November 10, COPECO documented 63 deaths²⁵ and 2.9 million Honduran affected.²⁶ At the same time, El Tiempo made public that the Armed Forces had registered 125 deaths.²⁷ Rafael Alegría warned about the dramatic situation of peasant farmers as Eta worsened an already difficult situation.²⁸ According to COHEP, at least 40% of the agricultural production was lost due to the floods.²⁹ Medical experts warned again about rescue centers becoming new corona hotspots and asked for maintaining biosafety measures.³⁰ "The president of the Association of Physicians of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS) in San Pedro Sula (SPS), Carlos Umaña, warned this Monday of a spike in cases of coronavirus by not giving masks to the victims of the Eta storm in the various shelters."³¹ There are also warning that the massive flooding will cause more cases of dengue, malaria and leptospirosis.³²

During this time, the JOH regime received a lot of international financial support. The BCIE, for example, donated \$500 million.³³ But Hondurans could still not rely on the government. The theme of the day is "only the people can save the people". This also corresponded with an observation made by journalist Jeff Ernst. "I just left the shelter in Chamelecon. The three meals come from the people, not the Muni[cipality]. There is no water. It's full of mud and garbage. Many people sleep on the floor. They said the mayor came today just to take a picture."³⁴

Just a week after Eta had hit Honduras, fear about a second hurricane, Iota, was voiced.³⁵ The next day, COPECO emitted a red alert for all of Honduras.³⁶ The situation further worsened when the hurricane changed its trajectory to go straight through Honduras.³⁷ People feared the worst.³⁸ "There is no historical precedent for two Atlantic hurricanes of at least category 4 strength hitting the same location just two weeks apart. That this may occur in November, when major hurricanes are rare, is particularly extraordinary."³⁹ On November 16, Iota made landfall in Nicaragua and further moved towards Honduras.⁴⁰ According to Copeco, by that time 580'360 Hondurans had been evacuated.⁴¹

23 <https://confidencialhn.com/corrupcion-a-la-vista-investh-movilizar-medio-centenar-de-empresas-para-remover-escombros-en-carreteras/>

24 <https://radioprogreso.net/instante/ahora-invest-h-comprara-puentes-de-metal-tipo-bailey-para-emergencia-de-eta/>

25 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2402-honduras-63-muertos-400-personas-esperan-rescate-y-protesta>

26 <https://tiempo.hn/crudas-cifras-un-tercio-hondurenos-damnificados-eta/>

27 <https://tiempo.hn/125-muertes-eta-fuerzas-armadas-doble-copeco/>

28 <https://criterio.hn/pequenos-agricultores-de-honduras-a-la-deriva-por-perdidas-en-cosechas/>

29 <https://proceso.hn/un-40-de-la-produccion-agricola-fueron-danados-por-las-inundaciones-estima-cohep/>

30 <https://tiempo.hn/eta-en-sps-21-damnificados-exponento-dan-positivo-covid/>

31 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1421259-410/-coronavirus-incrementarse-lbergues-eta-honduras-contagios->

32 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=49894>

33 <https://tiempo.hn/bcie-dona-500-mil-honduras-eta-prestaria-250-millones/>

34 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1325952584654475264>

35 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=50045>

36 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1421937-466/alerta-roja-honduras-tormenta-iota>

37 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2416-honduras-trayectoria-de-iota-afectaria-zonas-centro-y-sur>

38 <https://www.univision.com/amp/univision-news/latin-america/were-afraid-of-whats-coming-vulnerable-honduras-braces-for-iota-second-hurricane-in-two-weeks>

39 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1328425331368321035>

40 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/meteorologia/arranca-techos-como-si-fueran-de-carton-iota-azota-una-comunidad-de-nicaragua-golpeada-antes-por-eta>

41 <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-580-mil-personas-han-sido-evacuadas-en-honduras/>

Again it was accompanied by heavy rainfalls. More people lost their housing, more rivers spilt over, more bridges were destroyed.^{42 43}

Thousands of Hondurans sought refuge in shelters, but there were ongoing reports about they are unfit for this emergency. ConfidencialHN denounced that shelters in Comayagüela lack food and supplies.⁴⁴ Questions arose where the international aid was going.⁴⁵ Calls grew louder for the constitution of a consultative group to rebuild Honduras.⁴⁶ There were also demands to have both the head of Copeco as well as JOH investigated.⁴⁷ Community leaders in Guapinol denounced that the JOH regime discriminate against communities resisting against extractive projects when deciding where to help.⁴⁸

CESPAD published an analysis on the circumstances needed for a successful reconstruction of Honduras - circumstances which are not yet in place and should give donors pause to think if they want to send more money to the corrupt JOH regime or find other ways to work directly with the Honduran people.⁴⁹ Criterio also covered this. " With skepticism and uncertainty some experts received the management of external resources that the government of Juan Hernández Alvarado manages through the G-16 and cooperating countries, with which it will supposedly attend to the population, restore the productive apparatus, road infrastructure and housing that were devastated after the passage of hurricanes Eta and Iota through the country."⁵⁰ According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), \$69 are needed to support 450'000 people in Honduras.⁵¹ The BCIE announced to finance the construction of 7 dams in the Dry Corridor with \$7 million.⁵² The EU will support the Honduran people with \$900'000.⁵³ The European Investment Bank will finance reconstruction projects for \$15.7 in Honduras through the BCIE.⁵⁴ The disputed public body Invest-H (see above and last monitors) hopes to manage more than 12 billion Lempiras to rebuild Honduras' infrastructure.⁵⁵

An additional 640'000 Hondurans were affected by Iota to the already affected 2.9 million by Eta.⁵⁶ According to COPECO, 17 more Hondurans died to Iota.⁵⁷ Agriculture production suffered another heavy blow.⁵⁸ The Sula Valley, Honduras' economic center, is under water.⁵⁹ "The leader of the

42 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/hurricane-iota-causes-widespread-flooding-in-nicaragua-and-honduras-from-overflowing-rivers>

43 <https://radioprogreso.net/instante/iota-ya-es-historia/>

44 <https://confidencialhn.com/albergados-en-comayagua-urgen-de-alimentos-y-viveres/>

45 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2430-honduras-gobierno-gasto-fondos-eta-pero-en-albergues-no-hay-comida>

46 <https://confidencialhn.com/piden-que-se-conforme-un-grupo-consultivo-para-la-reconstruccion-de-honduras/>

47 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-debe-abrir-investigacion-a-copeco-y-poder-ejecutivo-por-mal-manejo-de-emergencia/>

48 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/investigaciones/item/3018-discriminacion-por-defender-derechos-pobladores-de-guapinol-no-recibieron-asistencia-del-estado-con-hurricanes-eta-y-iota>

49 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/19/reconstruccion-nacional-y-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

50 <https://criterio.hn/expertos-desconfian-del-manejo-de-recursos-internacionales-para-reconstruccion-y-ayuda-humanitaria/>

51 <https://twitter.com/UNOCHA/status/1329498696350904325>

52 <https://www.radiohrn.hn/honduras-bcie-desembolsara-7-millones-de-dolares-para-la-construccion-de-siete-represas-en-el-corredor-seco>

53 <https://proceso.hn/ue-destinara-e900-mil-a-honduras-para-ayudar-a-los-damificados-por-eta/>

54 <https://tiempo.hn/banco-europeo-reconstruccion-honduras/>

55 <https://proceso.hn/invest-h-gestiona-fondos-por-mas-de-1-12-mil-millones-a-nivel-internacional-para-rehabilitar-infraestructura/>

56 <https://proceso.hn/asciende-a-643-mil-856-las-personas-afectadas-tras-paso-de-iota-por-honduras/>

57 <https://proceso.hn/sube-a-17-los-hondurenos-fallecidos-por-tormenta-tropical-iota/>

58 <https://radioprogreso.net/portada/pequenos-productores-fuertemente-golpeados-por-hurricanes/>

59 <https://radioprogreso.net/portada/bajo-agua-el-valle-de-sula-el-polo-economico-de-honduras/>

National Association of Small and Medium Industries of Honduras (ANMPIH), Efraín Rodríguez, estimates that between seven and ten percent of the micro-enterprises in the informal sector disappeared as a result of the natural phenomena that affected Honduras.⁶⁰ Public debt has risen from 49% to 56.4% of GDP in the last year.⁶¹ COHEP estimates that GDP will drop by 11% this year.⁶²

According to Copeco, taken together, Iota and Eta affected more than 4 million Hondurans. They documented 91 deaths, the destruction of 58 bridges and 26'000 homes, 87 damages or collapsed highways, and the loss of 80% of agricultural production.^{63 64} There are still dozens of Hondurans in communities cut off from the rest of Honduras.⁶⁵ There are 969 shelters with 88'722 people.⁶⁶ Many parts of the country also suffer from lack of electricity.⁶⁷ FOSDEH estimates the total economic loss at \$10 billion.⁶⁸ CEPAL estimated that reconstructing destroyed infrastructure would cost some \$10 billion.⁶⁹ The Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) estimated that it would cost 6 billion Lempiras to reactivate the agricultural sector.⁷⁰

Instead of listening to the calls of civil society and experts, the JOH regime announced to put together its own advisory board to accompany the reconstruction.⁷¹ This top-down approach was immediately criticized.⁷² In a record speed, JOH put together this advisory board filled with allies and no critical voices⁷³ further undermining trust in the reconstruction process.⁷⁴

The COVID-19 Crisis

The number of dengue cases has risen to 22'199 in Honduras by the beginning of November.⁷⁵ By the end of the month, there were 23'317 cases.⁷⁶

November started with 98'212 COVID-19 cases and an official death count of 2675.⁷⁷ By November 30, the number rose to 108'253 cases and 2918 deaths.⁷⁸ Due to the hurricanes, testing capacities went down even further. But of course, the problems run deeper. The JOH regime never succeeded in testing more than 3000 people per day and it still depends on just two laboratories for testing.

60 <https://criterio.hn/huracanes-eta-e-iota-dejan-fuertes-perdidas-en-la-micro-y-pequena-empresa-de-honduras/>

61 <https://confidencialhn.com/a-19-mil-millones-de-lempiras-podria-incrementar-deuda-publica-al-cierre-de-2020-fosdeh/>

62 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1423658-410/honduras-cohep-estima-pib-caera-hasta-11-iota-eta>

63 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/11/22/eta-e-iota-arrasaron-con-cultivos-pero-el-gobierno-afirma-que-no-habra-hambruna/>

64 <https://criterio.hn/campesinos-reportan-perdidas-totales-de-cultivos-por-paso-de-iota-y-eta/>

65 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1424119-466/todav%C3%ADa-hay-decenas-de-hondure%C3%B1os-aislados-en-sus-comunidades>

66 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/11/23/chamelecon-la-reconstruccion-de-los-olvidados/>

67 <https://tiempo.hn/lunes-cortes-energia-programados-interrupciones/>

68 <https://tiempo.hn/eta-iota-mas-4-millones-personas-afectadas-copeco/>

69 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1424524-466/se-requerir%C3%A1n-m%C3%A1s-de-10-mil-millones-para-la-reconstrucci%C3%B3n-de-honduras>

70 <https://tiempo.hn/sag-6-mil-millones-reactivar-sector-agricola/>

71 <https://proceso.hn/gobierno-crea-su-consejo-consultivo-para-la-reconstruccion-y-hace-primer-nombramiento/>

72 <https://criterio.hn/consejo-consultivo-esta-formado-por-entes-y-personas-que-han-validado-corrupcion-del-gobierno/>

73 <https://proceso.hn/configurado-consejo-consultivo/>

74 <https://criterio.hn/reconstruccion-en-manos-de-cuestionado-consejo-consultivo-genera-desconfianza/>

75 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1420354-466/honduras-ya-registra-22199-casos-de-dengue>

76 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=50645>

77 <https://www.radiohrn.hn/noviembre-comienza-con-alerta-roja-en-los-18-departamentos-y-con-98212-casos-positivos-de-covid>

78 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-supera-los-108-mil-casos-de-covid-19-tras-sumar-365-nuevos-positivos/>

More affluent Hondurans, meanwhile, can rely on private laboratories, which cover up to 5500 Lempiras for a test.⁷⁹ Under-reporting of corona deaths have been made public by various non-state institutions over the last months. This month, even the National System of Risk Management (Sinager) said that in the Central District alone 3054 deaths had not been counted.⁸⁰

State Reaction

"The Ministry of Health failed to comply with a requirement of the Institute of Access to Public Information (IAIP) in response to a request made by Contracorriente in which we asked for a copy of the results of the tests in which Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández allegedly tested positive by COVID-19. Now the IAIP commissioners' plenary has issued a legal resolution for the delivery of the information, which if not complied with would take the case to the Attorney General's Office."⁸¹

Honduras signed a letter of intent for the acquisition of 1,400,000 doses of the ZD 1222 vaccine against the coronavirus from the company AztraZeneca.⁸² The JOH regime also promised a vaccine for everyone who needs one in Honduras.⁸³

Health Sector

Three more doctors died to COVID-19 this month.⁸⁴ ⁸⁵ Back in March, the JOH regime presented a plan to build 95 health centers to confront the corona pandemic...none of them have been built.⁸⁶ Even worse, the JOH regime plans to go forward with privatizing the IHSS in Roatán.⁸⁷

Human Rights

Social movements and indigenous organizations published the 34th joint press release during the pandemic.⁸⁸

Corruption

Invest-H and Copeco, both of pandemic corruption fame (see last monitors) are among the public institutions that failed to comply with the transparency law.⁸⁹ Additionally, two COPECO employees were detained for illegally selling of biosafety equipment.⁹⁰

79 <https://tiempo.hn/sinager-63-casos-14-fallecimientos-nivel-nacional/>

80 <https://tiempo.hn/tgu-sinager-revela-3-mil-muertes-covid-19-sin-contabilizar/>

81 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/11/13/secretaria-de-salud-oculta-resultados-de-las-pruebas-por-covid-19-del-presidente/>

82 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1425051-410/honduras-compra-adquisicion-dosis-vacuna-contracoronavirus->

83 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1425227-466/joh-habr%C3%A1-vacuna-contracovid-19-para-los-que-m%C3%A9dicamente-lo-necesiten>

84 <https://tiempo.hn/mueren-medicos-hondurenos-covid-19-heroes-primera-linea/>

85 <https://proceso.hn/covid-19-sigue-cobrando-la-vida-de-medicos-en-honduras-y-este-dia-suma-el-numero-53/>

86 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1424532-466/por-falta-de-an%C3%A1lisis-en-nada-quedaron-los-420-millones-para-los>

87 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-avanza-con-privatizacion-del-ihss-en-roatan/>

88 <https://copinh.org/2020/11/manifiesto-publico-34-noviembre-2020/>

89 <https://proceso.hn/copeco-e-invest-h-entre-las-123-instituciones-que-incumplieron-en-publicacion-en-informes-en-sus-portales-iaip/>

90 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/166-noviembre2020/6681-mp-da-captura-a-dos-empleados-de-copeco-que-vendian-equipos-de-biosseguridad-del-estado>

More than nine months have passed since Invest-H bought and payed by 100% the mobile hospitals. The CNA denounced that only one of the seven mobile hospitals is functional.⁹¹ This month, Invest-H promises that by February, they would be in the hands of the Health Secretariat.⁹² During the pandemic, the CNA so far has published 12 reports on corruption, but this has led to only one accusation by the MP.⁹³

Poverty

The corona pandemic together with the aftermath of Eta could lead to a hunger crisis in Honduras according to the Honduran Association of Economists (CHE).⁹⁴

Economy

Criterio reported on the economic impact of the pandemic. There are estimates that over 40% of micro-, small- and medium-sized business had to close.⁹⁵ According to FOSDEH, the economic cost of the hurricanes and the corona pandemic could be more than \$12 billion.⁹⁶

ContraCorriente published a breakdown of which companies benefited from state aid during the pandemic and surprise, surprise, it was not the small ones. "To assist the productive sector through COVID-19, the Government of Honduras authorized up to \$2.5 billion in debt, and commissioned a state bank to provide guarantees and loans that would favor small and medium enterprises. However, this research found that, despite the promises, the money has benefited private banks, business conglomerates, and medium-size companies the most. There has been almost no official relief for micro-enterprises."⁹⁷

Human Rights and Their Defenders

Various UN Special Procedures jointly wrote to the JOH regime regarding the deaths, forced disappearance and attacks against HRDs in Honduras as well as the irregularities in the Berta Cáceres trial.⁹⁸

The Universal Periodic Review of Honduras took place on November 4 for at the UN Human Rights Council.⁹⁹ COFADEH's Bertha Oliva commented on the importance of the process but also warned that the JOH regime would try to sell lies as truths.¹⁰⁰ After the process,¹⁰¹ Pasos de Animal Grande published an article focusing on the realities of the country and how they are a mismatch to

91 <https://criterio.hn/tras-siete-meses-de-haber-pagado-hospitales-moviles-solo-uno-funciona/>

92 <https://proceso.hn/invest-h-estima-que-para-febrero-de-2021-los-hospitales-moviles-estaran-a-cargo-de-salud/>

93 <https://criterio.hn/de-12-informes-de-corrupcion-presentados-por-el-cna-solo-hay-1-requerimiento-fiscal/>

94 <https://tiempo.hn/eta-covid-19-provocar-hambruna-honduras-che/>

95 <https://criterio.hn/cierre-de-mipymes-ha-aumentado-el-desempleo-en-honduras-fedecamaras/>

96 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=50092>

97 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/11/12/la-soledad-de-los-pequenos-empresarios-hondurenos/>

98 <https://twitter.com/MaryLawlorhrds/status/1332365924276592640>

99 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHHN/status/1323370547841888257>

100 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/bertha-oliva-ante-el-epu-honduras-va-a-construir-mentiras-y-las-vendera-como-verdades/>

101 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/HNIndex.aspx>

the presentation of the MP.¹⁰² The Human Rights Board published a press release denouncing that the JOH regime was lying about the realities in Honduras during the process.¹⁰³ Germany started its recommendation during the UPR by lamenting that they had to repeat recommendations made already at the UPR in 2015.¹⁰⁴

Assassinations

On November 24, OFRANEH member Laura Carolina Valentín Dolmo, a 32-year old Garífuna woman, was found dead, presumably assassinated.¹⁰⁵ "We demand an expeditious investigation, including an immediate and thorough autopsy, in order to elucidate the circumstances of the crime and help find those responsible; and that this process be carried out with strict respect for the worldview, identity and culture of the Garifuna people."¹⁰⁶ On November 29, a young member of the CNTC in Santa Barbara, Kevin Javier Chacon Lopez was assassinated by gunmen just a week after the Regional General Secretary Neptaly Ventura survived an attempt on his life (see below).

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

MADJ sent out an alert that the environmental defender Óscar Lopez had been illegally detained.¹⁰⁷ He was released about ten hours later. The CNTC denounced an attack against land defender Neptaly Ventura and the lack of response by the police.¹⁰⁸ Last but not least, COFADEH condemned "the repeated smear campaigns through the media and other forms, in order to damage the image of Betty del Carmen Vásquez Rivera, human rights defenders and the environment in the department of Santa Bárbara".¹⁰⁹

Indigenous Peoples

"In a letter signed by 57 MEPs we express our deepest concern to the authorities, asking to immediately locate the 4 kidnapped Garifuna members alive and end the systematic and intentional violence against the Garifuna people."¹¹⁰

COPINH sent out an alert denouncing the ongoing criminalization of COPINH members from El Achotal, Siguatepeque (see last month). Three more of them were detained and accused of usurpation. 12 in total now face criminalizing charges.¹¹¹

102 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/3011-del-dicho-al-hecho-hay-mucho-trecho-mp-presento-avances-ineficientes-en-derechos-humanos-en-el-eju-2020>

103 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/3012-segun-mesa-de-derechos-humanos-estado-hondureno-mintio-otra-vez-al-ser-examinado-en-el-eju>

104 www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1769-alemania-lamenta-tener-que-repetir-recomendaciones-en-materia-de-ddhh-a-honduras

105 <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/11/alerta-urgente-honduras-asesinan-a-la-joven-defensora-garifuna-laura-carolina-valentin-dolmo-integrante-de-la-ofraneh/>

106 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1331622803204960261>

107 <https://www.facebook.com/MovAmplioHn/posts/3490738704353337>

108 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/3021-6-dias-despues-de-atentado-estado-tiene-sin-proteccion-a-defensor-territorial-neptaly-ventura>

109 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/cofadeh-responsabiliza-por-la-integridad-de-betty-vasquez-a-quienes-las-senalan-publicamente/>

110 <https://twitter.com/MetzTilly/status/1332361956917915649>

111 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1326223320115798016>

The Case of Berta Cáceres

COPINH and the rest of the world commemorated Berta this month, 56 after her assassination.¹¹² The legal process against David Castillo, meanwhile, was postponed twice at the beginning of the month.^{113 114} Then, it should have continued on November 23 and COPINH and Berta's family members held a press conference in front of the court. "The evidence demonstrating Mr. David Castillo's responsibility as a co-author of the murder of our sister Berta Cáceres is clear, strong and irrefutable. The legal team will provide the scientific, testimonial and documentary evidence that supports this accusation to the sentencing court."¹¹⁵ But again, they were stopped from doing so as the hearing was postponed another time.¹¹⁶ EU Parliamentarian Tilly Metz tweeted: "It is regrettable that today's Court hearing against David Castillo, the man charged as the mastermind behind the murder of human rights defender Berta Cáceres had been suspended. It is very important to resume the trial soon to ensure #JusticeForBerta!"¹¹⁷

COPINH later wrote: " This Monday, November 23rd, the Hearing for Presentation of Evidence in the case against David Castillo was suspended again due to delaying actions by his defense. In this stage of proceedings, the evidence linking David Castillo to the crime would be presented, and the context around the crime and the actions and responsibilities that triggered the events of March 2, 2016 would be disclosed. The maneuvers to delay proceedings with the purpose of avoiding justice are obvious: trying to ensure that hearings do not take place and that evidence is not revealed and requesting that there be no public transmission of proceedings for observation by Honduran and international society. All these actions seek to hide the truth that the Honduran people and the world demand. These are puerile maneuvers that seek to hide not only David Castillo's responsibility, but also that of the masterminds of the crime, the Atala Zablah, as well as the State of Honduras' responsibility in the case."¹¹⁸

LGBTQ

This month, the hearing in the case of murdered trans activist Vicky Hernández started at the Inter-American Court on Human Rights.¹¹⁹ OACNUDH condemned that on the day of the hearing, a plaintiff and member of Cattrachas with protective measures suffered harassment.¹²⁰ Cattrachas commented on the important case: "For the Cattrachas Lesbian Network, the life and death of Vicky Hernández exemplifies the systematic discrimination and violence experienced by trans women and

112 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1323278796376727554>

113 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1325826072223625223>

114 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1328724815734317057>

115 <https://copinh.org/2020/11/public-statement-the-victims-present-irrefutable-evidence-against-david-castillo/>

116 <https://copinh.org/2020/11/se-pospone-la-audiencia-de-proposicion-de-pruebas-contra-david-castillo-coautor-en-el-asesinato-de-bera-caceres/>

117 <https://twitter.com/MetzTilly/status/1330939915610296322>

118 <https://copinh.org/2020/11/newsletter-no-12-every-delay-proves-david-castillos-guilt/>

119 <https://tiempo.hn/cidh-recibe-primer-caso-mujer-trans-asesinada-honduras/>

120 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1326636644800323584>

LGBT people in Honduras, even after their death."¹²¹ The Court later granted provisional protection measures to the family of Vicky Hernández and the Catrachas Lesbian Network.¹²²

IACHR and OSRESCER Publish Thematic Report: “Trans and Gender-Diverse People and Their Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights”.¹²³

Assassinations

LGBTQ+ activist and trans woman Mía Zabala was assassinated and found dead in Amapala, Valle on November 8.¹²⁴ OACNUDH condemned the murder. "The murder of Mía Zabala should have been prevented through actions aimed at guaranteeing the right to life of trans people in Honduras. The Office I represent is deeply concerned about the stigmatization, discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity that LGBTI people in the country are subjected to," said Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, OACNUDH Representative in Honduras.¹²⁵

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

Two journalists working with C-Libre, Cesario Padilla and Miriam Elvir, were detained by the police yesterday. "C-Libre has described the detention as "illegal and illegitimate". "The journalist Miriam Elvir was detained in a police checkpoint, at the entrance of the colony La Esperanza, accusing her of misconduct to the authority, while the journalist Cesario Padilla, was detained for recording the arrest", says the Committee."¹²⁶ ¹²⁷ Seven hours later, they were released again. Pasos de Animal Grande denounces the circumstances of the arrest, but also of the release. Apparently, they were forced to sign an act of conciliation where they expressed that "they will not act legally, judicially or extra-judicially". "Obviously it carries a clear message of trying to silence the victims of these human rights violations and that those responsible will go unpunished, as in hundreds of cases."¹²⁸

The above happened on the International Day to End Impunity in Crimes against Journalists. Two UN Special Rapporteurs called on the occasion of this day for an international accountability mechanisms to address impunity.¹²⁹ The Coalition against Impunity presented an official complaint at the MP against state security forces for cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of journalist. The complaint focuses on the illegal detention of nine journalists.¹³⁰

121 <https://criterio.hn/personas-lgtbi-en-honduras-son-victimas-de-violencia-hasta-despues-de-muertas/>

122 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1326946772623761408>

123 http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2020/282.asp

124 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/asesinan-a-activista-lgtbi-en-zacate-grande/>

125 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-atroz-asesinato-de-mia-zabala-octava-mujer-trans-asesinada-en-2020/>

126 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2380-alerta-policia-detiene-y-violenta-a-periodistas-hondurenos>

127 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/3008-alerta-detienen-a-los-periodistas-cesario-padilla-y-miriam-elvir-de-c-libre>

128 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/3009-las-horas-de-la-ignominia-policia-mantuvo-detenido-por-mas-de-siete-horas-a-periodistas>

129 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/expertas-de-la-onu-piden-mecanismos-internacionales-de-rendicion-de-cuentas-para-hacer-frente-a-la-impunidad/>

130 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1782-organizaciones-de-sociedad-civil-interponen-denuncia-colectiva-por-detenciones-arbitrarias-contra-periodistas-hondurenos-en-el-marco-de-la-pandemia-por-covid-19>

Journalist Yanina Romero received threatening calls and messages after speaking out in favor of the workers at the newspaper Diario Tiempo who demand the respect of their labor rights.¹³¹ Journalists having worked at the newspaper are also intimidated.¹³² Pasos de Animal Grande reports on the economic difficulties by journalist and social communicators in 2020.¹³³

Violence against Women

As every November 25, the world commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.¹³⁴ The pandemic and the hurricanes further worsened their situation in Honduras.¹³⁵ "Honduras is one of the nine countries in Latin America that prohibits abortion in its entirety. Penalties range from 3 to 10 years in prison".¹³⁶

Political Prisoners

The current situation in Honduras described in this report may lead us to forget that there are still political prisoners in Honduras. In the case of the teacher Rommel Baldemar Herrera Portillo, imprisoned since May 2019, in a Review of Measures hearing, the Supreme Court requested that a forensic doctor issue a report on the state of health of Rommel.¹³⁷ ¹³⁸ He has been held for 480 days.¹³⁹ He will face trial next month.

A second political prisoner, Raúl Álvarez fares even worse. He was stabbed in prison and had surgery. "Alvarez was taken to the Hospital Escuela, where he was admitted to the operating room at about 8:30 pm to safeguard his physical integrity. His state of health is stable, according to information provided by doctors at the care center."¹⁴⁰

Extractive Industries

Honduras has been suspended from the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative for "insufficient progress" regarding the participation of civil society actors.¹⁴¹

Fosdeh and Oxfam published a report on the failures of the Honduran economic model based on extractivism.¹⁴² "The Environmental Law Institute of Honduras (Idamho) presented a technical analysis aimed at explaining the havoc that extractivism can cause and the harmful behaviors that can reduce the country to a desert, since the National Congress is debating a reform through,

131 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1278-amenazas-telefonicas-a-periodista-en-reaccion-a-denuncia-contra-violaciones-laborales>

132 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1279-intimidaciones-por-exigencia-de-derechos-laborales-denuncia-periodista-afectado>

133 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/3013-advierten-periodistas-de-redes-el-2021-puede-ser-un-ano-devastador-para-este-sector>

134 <https://honduras.un.org/es/102445-la-eliminacion-de-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres-es-fundamental-para-el-desarrollo-de>

135 <https://radioprogreso.net/portada/pandemia-y-huracanes-incrementan-violencia-contra-mujeres-en-honduras/>

136 <https://criterio.hn/mujeres-de-honduras-siguen-siendo-criminalizadas-por-el-aborto/>

137 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/tribunal-solicita-mas-informacion-sobre-salud-de-rommel-herrera/>

138 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/por-orden-judicial-rommel-baldemar-sera-evaluado-por-un-medico-psiquiatra/>

139 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/el-maestro-rommel-baldemar-lleva-480-dias-privado-de-libertad-en-forma-arbitraria/>

140 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/atentan-contra-el-pres-o-politico-raul-alvarez/>

141 <https://criterio.hn/suspension-de-honduras-ante-eiti-dejara-a-extractivismo-al-libre-albedrio/>

142 <https://fosdeh.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/fosdeh-2020-ilusionismo-economico.pdf>

Legislative Decree No. 238-2012, to the General Mining Law, which according to Idamho, "must be stopped because it is another blow to the country's natural resources in the line of continuing the extractive model that destroys ecosystems, affects populations and public finances".¹⁴³

"The following analysis seeks to point out the most important elements that have marked the territorial situation in Honduras, in the framework of the pandemic generated by Covid19 , and to identify the possible scenarios that the socio-territorial movement will face in a post-pandemic context. In the first section, the central points of the situation are presented from a territorial approach, analyzing the impact of the primary elections in the territories, the consequences of the rehabilitation and creation of new extractive regulatory frameworks; the intelligent reactivation of the territorial struggle and the remilitarization of the territories in resistance. The second section develops the idea of how the extractivist counteroffensive, in the times of Covid19 , on the one hand, has generated points of inflection that register new extractivist and military enclosures in the territories; the constitution of a new ecology that promotes the socio-territorial movement and, on the other hand, the development of four scenarios that could mark the territorial struggle in the country, in a post-pandemic context. And finally, in the third section, a series of recommendations are made so that the socio-territorial movement positions itself strategically in the current country context and advances a political proposal that opens the way to the post-extractivist transition in Honduras."¹⁴⁴

Guapinol

14 months have passed since the illegal detention of the Guapinol defenders. This month, a new international dimension came to light. "Discreetly and without public announcement, the largest steel producer in the United States, the Nucor Corporation, spent at least four years associated with an iron mine in Honduras under fire for its presumed persecution of social leaders who are protesting the ecological damage the mine may cause in protected land, according to documents obtained through a cross-border journalism collaboration between Contracorriente, the Centro Latinoamericano de Investigación Periodística (CLIP) and the Univision Investigative Unit. Nucor, a publicly traded company coddled by President Donald Trump, partnered in 2015 with the prominent Honduran businessman Lenir Pérez and his wife Ana Isabel Facussé, owners of Inversiones Los Pinares -- a company that is waging battle against the residents of a town called Guapinol, who oppose the company's planned mine in the Carlos Escaleras National Park, in the northern part of this Central American nation. The conflict has left a wake of people dead, injured and imprisoned."¹⁴⁵

143 <https://criterio.hn/instituto-ambiental-advierte-de-reforma-a-la-ley-de-mineria-que-convertira-a-honduras-en-desierto/>

144 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/13/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-el-movimiento-socio-territorial-ante-nuevos-escenarios-de-lucha-en-honduras/>

145 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/the-hidden-connection-between-a-us-steel-company-and-the-controversial-los-pinares-mine-in-honduras>

ZEDES

Criterion published two articles focusing on the Crawfish Rock community and the ZEDE threatening it.^{146 147}

Agriculture

"The Honduran Agricultural Development Program (PDAH) and the Agrocredit Program 8.7, were created by the Executive Branch in 2019 and 2020 respectively, both coincide in the mission of increasing productivity through agricultural profitability, benefiting the entrepreneurship of micro, small and medium producers. For both programs, the budget allocated exceeds 6,500 million lempiras for the year 2020 of that amount and according to the Honduran Bank of Production and Housing (BANHPROVI) and the PADH, what has been executed until August of this year corresponds to 680 million lempiras, the equivalent to 10% of the general budget. The poor execution of the programs is reflected in journalistic field works published in Conexihon.hn, in which the crude reality of the producers at the national level is captured, who clamor for the state support that is so much promoted in the media, but whose realities are different, including the protocol of the requirements to qualify for funding of such programs."¹⁴⁸

Corruption and Its Enemies

A new draft law caused widespread rejection. The so-called Bill on Investment for Sustainable Development in Projects of National Interest aims to use funds from social welfare institutes.¹⁴⁹

"The opposition points out that this law proposes to drain the funds of the social welfare institutions in Honduran territory, affecting workers as well as different unions." Former president of the Central Bank, Hugo Noé Pino, speaks of "dark interests" interested in the law.¹⁵⁰ UFERCO coordinator Luis Santos highlighted a very problematic article which more or less grants impunity for corruption. As a past report said on Honduras, "corruption is the operating system".¹⁵¹ Even the business lobby COHEP criticized the law.¹⁵² A week later, the bill was withdrawn again.¹⁵³ Javier Suazo presented the backstory of the controversial law.¹⁵⁴

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

In a typical JOH regime move, they announced out of the blue the creation of a Transparency Secretariat to fight corruption. The motivation seemed to undermine the existing Institute for Access

146 <https://criterio.hn/crawfish-rock-el-ensayo-del-neoliberalismo-radical-en-centroamerica/>

147 <https://criterio.hn/crawfish-rock-entre-el-abandono-del-gobierno-y-la-amenaza-de-expropiacion-por-instalacion-de-zede/>

148 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/investigaciones/1775-solamente-el-10-de-6-500-millones-de-lempiras-han-ejecutado-dos-de-los-proyectos-estatales-destinados-a-fortalecer-el-agro-en-honduras>

149 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1421858-466/ley-de-inversiones-abre-la-pol%C3%A9mica-entre-los-sectores-en-honduras>

150 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2408-honduras-dr-pino-revela-nuevo-abuso-de-joh-y-oliva-con-dinero-de-obreros>

151 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1326726433939595264>

152 <https://confidencialhn.com/director-del-cohep-dice-que-solo-un-picaro-puede-estar-detras-de-la-ley-que-trastoca-fondos-de-prevision/>

153 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2434-honduras-diputado-minero-retira-ley-que-despoja-fondos-de-trabajadores>

154 <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/209873>

to Public Information (IAIP) as well as the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA).¹⁵⁵ ¹⁵⁶ Accordingly, the announcement was met with widespread rejection.¹⁵⁷ ¹⁵⁸ "Duplicating functions equals weakening the frontal fight against the corrupt."¹⁵⁹ Even the business lobby COHEP rejected it. El Libertador saw this as another sign of a break with the JOH regime.¹⁶⁰

One big problem with the Transparency Secretariat is its institutional setting. Its official name is Secretariat of State in the Offices of Transparency (Secretaría de Estado en los Despachos de Transparencia) meaning that the executive oversees it and JOH has the discretion to decide what is investigated and what not.¹⁶¹ And a not less important detail, heading this new body will María Andrea Matamoros, daughter of the former TSE magistrate David Matamoros Batson who has overseen the electoral frauds by JOH.¹⁶²

This all unrolled ten months after the disappearance of the MACCIH.¹⁶³ Its national replacement, UFERCO; still fights for resources and political weight.¹⁶⁴

IHSS

The IHSS corruption case continued this month with a trial against 14 members of the former Board of Directors.¹⁶⁵ On November 25, news broke that the charges against them were reclassified lowering the penalties.¹⁶⁶ They may all go free.¹⁶⁷

Nasry

Radio Progreso published a helpful overview of the corruption case against the Nationalist mayor of Tegucigalpa and presidential runner Tito Asfura (see last month).¹⁶⁸ CESPAD also published an update.¹⁶⁹ On November 13, the Appeals Court accepted a challenge by the MP which demanded a pre-trial in this case.¹⁷⁰

155 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-le-monta-paralela-al-iaip-crea-secretaria-de-la-transparencia/>

156 <https://confidencialhn.com/el-regimen-va-por-el-iaip-cna-y-tsc-monta-secretaria-de-transparencia-para-tapar-su-corrupcion/>

157 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1326172499051225089>

158 <https://criterio.hn/nueva-secretaria-de-transparencia-nace-con-los-antecedentes-del-gobierno-actual-cna/>

159 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1325967875086184448>

160 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2400-honduras-cohep-abandona-a-joh-y-rechaza-secretaria-transparencia>

161 <https://criterio.hn/joh-concentra-aun-mas-su-poder-al-crear-secretaria-de-transparencia-rafael-jerez/>

162 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-intenta-vender-bondades-de-nueva-secretaria-de-transparencia/>

163 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/26/redes-de-corrupcion-y-la-lucha-anticorrupcion-notas-para-un-balance-tras-mas-de-10-meses-de-la-salida-de-la-maccih/>

164 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/25/los-malabares-de-la-uferco-para-enfrentar-las-redes-de-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

165 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/166-noviembre2020/6679-unaf-arranca-juicio-contra-exdirectivos-del-ihss-por-millonarias-trasferencias-irregulares>

166 <https://criterio.hn/suavizan-acusaciones-a-14-ex-directivos-del-ihss-senalados-de-meter-mano-a-fondos-de-pensiones/>

167 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2468-honduras-urgente-piden-liberar-a-exdirectivos-del-ihss>

168 <https://radioprogreso.hn/especiales/las-turbias-trasferencias-del-alcalde-de-tegucigalpa-tito-asfura/>

169 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/01/corte-de-apelaciones-conocera-antejuicio-de-alcalde-de-tegucigalpa-nasry-tito-asfura/>

170 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2413-honduras-va-juicio-contra-alcalde-asfura-reves-a-sala-constitucional>

Corruption on Wheels

The hearing in the MACCIH-era corruption case, Corruption on Wheels, was suspended this month.¹⁷¹

Impunity Pact

CESPAD published an update on the Impunity Pact case.¹⁷²

Patuca III

CESPAD published an update on the Patuca III corruption case. "According to the investigation carried out, the defendants committed the fraud when they invited bids for the equipment of the housing unit of the base camp located in the Patuca III Hydroelectric Project, in the Department of Olancho, and which was awarded to a certain group of companies that were related to each other, assigning themselves millionaire contracts that were overvalued. The investigation also showed categorical irregularities in the awarding process; the overvaluation of goods that were the object of the supply contract, in some cases reached up to 149% more than the value of said goods in the market. According to the Attorney General's Office, it will also be demonstrated in the trial that the goods were received falsely, so that they were paid for without any real delivery of the goods. In short, they will prove the collusion in the formation of companies in order to defraud the Honduran State."¹⁷³ The case continued with the final arguments of both the defense of the nine accused and the Public Ministry on November 18.¹⁷⁴ The final day in court then took place a week later on November 27.¹⁷⁵ Nine out of ten accused were absolved.¹⁷⁶ Three of them face separate charges for money laundering linked to the Los Cachiros drug cartel.¹⁷⁷

State Security Forces

A human trafficking ring led by active members of the police was dismantled. 15 people were arrested, among them five from the police.¹⁷⁸ In a second incident, another active police agent was detained with 2kg of cocaine.¹⁷⁹ The Honduras Solidarity Network offered some important context regarding the body responsible for the arrest. "Office for Fight Against Drug Trafficking (DLCN) that arrested cop is run by family member of Tony Hernandez's right hand man, Mario Calix who has been indicted by NY

¹⁷¹ §

¹⁷² <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/17/no-ha-lugar-declaran-peticion-de-elevar-a-juicio-oral-y-publico-la-causa-contra-sara-medina/>

¹⁷³ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/13/arranco-juicio-oral-y-publico-contra-implicados-en-el-caso-patuca-iii/>

¹⁷⁴ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/17/finaliza-evacuacion-de-medios-de-prueba-en-caso-patuca-iii/>

¹⁷⁵ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/20/el-27-de-noviembre-se-conocera-fallo-judicial-para-los-implicados-en-patuca-iii/>

¹⁷⁶ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/11/28/9-funcionarios-publicos-mas-que-salieron-bien-librados-con-la-justicia-hondurena>

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2467-honduras-patuca-iii-replica-camino-impunidad-de-pandora>

¹⁷⁸ <https://confidencialhn.com/y-la-depuracion-caen-5-policias-durante-operacion-contra-trata-de-personas/>

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/166-noviembre2020/6693-dlcn-detuvo-a-policia-activo-con-dos-supuestos-kilos-de-cocaina>

prosecutors".¹⁸⁰ An active police official was arrested allegedly for drug trafficking.¹⁸¹ Last but not least, in the Operation Perseus III, the MP went after the Barralaga clan for money laundering, Jorge Alberto Barralaga Hernández was a former deputy commissioner of the National Police Force.¹⁸²

Repression

An oral and public trial was held with against members of the police force involved in an illegal and violent eviction in the community of Coyolito, Zacate Grande Peninsula in the municipality of Amapala, in 2010. They attacked more than thirteen residents, including the owner of the land they were evicting, who had showed them the documentation that he was the legitimate owner.¹⁸³

Assassinations

The MP requested a conviction against a member of the Armed Forces for murder of three members of the Miskito community in Warunta.¹⁸⁴

Penitentiary System

OACNUDH organized together with the Human Rights Secretariat a regional exchange on best-practices for the management of prisons during a pandemic. "OACNUDH invites the State of Honduras to take note of the good practices shared, to adopt protocols necessary to re-establish communication between persons deprived of liberty and their families and to ensure the right to due process."¹⁸⁵

International Community

Further raising the debt levels of Honduras, Congress approved another \$250 million loan from the BCIE as well as a \$76.2 million debt from the BID. The first one for the energy sector, the second one to address the pandemic.¹⁸⁶ ¹⁸⁷ The BCIE additionally offered \$500 million to each Central American country for 2021.¹⁸⁸ They further announced to spend 36 million Lempiras to improve access to drinking water in Gracias, Lempira.¹⁸⁹

180 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1332030818517016577>

181 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2453-honduras-oficial-de-policia-detenido-con-paquetes-de-droga>

182 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/166-noviembre2020/6709-operacion-perseo-iii-mp-asegura-362-bienes-muebles-e-inmuebles-productos-financieros-y-vehiculos-a-socio-del-clan-barralaga>

183 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/diez-anos-despues-se-realizara-juicio-contr-policias-agresores-de-pobladores-en-amapala/>

184 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/166-noviembre2020/6634-ministerio-publico-pide-condena-contr-miembro-del-ejercito-por-asesinato-de-tres-miembros-de-la-comunidad-misquita-de-warunta>

185 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1332328972856799233>

186 <https://tiempo.hn/congreso-nacional-aprueba-prestamo-250-millones-el-bcie/>

187 <https://confidencialhn.com/el-legislativo-aprueba-prestamo-por-76-millones-de-dolares-para-afrontar-emergencia-nacional/>

188 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1422923-410/honduras-bcie-ofrece-2500-millones-proyectos-pa%C3%ADses-centroamerica>

189 <https://proceso.hn/bcie-aprueba-36-millones-para-mejorar-calidad-de-agua-potable-en-el-occidente-de-honduras/>

US

Once more, the JOH regime failed to qualify for the funds by the US Millenium Challenge Corporation due to the widespread corruption.^{190 191} There was a joint law enforcement operation between the United States, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras this month resulting in “criminal charges in Central America against more than 700 members of transnational criminal organizations, primarily MS-13 and 18th Street gangs”.¹⁹²

EU

"[T]he ambassador of the European Union in Honduras, Jaume Segura Socías, revealed that in the last 7 years, they have invested about 300 million euros (almost 9 billion lempiras), "we are confident that the budget for the next 7 years will be similar, Honduras receives the second highest amount in Latin America from Europe and we believe it will continue to be so," said the diplomat."¹⁹³ The same month, Honduras and Spain signed a cooperation agreement worth 215 million Euros for the years to 2023.¹⁹⁴

Drug Trafficking

"After years of low-level experimentation, coca cultivation in Honduras is seemingly expanding, with cocaine production coming online — potentially reducing costs and shortening supply chains."¹⁹⁵

Tony Hernández

JOH's brother Tony Hernández has been found guilty of drug trafficking months ago, but the sentencing hearing has been postponed on several occasions. It finally should have taken place next week, but was postponed again to January 27, 2021.¹⁹⁶

Varia

JOH

Nacla published an important piece on the "[q]uestionable homicide numbers, a murky police purge, and a pervasive distrust of authorities in Honduras” and how this “reveal[s] deep state failures that enable violence and impunity.”¹⁹⁷

190 <https://criterio.hn/por-corrupcion-del-gobierno-honduras-aplazada-otra-vez-en-cuenta-del-milenio/>

191 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-no-califica-de-nuevo-para-cuenta-del-milenio-2021/>

192 <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/more-700-members-transnational-organized-crime-groups-arrested-central-america-us-assisted>

193 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2396-exclusiva-honduras-segundo-de-america-latina-que-mas-fondos-recibe-de-europa>

194 <https://tiempo.hn/honduras-espana-convenio-215-millones-de-euros/>

195 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/coca-crops-flourish-honduras/>

196 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1419751-466/reprograman-sentencia-27-enero-de-tony-herandez-narcotrafico-2021>

197 <https://nacla.org/news/2020/11/18/state-mistrust>

Manuel Zelaya

At the end of November, the former ousted president and opposition leader Mel Zelaya was held-up by the authorities at the airport for allegedly not declaring \$18'000 in a bag he says does not belong to him.¹⁹⁸ Supporters rushed to the airport and were met with tear gas by state security forces.¹⁹⁹ The MP called the retention a purely "administrative process".²⁰⁰ The next day, he was able to travel to Mexico.²⁰¹ At the time of writing, it is unclear what the consequences of the incident will be, just an intimidation or more.

Penal Code

It took a while, but yesterday the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court send two challenges to the Penal Code to the plenary because they had not come to a joint agreement. The challenges had been presented by the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) and the Association of Judges for Democracy (AJD).²⁰²

Elections

At the start of the month, Congress had another day of discussing the new Electoral Law. According to Proceso Digital, at least 40 further articles were approved.²⁰³ But soon afterwards, the discussion was delayed again – the reason given, the hurricanes (see above).²⁰⁴ In the meantime, El Herald reported that the National Electoral Council would go back to transmitting the electoral results by TREP instead of SIEDE because it is the cheaper option. This news was accompanied by worried comment about its impact on the transparency of the electoral process.²⁰⁵ Given the lack of progress with the new Electoral Law, the president of the CNE announced that the primaries would be held with the former electoral law.^{206 207}

At the end of the month, the JOH regime and the National Party continued to make crisis politics. They claimed that it is not the time to discuss electoral reforms²⁰⁸ and they wanted to postpone the elections.²⁰⁹ But constitutional lawyer Ramón Barrios explained that only the people can change the date of an election, not politicians nor parties.²¹⁰ "I believe that they [the Nationalists] are creating an atmosphere of uncertainty so that they can then go to other extremes, because I am convinced

198 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/11/27/presenten-el-video-completo-el-dinero-me-lo-pusieron-ahi-dentro-de-una-bolsa-tengo-la-grabacion/>

199 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1332487082573402112>

200 <https://confidencialhn.com/retencion-al-expresidente-zelaya-fue-un-proceso-administrativo-dice-mp-video/>

201 <https://confidencialhn.com/tas-incidente-mel-zelaya-va-esta-rumbo-a-mexico/>

202 <https://proceso.hn/al-no-haber-unanimidad-sala-constitucional-remite-al-pleno-de-la-csj-recursos-contra-codigo-penal/>

203 <https://proceso.hn/aprobados-articulos-sobre-regulacion-de-campanas-y-propagandas-en-nueva-ley-electoral/>

204 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/inicio/1421596-465/por-emergencia-se-podr%C3%ADa-prolongar-aprobaci%C3%B3n-de-nueva-ley-electoral>

205 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1421823-466/vuelve-el-trep-para-transmitir-resultados-de-primarias-de-2021>

206 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/elecciones-primarias-iria-con-la-ley-electoral-vigente-presidente-del-cne/>

207 <https://criterio.hn/cada-vez-mas-incierto-el-camino-para-aprobacion-de-nueva-ley-electoral-en-congreso-nacional>

208 <https://criterio.hn/presidente-del-partido-nacional-dice-no-a-nueva-ley-electoral/>

209 <https://confidencialhn.com/diputada-nacionalista-propondra-que-se-pospongan-elecciones-en-honduras/>

210 <https://criterio.hn/ningun-diputado-ni-partido-politico-puede-modificar-fechas-de-elecciones/>

that the ruler wants to continue and is preparing for it, and these voices only serve to create that environment," said former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana."²¹¹

Youth

ContraCorriente reported on how violence affects children and the youth focusing on forced disappearance. "In Honduras, 1,095 minors have disappeared between 2016 and 2018, according to data from the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). In these same years, the Public Ministry has only conducted four investigations of disappearances"²¹²

Migration

"U.S. border authorities have been expelling migrant children from other countries into Mexico, violating a diplomatic agreement with Mexico and testing the limits of immigration and child welfare laws. The expulsions, laid out in a sharply critical internal email from a senior Border Patrol official, have taken place under an aggressive border closure policy the Trump administration has said is necessary to prevent the coronavirus from spreading into the United States. But they conflict with the terms upon which the Mexican government agreed to help implement the order, which were that only Mexican children and others who had adult supervision could be pushed back into Mexico after attempting to cross the border. The expulsions put children from countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador at risk by sending them with no accompanying adult into a country where they have no family connections. Most appear to have been put, at least at first, into the care of Mexican child welfare authorities, who oversee shelters operated by religious organizations and other private groups."²¹³

And Light at the End of a Month

"The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice has ordered a stop of the exhumations in the San Andres cemetery, which the company Minerales de Occidente S.A de C.V. (Minosa) has been carrying out in the community of Azacualpa, municipality of La Unión, Copán."²¹⁴

211 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2460-honduras-joh-se-prepara-para-continuar-en-el-poder-ex-fiscal-general>

212 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/11/03/ninos-ninas-y-adolescentes-en-garras-de-la-violencia/>

213 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/30/us/migrant-children-expulsions-mexico.html>

214 <https://criterio.hn/sala-de-lo-constitucional-ordena-parar-exhumaciones-de-minosa-en-cementerio-de-la-union-copan/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

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-

Upcoming Activities:

-

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