

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – June 2021

Apart from the ongoing pandemic, corruption and the ZEDEs made most headlines this month. There was an important debate about the role of the US in fighting corruption in Honduras. Some key corruption cases, such as the one regarding the mobile hospitals, advanced, although just a little. But there was also a new wave of attacks against the most important anti-corruption body in the country since the end of the MACCIH, UFERCO. Its coordinator Luis Santos suffered harassment by the MP itself for the Hermes corruption case involving important Nationalist politicians and public officials. In the case of the ZEDEs, new ones were announced while the rejection of them grew wider and wider including universities and the business community. But the JOH regime pushed on with the support of the docile Judicial System granting tax benefits to them which ignited even more opposition. But there was also some good news thanks to a historic IACtHR decision condemning the State of Honduras for the murder of trans woman and activist Vicky Hernández on June 28, 2009, during military curfew after the coup d'état. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

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Abbreviations

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 COVID-19 Crisis

If true, there were some good news regarding dengue this month. "Dengue cases in Honduras have been reduced by 73 percent, while deaths from the disease have decreased by 78 percent, according to data provided by the Health Ministry's Communicable Disease Surveillance Unit."¹

June started with 238'820 COVID-19 cases detected in Honduras and 6379 confirmed deaths.² At the same time, the death toll according to the Funeral Homes Association is at 15'000 deaths.³ By the end of the month, the case number rose to 262'760 and the official death toll to 7005.⁴

State Reaction

Health Sector

At the beginning of the month, Proceso Digital reported that several ICUs are at maximum capacity or even beyond.⁵ A week later, the situation was not better: "The Intensive Care Units (ICU) in the main public hospitals of the capital Tegucigalpa are overflowing, as their occupancy at the moment is 110.34% over their installed capacity, the same scenario happens in the main health care center in Choluteca, southern Honduras."⁶ On June 17, "[t]he nurses of the Hospital de Especialidades Pediátricas "María", in Tegucigalpa, held a protest this Thursday demanding respect for their labor rights."⁷

At the end of the month, Pasos de Animal Grande reported on the death of front line workers during the pandemic.⁸ The director of the University Hospitals warned that they are at 100% capacity.⁹ There were also warnings from the Mario Catarino Rivas Hospital.¹⁰

By the beginning of June, the JOH regime had only applied 352'000 vaccine doses.¹¹ By mid-June, the number rose to 460'000, still very low and even worse, only 57'000 Hondurans were fully vaccinated.¹² ContraCorriente published an article on the failures of the JOH regime's vaccine policies.¹³ Due to this ongoing lack of vaccines, over 100 Liberal and Libre mayors joined forces on

1 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/11/defunciones-y-casos-por-dengue-se-han-reducido-en-73-y-78-por-ciento/>

2 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-suma-593-nuevos-casos-y-acumula-238-mil-820-contagios-de-covid-19/>

3 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/gobierno-sigue-generando-desconfianza-en-numero-de-muertes-por-covid-19/>

4 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-supera-las-7-mil-muertes-por-covid-19/>

5 <https://proceso.hn/covid-19-honduras-con-varias-uci-al-100-o-mas-de-su-capacidad/>

6 <https://proceso.hn/desbordadas-las-uci-en-tegucigalpa-y-choluteca/>

7 <https://confidencial.hn.com/enfermeras-de-hospital-maria-demandan-respeto-a-sus-derechos-laborales/>

8 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3196-muerte-blanca-la-consecuencia-fatal-del-virus>

9 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1474110-410/-pacientes-covid-19-hospital-escuela-pandemia-honduras->

10 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/28/sube-ocupacion-en-hospital-mario-rivas-por-coronavirus-reciben-pacientes-de-la-capital/>

11 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/solo-352-mil-dosis-de-la-vacuna-contrala-covid-19-han-sido-aplicadas-en-honduras/>

12 <https://tiempo.hn/epidemiologo-de-honduras-cifras-son-enganosas/>

13 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/06/05/mucha-fanfarria-pocas-vacunas/>

June 2 to buy vaccine doses.¹⁴ They formed the Mayors of Honduras Association.¹⁵ Later, they "informed that they have advanced talks with the Government of China to receive the donation of 250 thousand vaccines that the Hernández cabinet had rejected for "geopolitical" reasons. Likewise, they added that next Monday they will present a formal request to the Cuban ambassador in Honduras, Francisco Emilio Delgado, to acquire the "Soberana" vaccine and be able to extend the immunization to 125 municipalities."¹⁶

On June 14, "[t]hrough a press release, the Ministry of Health informed that people who were vaccinated against Covid-19 at the beginning of May will receive their second dose until August. That is, three months after the first one. Dr. Marco Girón, a public health specialist, said on Radio Progreso that the government is seeking to justify not having the second dose of the vaccine, which demonstrates the government's inability to manage and handle the pandemic well."¹⁷ In the coming days, more criticism about this decision followed.¹⁸

On June 17, Honduras received the third batch of vaccine doses through the COVAX mechanism, 212'940 doses of the Pfizer vaccine.¹⁹ Additionally, Honduras received another 154'100 doses of AstraZeneca from Mexico.²⁰ And the second batch of the vaccine doses purchased by the IHSS also arrived.²¹ ²² On June 24, another 20'000 AstraZeneca doses arrived through the COVAX mechanism.²³ Then, 150'000 doses of AstraZeneca were donated from Mexico.²⁴ On June 26, the BCIE handed out the first 7 out of 35 million Lempiras to the JOH regime meant to purchase vaccines.²⁵ The next day, 1.5 million vaccine doses donated by the Biden administration arrived in Honduras.²⁶ Even before that donation, the JOH regime had only purchased 4.11% of all the vaccine doses arriving in Honduras, even though it received millions to do so.²⁷ And by the end of the month, only 80'000 Hondurans had been fully vaccinated. ²⁸ On June 30, another 59'670 Pfizer-BioNTech doses arrived.²⁹

Corruption

"Criminal lawyer, Fernanda Gonzales, questions the high level of impunity in corruption cases during the pandemic, as well as the fact that despite the millionaire budget of the Public

14 <https://confidencialhn.com/mas-de-100-alcaldes-hondurenos-gestionan-compra-de-vacunas-contra-el-covid-19/>

15 <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-un-centenar-de-ediles-crean-asociacion-de-alcaldes-de-honduras/>

16 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2961-honduras-alcaldes-independientes-gestionan-vacuna-con-china-eeuu-y-cuba>

17 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/luvia-de-criticas-contra-gobierno-por-retrasar-aplicacion-de-segunda-dosis-de-vacuna-anticovid-19/>

18 <https://proceso.hn/aplicar-segunda-dosis-pide-gremio-medico-que-tilda-de-espejismo-estrategia-de-alargar-inoculacion/>

19 <https://www.paho.org/es/noticias/17-6-2021-honduras-recibe-212940-dosis-vacunas-pfizer-tercera-entrega-covax>

20 <https://proceso.hn/mexico-donara-154-mil-100-vacunas-de-astrazeneca-hacia-honduras/>

21 <https://proceso.hn/llegan-86-mil-400-dosis-de-astrazeneca-como-parte-del-segundo-lote-de-compra-del-ihss/>

22 <https://proceso.hn/arriba-otro-lote-de-81-mil-600-de-vacunas-astrazeneca-para-el-ihss/>

23 <https://tiempo.hn/llegan-a-honduras-20-mil-vacunas-de-astrazeneca-covax/>

24 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1473225-466/llegan-honduras-150-mil-dosis-astrazeneca-donadas-mexico>

25 <https://proceso.hn/bcie-desembolsa-7-millones-de-dolares-para-compra-de-vacunas-anticovid-a-honduras/>

26 <https://hn.usembassy.gov/es/gobierno-de-los-estados-unidos-de-america-dona-a-honduras-1-5-millones-de-dosis-de-vacuna-contra-covid-19/>

27 <https://proceso.hn/gobierno-solo-compro-el-4-11-de-las-vacunas-aplicadas-en-honduras/>

28 <https://confidencialhn.com/sesal-confirmo-que-80-mil-hondurenos-ya-han-recibido-sus-dos-dosis-de-la-vacuna-anticovid/>

29 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1474639-466/llegan-honduras-vacunas-pfizer-covid-19-presidente-juan-orlando-herandez-compra>

Prosecutor's Office, there are no favorable results for the population. Gonzales mentions that the Public Prosecutor's Office and the investigation entities have not done anything to file strong prosecutorial requirements against these corrupt people, letting them "do whatever they want to do" without any repercussions."³⁰

On June 3, an appeals court confirmed the pre-trial detention of Marco Bográn and Alex Moraes for the irregular purchase of the mobile hospitals (also see previous monitors).³¹ The MP announced that they were about to open trial against them.³² Related to this, US authorities seized over 100 million Lempiras from Axel López, the man having sold the mobile hospitals to the JOH regime.³³ But according to the CNA, the total sum of this particular corruption case is some 800 million Lempiras.³⁴ The CNA also denounced that the mobile hospital, 15 months after their purchase, still don't work as the MP stopped investigating those responsible beyond the sole act of purchase.³⁵ On June 21, the MP announced that the case against Marco Bográn and Alex Moraes for the purchase of the mobile hospitals would go to trial.³⁶

Human Rights

Social movements and indigenous organizations published their 49th joint press release during the pandemic.³⁷ "The renowned doctor Ligia Ramos of the Medical Association of Honduras and fighter in the Platform in Defense of Health and Public Education, said in a television forum in the capital, that she was forced to leave the country after receiving death threats."³⁸ ³⁹ COFADEH requested special protective measures by the IACHR for her.⁴⁰

Economy

According to the Ministry of Finance, public debt in Honduras reached 14,655.3 million dollars in the first quarter of this year, equivalent to 59.6 percent of GDP.⁴¹ According to COHEP, 9 out of 10 Hondurans have employment problems and 7 out of 10 companies are affected by the pandemic.⁴²

The largest sportswear factory in Central America will start operation in July in San Pedro Sula. Operated by Tegra Global which has Nike among its customers, promises 5000 jobs by the end of this year and 7000 by the beginning of 2022.⁴³

30 <https://criterio.hn/caso-de-estafa-de-hospitales-moviles-sigue-en-completa-impunidad/>

31 <https://tiempo.hn/hospitales-moviles-bogran-y-moraes/>

32 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7817-mp-solicitar-apertura-a-juicio-luego-que-tribunal-confirmara-auto-de-formal-procesamiento-a-marco-bogran-y-alex-moraes-en-el-caso-hospitales-moviles>

33 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7810-mas-de-100-millones-de-lempiras-en-primer-aseguramiento-de-cuentas-a-alex-lopez-en-estados-unidos>

34 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1400526049142882307>

35 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1404513906668752902>

36 https://twitter.com/MP_Honduras/status/1407114988230262792

37 <https://copinh.org/2021/06/manifiesto-publico-49/>

38 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/doctora-ligia-ramos-abandono-el-pais-tras-recibir-amenazas-a-muerte/>

39 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/la-doctora-ligia-ramos-estaba-sentencia-de-muerte/>

40 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/solicitan-a-la-cidh-medidas-de-proteccion-para-doctora-ligia-ramos/>

41 <https://confidencialhn.com/revelan-que-honduras-alcanzo-una-deuda-publica-de-14-mil-655-millones-de-dolares/>

42 <https://tiempo.hn/9-de-cada-10-personas-tienen-problemas-de-empleo/>

43 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/1468846-410/julio-comenzara-fabrica-nike-san-pedro-sula>

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Honduras fell by 7% in the first trimester of 2021.⁴⁴

Poverty

Remittances sent to Honduras grew by 45% in the first five months of 2021.⁴⁵

Education

"The schooling rate in Honduras, which used to be seven years, has gone back a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, said this Friday the vice-rector of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán (UPNFM), Darío Cruz."⁴⁶

Human Rights and Their Defenders

Members of the Coalition against Impunity held a meeting with UN Resident Coordinator Alice H. Shackelford.⁴⁷

Assassinations

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

"So far in 2021 the wave of legal proceedings against human rights defenders, especially environmental and territorial defenders, continues as a method of criminalization against opponents of extractive projects imposed in communities (...). Through monitoring, the Association for Democracy and Human Rights ASOPODEHU, registered so far this year, about 38 active criminal proceedings against defenders of territory and environment".⁴⁸

On June 24, COFADEH denounced: "Agents of the Police Directorate of Investigations (DPI), captured this Thursday, June 24, José Laureano Escobar and Elvin Rufino Munguía, both leaders of the Environmental Committee of Gualaco, for the alleged crime of usurpation of land."⁴⁹

"Seven indigenous people belonging to the Nahua ethnic group, who live in the department of Olancho, Honduras, were accused of the crime of land usurpation by the forestry company Murillo Tejada. However, the lands are the lands where they have lived with their families for a long time."⁵⁰

44 <https://proceso.hn/la-inversion-extranjera-directa-en-honduras-cae-7-en-el-primer-trimestre/>

45 <https://proceso.hn/las-remesas-enviadas-a-honduras-crecen-45-en-primeros-cinco-meses-de-2021/>

46 <https://criterio.hn/indice-de-escolaridad-en-honduras-ha-retrocedido-un-ano-vice-rector-upnfm/>

47 <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1399885419408510977>

48 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/monitoreo/item/3185-hay-38-procesos-judiciales-activos-en-2021-contra-defensores-ambientales-y-territoriales-en-honduras>

49 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/alerta-persecucion-judicial-contr-ambientalistas-en-gualaco/>

50 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/28/alerta-indigenas-nahuas-son-detenidos-y-acusados-de-usurpar-sus-propias-tierras/>

"Wearing a white cassock and red stole, Florentino Hernández, who for 12 years has been the parish priest in the municipality of El Triunfo, bordering Nicaragua, was judicially released for the second time from the lawsuit filed against him by the Bishop of Choluteca in November 2019. Father Florentino Hernández is a human rights defender who has organized the community of El Triunfo, department of Choluteca, to defend natural resources and promote social projects that make the food supply of families sustainable. In December 2018, a consultation was held on the presence of extractive companies, revealing the opposition of the people, and since then began his ordeal."⁵¹

Indigenous Peoples

More than two hundred organizations signed a letter in support of the Committee for the Investigation and Search for the Disappeared of Triunfo de la Cruz (SUNLA) calling for its integration into the official investigation.⁵² In another case, ConexiHon reported on a recent IACtHR resolution expressing "its concern over the non-compliance with the judgments issued in 2015 in the cases of the Garifuna community of Punta Piedra and Triunfo de la Cruz, the referred judgments declare the international responsibility of the Republic of Honduras for the violation of the right to collective property to the detriment of both communities".⁵³

On June 16, OFRANEH's Miriam Miranda sent out an alert. "Today was arrested the comrade Silvia Bonilla Flores, 73 years old, criminalized along with 32 other people in Trujillo, accused of usurpation of their own territory. We are persecuted by the criminal mafia that governs this country. ENOUGH NOW!"⁵⁴ EU Parliamentarian Tilly Metz also reacted. "I express my full support to Silvia Bonilla Flores, 73, who was detained by the police yesterday. She is criminalized together with 32 others for defending their ancestral land against exploitation. This systematic persecution against the Garífuna people has to stop!"⁵⁵

The Forest Conservation Institute (ICF) ordered to suspend the construction of the controversial highway through the Moskitia (see last monitor).⁵⁶

FPIC

The Case of Berta Cáceres

On the first day of the month, the Observer Mission of the case sent out a press release. "A month into the trial of a retired military intelligence officer and president of the DESA hydroelectric company, David Castillo, for the murder of Lenca leader Berta Cáceres in Honduras, the Expert Observation Mission remains concerned about the right to the truth and the clarification of the acts

51 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/tribunal-de-choluteca-reitera-cierre-judicial-de-querrela-contrasacerdote-de-el-triunfo/>

52 <http://im-defensoras.org/2021/06/mas-de-doscientas-organizaciones-de-america-y-europa-exigimos-la-incorporacion-del-sunla-al-proceso-de-investigacion-en-el-caso-de-los-jovenes-garifunas-victimas-de-desaparicion-forzada-desde-julio/>

53 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1865-corte-idh-manifiesta-preocupacion-ante-incumplimiento-del-estado-de-honduras-en-sentencia-a-favor-de-comunidades-garifunas>

54 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1405301322564448258>

55 <https://twitter.com/MetzTilly/status/1405447722950352896>

56 <https://proceso.hn/icf-ordena-suspender-construccion-de-la-carretera-en-la-mosquitia/>

that led to the murder of the human rights defender on March 2, 2016. Through the evidence presented by the Public Prosecutor's Office, indications have emerged of criminal complicity of other actors in the harassment of Berta Cáceres, COPINH, and the Rio Blanco community, and in the planning and logistics of the assassination. (...) The Observer Mission calls on the Honduran authorities to immediately take the necessary steps to clarify the facts denounced in the Berta Cáceres Case, and thus send a strong signal that crimes against human rights defenders will not be tolerated. Human rights defenders, both in the country and around the world, are following this case, which sets a precedent for generations to come."⁵⁷

The trial against David Castillo continued this month on June 5 with Day 31.⁵⁸ Day 32⁵⁹, Day 33⁶⁰ and Day 34⁶¹ followed. At this point, OACNUDH and several embassies announced that they would continually monitor the trial and called for judicial independence.^{62 63 64} Day 35⁶⁵, Day 36⁶⁶, Day 37⁶⁷, Day 38⁶⁸, Day 39⁶⁹, Day 40⁷⁰, Day 41⁷¹, Day 42⁷² and Day 43⁷³ followed without a break. After the weekend, the trial continued on June 21 with Day 44.⁷⁴ Then, Day 45⁷⁵, Day 46⁷⁶, Day 47⁷⁷ and Day 48⁷⁸ took place as scheduled before the hearing of conclusions took place on June 27.⁷⁹ The verdict is expected for the beginning of July.

A group of US members of Congress and the Senate published a joint letter release urging "the State Department and international community to closely monitor the trial, ongoing investigations into the murder of Berta Cáceres, and related cases involving human rights defenders".⁸⁰ More than 60 European Parliamentarians called for justice for Berta Cáceres.⁸¹ "The Expert Observation Mission, a group of 19 organizations with expertise in international law and human rights, has observed the trial of David Castillo as alleged co-perpetrator of the murder of Lenca human rights and environmental defender Berta Cáceres. The Mission notes that during nearly 50 days of hearings,

57 <https://www.observacionbertacaceres.org/post/experts-honduras-must-investigate-illicit-actions-denounced-in-bera-c%C3%A1ceres-case>

58 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/5/day-thirty-trial-against-david-castillo>

59 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/7/day-thirty-two-trial-against-david-castillo>

60 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/8/day-thirty-three-trial-against-david-castillo>

61 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/9/day-thirty-four-trial-against-david-castillo>

62 <https://twitter.com/OACNNUDDHH/status/1402324564642828292>

63 <https://twitter.com/EmbCanCRHNNI/status/1402412689352278016>

64 <https://twitter.com/EmbEspHonduras/status/1402375127912812552>

65 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/10/day-thirty-five-trial-against-david-castillo>

66 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/11/day-thirty-six-trial-against-david-castillo>

67 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/12/day-thirty-seven-trial-against-david-castillo>

68 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/14/day-thirty-eight-trial-against-david-castillo>

69 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/15/day-thirty-nine-trial-against-david-castillo>

70 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/16/day-forty-trial-against-david-castillo>

71 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/17/day-forty-one-trial-against-david-castillo>

72 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/18/day-forty-two-trial-against-david-castillo>

73 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/19/day-forty-three-trial-against-david-castillo>

74 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/21/day-forty-four-trial-against-david-castillo>

75 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/22/day-forty-five-trial-against-david-castillo>

76 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/23/day-forty-six-trial-against-david-castillo>

77 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/24/day-forty-seven-trial-against-david-castillo>

78 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/25/day-forty-eight-trial-against-david-castillo>

79 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/6/28/day-forty-nine-trial-against-david-castillo>

80 <https://schakowsky.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-schakowsky-merkley-colleagues-urge-state-department-monitor-honduras-trial>

81 <https://copinh.org/2021/06/mas-de-60-parlamentarios-europeos-solicitan-justicia-en-el-caso-bera-caceres/>

the defense was given ample opportunity to respond to the robust presentation of evidence by the public and private Prosecutors and hopes that judicial independence will prevail in the final decision of the Court, which will be issued this week."⁸²

LGBTQ

The IACtHR condemned the State of Honduras for the murder of trans woman and activist Vicky Hernández on June 28, 2009, during military curfew after the coup d'état.^{83 84} OACNUDH welcomed the ruling.⁸⁵ Since the coup, at least 388 members of the LGBTQ+ community violently lost their lives in Honduras.⁸⁶

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

"Feminist defenders explained how conservative thinking influences the promotion of women's rights, and how freedom of expression is undermined in the media. When they try to raise the issue, they face prejudice, harassment and attacks, just for breaking down the violence that women face in different spheres."⁸⁷

Pasos de Animal Grande reported that "there is no real access to vaccines or benefits for journalists, especially for community and independent journalists who are ignored by the authorities in their own municipalities or towns, during the crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic".⁸⁸

Violence against Women

OACNUDH expressed concern about the increase in femicides in Honduras.⁸⁹ At least 147 women had been murdered by mid-June.⁹⁰ The Washington Post reported that Central American women fleeing violence seldom find refuge in the US.⁹¹ By mid-June, the MP had received at least 4000 complaints for "domestic violence".⁹²

Protection Mechanism

82 <https://www.observacionbertacaceres.org/post/experts-demand-fair-and-lawful-ruling-this-week-in-berta-c%C3%A1ceres-trial-in-honduras>

83 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1409604404731289603>

84 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3197-corteidh-condena-al-estado-de-honduras-por-crimen-contra-mujer-trans-en-2009>

85 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1409671822610628609>

86 <https://criterio.hn/al-menos-388-muertes-violentas-lgbt-en-honduras-desde-el-golpe-de-estado-de-2009/>

87 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3186-segun-mujeres-comunicadoras-hay-serios-obstaculos-para-hablar-de-los-derechos-de-las-mujeres-en-los-medios>

88 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3190-periodistas-comunitarios-e-independientes-estan-quedando-excluidos-de-la-vacunacion-contra-covid19>

89 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1402290085081534468>

90 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-147-femicidios-en-lo-que-va-del-2021-segun-observatorio-de-la-unah/>

91 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/06/13/central-america-women-domestic-violence/>

92 <https://confidencialhn.com/revelan-que-la-fiscalia-ha-recibido-al-menos-cuatro-mil-denuncias-de-violencia-domestica-en-2021/>

Political Prisoners

After two years in prison, political prisoner Rommel Baldemar Herrera Portillo. “Rommel added that justice was never done to him, but he thanks God for allowing him to leave the hell he was in, "until now justice was never done to me, justice was never presented, I was unjustly charged since that May 31, 2019, I am another Honduran who was in impunity and thanks God I got out of this hell".”⁹³

Sadly, his place may be occupied again soon. On June 22, the Honduras Solidarity Network denounced: "Student leader Hery Flores was arrested and has been sent to prison for 6 days while he waits his initial hearing. Flores is accused of aggravated arson stemming from 2019 protests against the privatization of healthcare & education".⁹⁴ ⁹⁵ He was released after the initial hearing, but he is still facing trial.⁹⁶ Before the hearing, Hery told COFADEH that he had suffered police surveillance and persecution for some years.⁹⁷ During the hearing, OACNUDH was not allowed to observe the proceedings.⁹⁸

Extractive Industries

ZEDEs

CESPAD published a very helpful overview of the state of ZEDEs in Honduras.⁹⁹ They also published a human rights impact analysis of the ZEDEs.¹⁰⁰

Last month the Nationalist members of Congress approved a controversial tax break for the ZEDEs. This led to a new public outcry against the idea of the ZEDEs, even beyond the usual circles. And this continued this month. "The Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE) can "potentially" be a "sanctuary for national and international criminals", warned the Honduran Bar Association (CAH) in a public statement released in recent hours."¹⁰¹ The private business lobby COHEP concluded in a legal review that the ZEDEs as well as the recently granted tax exemptions for them are unconstitutional.¹⁰² Especially this criticism by COHEP highlighted how ridiculous a statement by JOH was. "Those who oppose ZEDEs are against generating employment".¹⁰³ The newly created Mayors of Honduras Association (see above) also opposed the ZEDEs.¹⁰⁴ Proceso

93 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/termina-la-pesadilla-rommel-baldemar-ha-vuelto-a-casa/>

94 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1407556038870454275>

95 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-dpi-captura-a-estudiante-universitario-herly-flores/>

96 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1408554411937382400>

97 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/herly-habia-denunciado-persecucion-y-vigilancia/>

98 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1408496778983493637>

99 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/11/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-las-zedes-y-los-extractivismos-la-perfecta-fusion-para-el-despojo-territorial/>

100 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/23/analisis-del-impacto-en-los-derechos-humanos-que-dejaran-las-zedes/>

101 <https://criterio.hn/las-zede-pueden-ser-un-santuario-de-criminales-advierte-colegio-de-abogados-de-honduras/>

102 <https://proceso.hn/zede-carece-de-legitimidad-y-advierten-que-su-inversion-es-de-alto-riesgo-determina-el-cohep/>

103 <https://tiempo.hn/joh-se-oponen-las-zedes-no-quieren-empleo/>

104 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/asociacion-de-alcaldes-de-honduras-se-opone-a-las-zedes/>

Digital then interviewed sociologist Pablo Carías who compared them with the banana concessions made in the last century which had made Honduras the name-giving banana republic.¹⁰⁵

On June 4, Pinu congressman Andrés Benedith presented a bill to derogate the ZEDEs.¹⁰⁶ He was not the first and may not be the last, but the Nationalist-controlled Congress won't allow for it. A few days later, El Pulso made public that the ZEDE called Orchid (Orquídea) planned for San Marcos de Colón, Choluteca, would apply private law from Delaware.¹⁰⁷ The location of the ZEDE was only recently made public. Even the mayor of the place had not known about it before JOH's announcement.¹⁰⁸ The National Party and the JOH regime seemed unmoved by the widespread criticism. The president of the National Party, David Chávez Madison, called them "a done deal".¹⁰⁹ The Secretary of Health promoted the ZEDEs by claiming that they will offer health care like in the EU promised jobs for all Hondurans no matter their education.¹¹⁰ And the JOH regime even tried to blackmail business leaders to fall in line regarding the ZEDEs.¹¹¹

On June 8, the UN System in Honduras published a press release warning about the human rights implications of ZEDEs. "The United Nations System respectfully calls on the State of Honduras to review the compatibility of the constitutional and legal framework of the ZEDE with its international obligations to respect and guarantee the exercise of human rights."¹¹² The JOH regime reacted: "The Honduran Foreign Ministry said tonight, through a press release, that it is a sovereign State and that it makes decisions respecting the Constitution and its internal legal framework with the objective of guaranteeing the economic and social well-being of the population."¹¹³ The next day, UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras Alice H. Shackelford met with the mayor of Roatán Jerry Hynds to discuss his concerns regarding the Próspera ZEDE.¹¹⁴ ¹¹⁵ Roatán's residents called for UN mediation to stop the ZEDE.¹¹⁶

CONADEH also raised concerns about the ZEDEs. It calls for the respect of ancestral lands.¹¹⁷ On June 14, another important voice raised concerns regarding the ZEDEs. The National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) demanded from Congress to derogate the laws which gave birth to the ZEDEs.¹¹⁸ Ignoring this widespread rejection of the ZEDEs, the JOH regime pushed on and then the courts once again showed their lack of independence. "The Supreme Court of Justice of Honduras determined the establishment of a special jurisdiction through the creation of courts with exclusive and autonomous jurisdiction in those territories where Employment and Economic

105 <https://proceso.hn/las-zede-reeditan-historia-de-concesiones-bananeras-en-honduras-alerta-sociologo/>

106 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/04/presentan-al-legislativo-proyecto-de-ley-para-derogar-las-zedes/>

107 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/07/nueva-zede-orquidea-en-choluteca-se-sometera-a-ley-de-un-estado-de-ee-uu/>

108 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1469159-466/sorpresa-zede-san-marcos-colon-honduras>

109 <https://proceso.hn/las-zede-son-cosa-juzgada-y-estan-generando-empleo-sentencia-el-presidente-del-pn/>

110 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/1469714-410/zede-roatan-aprobo-criptomoneda-honduras>

111 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2979-honduras-joh-extorsiona-a-empresarios-por-oposicion-a-zedes>

112 <https://honduras.un.org/es/130598-las-zede-podrian-suponer-serios-riesgos-para-la-garantia-de-los-derechos-humanos-por-parte>

113 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-responde-a-la-onu-que-es-un-estado-soberano-y-que-respete-la-constitucion-tras-pronunciarse-sobre-las-zede/>

114 <https://twitter.com/ONU Honduras/status/140304764003141643>

115 <https://twitter.com/ONU Honduras/status/1403074015124770829>

116 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2982-honduras-islenos-piden-mediacion-de-onu-para-detener-prospera>

117 <https://criterio.hn/en-torno-a-las-zede-conadeh-pide-respetar-los-territorios-de-los-pueblos-originarios/>

118 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/unah-demanda-al-congreso-nacional-derogar-decreto-que-da-vida-a-las-zedes/>

Development Zones (ZEDE) are established."¹¹⁹ "The resolution (...) closes all possibilities of claims before the Judiciary to rescue the sovereignty of the territories ceded by the "traitors of the homeland", said former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana".¹²⁰ "Lawyer Ramón Enrique Barrios,¹²¹ former judge of sentences and constitutional specialist, said on Radio Progreso that establishing a special jurisdiction that endorses the implementation of the Employment and Economic Development Zones, ZEDES, by the Supreme Court of Justice, means breaking the jurisdictional unity of the State of Honduras so that judges from other parts of the world can impart justice to these ZEDES. Barrios said that it is painful that the independence of the Judiciary is broken with the creation of these special courts, in that sense, he said, that the magistrates who voted in favor should be subjected to an impeachment trial." JOH later held a meeting with alleged ZEDES investors.¹²²

On June 16, resistance against the ZEDES got a new outlet with the founding of the National Movement Against ZEDES and in Defense of National Sovereignty.¹²³ "In a press release, the Diocese of La Ceiba made a strong call to its parishioners to mobilize and participate as citizens against the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE), a project that "smells illegal and unconstitutional from the root".¹²⁴ Maybe equally important, the corporate media outlet continued to critically report on the ZEDES. "Rumors that the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE) are a state within a state are increasing as more evidence to support this theory emerges. According to the legislation that gave life to the ZEDES, those who run the controversial model cities will not only have the power to designate their own justice system, but will also be able to set up their own police, prosecutors, hospitals and even schools."¹²⁵

Given all this opposition, the question about what to do becomes even more urgent. "For former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana, Article 45 of the Organic Law of the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE) is the "Gordian knot" for the repeal of Decree 120-2013 approved by the National Congress. (...) The article in question establishes that the Organic Law of the ZEDE, in accordance with Article 329 of the Constitution, which was amended in order to create these special territories, "may only be modified, amended, interpreted or repealed by two thirds (2/3) in favor of the members of the National Congress", i.e. with at least 84 deputies."¹²⁶ Orellana additionally called on the MP "to abandon its "slumber" and proceed to criminally accuse the Good Practices Committee for granting the so-called Special Economic Development Zones (ZEDES)."¹²⁷ The Honduran Bar Association (CAH) together with the Association of Mayors of Honduras demand the derogation of the decrees giving life to the ZEDES.¹²⁸

119 <https://criterio.hn/corte-de-honduras-otorga-autonomia-judicial-a-las-zede/>

120 <https://criterio.hn/hondurenos-ya-no-podran-acudir-a-la-csj-para-rescatar-la-soberania-edmundo-orellana/>

121 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/demandan-juicio-politico-para-magistrados-que-votaron-a-favor-de-nuevos-tribunales-en-las-zedes/>

122 <http://www.web.elibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2995-honduras-joh-da-la-cara-por-zedes-y-entrega-ley-inconstitucional-a-inversionistas>

123 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1863-organizaciones-conforman-movimiento-nacional-contra-las-zedes-y-por-la-soberania-nacional>

124 <https://criterio.hn/zede-desde-la-raiz-huele-a-ilegalidad-e-inconstitucionalidad-diocesis-de-la-ceiba/>

125 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1471438-466/zede-policia-fiscalia-hospitales-escuelas-honduras>

126 <https://criterio.hn/articulo-45-de-ley-de-las-zede-el-nudo-gordiano-legado-por-los-traidores-a-la-patria-edmundo-orellana/>

127 <https://proceso.hn/mp-debe-acusar-criminalmente-al-comite-de-buenas-practicas-por-otorgar-mas-zedes-dice-exfiscal-orellana/>

128 <https://criterio.hn/colegio-de-abogados-y-asociacion-de-alcaldes-de-honduras-exigen-derogacion-de-las-zede/>

The people of La Ceiba try the way of a town hall meeting. "The expectation we have is that the voice of the people will be heard and to demonstrate that things should not be done as officials intend just because they are in power but based on the law, the population will attend because it is not a problem of an organization but of the whole country in general," said Alba Cano of the Organized Social Movement, MOSO, of La Ceiba, Atlántida, on Radio Progreso.¹²⁹ The town hall meeting was disturbed by Nationalist activists, which led the mayor to abort it¹³⁰, but the vice-mayor and other councilors continued together with the people of La Ceiba rejecting the ZEDE.¹³¹

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By the end of the month, the list of opponents to the ZEDEs had further grown. "The Association of Pastors of Tegucigalpa (APT) spoke out against the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE). Through a press release, the pastors stated their position against the ZEDE, "since they lack legality, transparency and social justice for the Honduran people".¹³³ "The professors at the Faculty of Juridical Sciences of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH), through a public letter on Monday stated its position regarding the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE). Among other conclusions, the university professors point out that the government initiative is unconstitutional."¹³⁴ "The Honduran Academy of Geography and History of Honduras has raised its voice against the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE), questioning that these "exclusive cities" are unconstitutional and even violate the first paragraph of the Absolute Independence Act of 1823. The historic document in question, signed in the context of the separation of Honduras and the Central American region from the Mexican Empire, states that the national territory is free and independent of "the former Spain, Mexico and any other power, both from the old and the new world, and that they are not and should not be the patrimony of any person or family".¹³⁵ "In a public statement, the College of Mechanical, Electrical and Chemical Engineers of Honduras (CIMEQH), in which it expresses its opposition to the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE), points out that with the alienation of territory, sovereignty is lost and Hondurans are displaced from their territories."¹³⁶

On June 24, a new controversy about the ZEDEs erupted yesterday as news made the rounds that people may not be extradited from the ZEDEs...which of course could greatly benefit a post-presidency JOH.¹³⁷ The Nationalist secretary of Congress, Tomás Zambrano, disputed this.¹³⁸ With every other party rejecting the ZEDEs, they have become clearly linked to the National Party. This is especially evident in the case of the Próspera ZEDE. "The Committee for the Application of Zede's Best Practices or Prosperous Honduras Model City of Roatán, Bay Islands, is made up of 21

129 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/todo-listo-en-la-ceiba-para-el-cabildo-abierto-y-decidir-el-futuro-de-las-zedes/>

130 <https://radioprogressohn.net/portada/alcade-ceibeno-da-la-espalda-al-pueblo-al-no-validar-cabildo-en-rechazo-a-las-ciudades-modelo/>

131 <https://radioprogressohn.net/portada/asi-fue-el-cabildo-donde-la-ceiba-dijo-no-a-las-ciudades-modelo/>

132 <https://radioprogressohn.net/instante/solicitan-a-alcaldia-de-la-ceiba-refrendar-decision-tomada-contra-las-zedes/>

133 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1472471-466/pastores-capital-oponen-zede-honduras>

134 <https://proceso.hn/claustro-de-profesores-de-derecho-de-la-unah-senalan-que-zedes-son-inconstitucionales/>

135 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3007-honduras-zedes-violan-leyes-aprobadas-por-padres-de-la-patria-historiadores>

136 <https://criterio.hn/con-la-enajenacion-del-territorio-se-pierde-la-soberania-cimeqh/>

137 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/06/24/zedes-escondite-de-extraditables-rompen-la-constitucion-de-la-republica/>

138 <https://proceso.hn/la-extradicion-se-aplicara-en-las-zedes-dice-el-secretario-del-congreso/>

representatives of companies or financial consortiums, including four well-known Nationalists: Ebal Díaz, Ricardo Cardona, Octavio Sánchez and Leonel Ayala."¹³⁹

Liberal members of Congress signed a bill intended to derogate the ZEDEs.¹⁴⁰ The CNA announced to go after the members of Congress who approved the ZEDEs.¹⁴¹ And a group of opposition members of Congress demanded the impeachment of the 12 Supreme Court judges who had endorsed the unconstitutional ZEDEs.¹⁴² But two days later, the Nationalist-controlled Congress rejected it.¹⁴³

Mining

In an open letter, several national and international human rights organizations demand a transparent and public hearing for the criminalized Guapinol defenders. "With this letter, we respectfully request that this honorable court guarantee full publicity of said hearing, including in-person observation and live transmission through the Judiciary's social networks, as has been the case in other hearings related to this case and other cases of national and international importance."¹⁴⁴

Guapinol

"The Municipal Committee for the Defense of Common and Public Goods of Tocoa and the representatives of 13 communities of the San Pedro sector, neighborhoods and colonies, delivered this June 29, 2021 to MiAmbiente, a Technical Report that evidences the contamination they suffer because of the mining company Inversiones Los Pinares/Ecotec, in the Carlos Escaleras National Park, established in a protected area, as well as in the rivers of the sector. The negative impact on the Guapinol and San Pedro Rivers is due to the mining company's operations that contaminate the water in the sector."¹⁴⁵

Corruption and Its Enemies

This month, the Center against Corruption and Impunity in the North of Central America was presented to the public.¹⁴⁶ ¹⁴⁷ Luis Santos, head of UFERCO, said on this occasion. "It is time for us to move from theory to practice, too much has already been written about corruption, we all know the harm it causes us, when something happens we all know that it is corruption or not (...) it is time that the strengthening or support of all international cooperation is focused not on discourse or more

139 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/ebal-diaz-y-leonel-ayala-figuran-entre-los-nacionalistas-que-integran-el-comite-para-las-mejores-practicas-de-honduras-prospera/>

140 <https://proceso.hn/diputados-liberales-firman-anteproyecto-para-pedir-derogacion-de-las-zedes/>

141 <https://proceso.hn/cna-anuncia-que-presentara-demanda-contra-diputados-que-aprobaron-las-zedes/>

142 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3195-diputados-demandan-juicio-politico-para-los-12-magistrados-de-la-csj-que-avaloron-la-creacion-de-las-zede>

143 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3025-diputados-cachurecos-ratifican-traicion-a-honduras-y-no-enjuician-a-magistrados>

144 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/organizaciones-nacionales-e-internacionales-preocupadas-por-transparencia-en-caso-guapinol>

145 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3201-entregan-evidencias-de-la-contaminacion-de-la-minera-inversiones-los-pinares-ecotec-entregan-a-miambiente>

146 <https://ccinoc.org/>

147 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/03/inicia-funciones-primer-centro-regional-anticorruptcion-en-el-triangulo-norte-de-centroamerica/>

studies, but on bringing all these cases of corruption to light".¹⁴⁸ El Libertador focused on the problematic role of Heide Fulton during the recent presentation of the Center against Corruption and Impunity in Northern Central America (CCINOC). "We want the people of Central America to know that we are on the side of the victims of corruption," said last Thursday U.S. diplomat Heide Fulton, who in 2017 in her capacity as Chargé d'Affaires of her country's embassy, certified the imposition of the illegal presidential reelection, made possible thanks to the scandalous electoral fraud against the Opposition Alliance Against Dictatorship."¹⁴⁹ The US' role was also questioned by Padre Melo.¹⁵⁰ "Very valid that U.S. government supports fight against corruption in C.A. To be effective, Mrs. Fulton should acknowledge her active endorsement of corrupt and electoral fraud in 2017, and that ASJ clarifies what is seen as close support and collusion with the JOH administration".¹⁵¹

There were further inquiries into the role of the US in anti-corruption efforts. CESPAD looks at the significance of the so-called Torres List of corruption Honduran officials. "What did the publication of this list represent for the Honduran political context? The question is part of the debate that took place in recent days regarding the impact that this type of lists had and will have on the actions of the corruption networks that currently control the administration of the Honduran State. In this sense, a favorable answer will be found if one takes into account the public perception that identifies a source of hope in the U.S. government and judicial system, but on the other hand, there is a more skeptical and distrustful look at the policies and the real intentions of this country in the region."¹⁵²

The US Special Envoy to the Northern Triangle, Ricardo Zúniga, participated in a forum organized by the business lobby COHEP. There he reminded his listeners that Honduras lost some \$3 billion to corruption in 2020.¹⁵³ Zúniga also raised concern about the new Penal Code and how it lowered the penalties for corruption.¹⁵⁴

Members of Congress showed a lot of creativity again to enrich themselves...57.6 millions for per diems during a year of lockdown due to the pandemic.¹⁵⁵ CESPAD looked for similarities in the corruption cases involving high-level officials.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, "[i]n an oral and public trial, the Special Prosecutor's Office for Transparency and Combating Public Corruption (FETCCOP), obtained a conviction against eight municipal officials of the mayor's office of Choloma, Cortés for corruption. (...) For this, the Choloma mayor's office paid this company a total of 26.4 million lempiras, despite the fact that the company was created 53 days before it was hired to carry out this work and that it had only one employee."¹⁵⁷

148 <https://proceso.hn/ya-es-momento-que-la-lucha-contra-la-corrupcion-pase-de-la-teoria-a-la-practica-clama-jefe-de-ufenco/>

149 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2965-honduras-heide-fulton-ahora-ataca-corrupcion-que-monto-en-2017>

150 <https://criterio.hn/presencia-de-fulton-y-asj-en-lucha-anticorrupcion-apoyada-por-ee-uu-pone-en-duda-su-efectividad-y-validez/>

151 <https://twitter.com/Melosjmoreno/status/1401601412690239495>

152 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/10/analisis-la-lista-torres-sus-implicaciones-en-el-ambito-de-la-corrupcion-y-las-reacciones-en-la-sociedad-hondurena/>

153 <https://proceso.hn/es-de-especial-interes-de-eeuu-la-prosperidad-y-democracia-de-honduras-ricardo-zuniga/>

154 <https://tiempo.hn/funcionario-codigo-penal-dificulta-inversion-honduras/>

155 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/13/congreso-reparte-cantidad-millonaria-en-viaticos-a-pesar-de-encierro-por-pandemia/>

156 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/15/que-tienen-en-comun-los-casos-de-corrupcion-que-vincula-a-altos-funcionarios-en-honduras/>

157 <https://confidencialhn.com/condenan-a-funcionarios-de-la-alcaldia-de-choloma-por-pagos-millonarios-a-empresas-de-fachada/>

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

UFERCO and its coordinator came under pressure again this month. The MP intimidated him and his fellow prosecutor Juan Carlos Griffin just one day after important progress with the Hermes corruption case¹⁵⁸ linked to JOH (see below).¹⁵⁹ ¹⁶⁰ The Anti-Corruption Coalition expressed their solidarity with Santos.¹⁶¹ The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the US State Department also reacted: "Preserving the independence and operation of prosecutors is vital to strengthen Honduras' fight against corruption and impunity. We support the work of UFERCO and other anti-corruption units to investigate and prosecute corrupt actors at all levels of government."¹⁶² International human rights organizations signed a joint letter demanding a stop to the attacks against him.¹⁶³

CESPAD held a virtual forum discussing the end of the MACCIH and how it came about.¹⁶⁴ "The Special Prosecutorial Unit Against Impunity and Corruption (UFECIC), together with the Support Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH), left some 50 corruption investigations underway in the country. But they are paralyzed because there are no auditors and prosecutors to move towards the prosecution of the cases; the magnitude of the information of each investigation is so extensive that it is impossible for the 5 forensic auditors who are currently part of the Special Prosecutorial Unit Against Corruption Networks (UFERCO), to take up these cases. More personnel is needed to thoroughly investigate the crimes, to obtain evidence to support the allegations and facts, and that can be conclusive evidence in a trial. To achieve this, the Attorney General should assign more auditors and prosecutors to UFERCO."¹⁶⁵

"For three consecutive years, the budget allocated to the Public Prosecutor's Office has been the same, due to an alleged retaliation by the National Congress for the accusations against deputies involved in acts of corruption. This is the conclusion reached by the employees of the Public Prosecutor's Office, whose frontispiece in Tegucigalpa has been displaying banners for more than a week with the demand for a salary increase. The same demand is reproduced in the cities of San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba, as well as in the regional and local prosecutors' offices."¹⁶⁶

Asfura

Nationalist presidential candidate and current mayor of Tegucigalpa Nasry Asfura can count on the Supreme Court to protect him from a corruption investigation. But at the same time, UFERCO does not seem to give up. "Honduran citizens are confused with the actions of the justice operators because, on the one hand, the Supreme Court refuses to impeach the mayor of the capital, Nasry

158 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2999-honduras-11-enjuiciados-por-hermes-con-detencion-judicial-y-otras-medidas>

159 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1405940314796441603>

160 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1405940320806838277>

161 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-estaria-fraguando-salida-del-fiscal-de-la-uferco-luis-javier-santos/>

162 <https://twitter.com/StateDRL/status/1408499949420044290>

163 https://twitter.com/DPLF_info/status/1409989096315961345

164 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/05/que-incomodo-a-las-redes-de-corrupcion-en-honduras-que-terminaron-expulsando-a-la-maccih/>

165 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/18/50-investigaciones-de-corrupcion-que-no-avanzan-porque-no-hay-audidores-fiscales-en-la-uferco/>

166 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-no-aumentaria-presupuesto-a-mp-por-acusaciones-contradiputados/>

Asfura, and on the other hand, the Specialized Prosecution Unit Against Corruption Networks (UFERCO) seizes documents from the municipal government headquarters due to the refusal of its authorities to cooperate with a new line of investigation for acts of corruption in the municipal government."¹⁶⁷ "The head of Uferco, Luis Javier Santos, upon learning of the resolution in favor of Asfura, said that justice in the country responds to political and economic interests."¹⁶⁸ UFERCO then filed an official challenge against the decision.¹⁶⁹ El Pulso then reported that Luis Santos was under attack by the legal team of Asfura.¹⁷⁰

Hermes

In the Hermes corruption case, a judge ordered "Judicial Detention for Finance Minister, Administrator, Accountant and Deputy Administrator of Casa Presidencial; also for Carol Alvarado, Claudia Noriega and Guillermo Noriega and alternative measures for 4 more defendants".¹⁷¹ ¹⁷² On June 17, the initial hearing concluded. Trial was opened against seven of the accused while the charges were dropped against 4.¹⁷³ ¹⁷⁴

Astropharma

"The former vice president of the National Congress, Lena Karin Gutiérrez Arévalo; her siblings Julio César Gutiérrez, Ginette Gutiérrez and their father, Marco Tulio Gutiérrez Velásquez, were acquitted of the Astropharma case due to lack of evidence. One of the family's arguments that helped their acquittal was that they sold their shares to the company G.K American Electronic in 2009, before the contracts with the State. However, their relationship with this company starts from its creation to the sale of shares to companies incorporated in Panama. Furthermore, in February 2020, a few months after they were acquitted, a piece of land belonging to Astropharma, valued at more than 16 million Lempiras, was donated to Marco Tulio Gutiérrez Velásquez. The Public Prosecutor's Office filed an appeal for the trial to be repeated. If this happens, the Gutiérrezes could be acquitted again, here we explain the possible reasons."¹⁷⁵

IHSS

The MP filed a cassation appeal against the latest ruling of the Sentencing Court that acquitted Mario Zelaya, former director of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS), of seven crimes (see last month).¹⁷⁶ In a second sub-case, "the National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF) and the

167 <https://criterio.hn/la-corte-suprema-de-justicia-declara-sin-lugar-el-antejuicio-contrasfura/>

168 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1399801840632532996>

169 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/autor-login/177-junio2021/7812-mp-presenta-recurso-contradecision-de-la-sala-penal-de-archivar-antejuicio-contraalcalde-y-regidora-capitalinos>

170 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/07/apoderado-de-asfura-arremete-contrael-titular-de-uferco-a-quien-considera-prepotente/>

171 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1403588598771953665>

172 <https://confidencialhn.com/a-la-carcel-envian-a-siete-acusados-por-caso-de-corrupcion-hermes/>

173 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/140541085446003713>

174 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1405761546806972418>

175 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/06/07/los-vinculos-de-los-gutierrez-con-astropharma-y-sus-mecanismos-para-ser-absueltos/>

176 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1468398-466/presentan-recurso-casacion-ultimo-fallo-favorable-mario-zelaya-ihss>

Technical Agency of Criminal Investigation (ATIC), achieved the judicial arrest against the lawyer Jenny Carolina Andrade Lemus, for allegedly being responsible for laundering assets amounting to more than 14 million lempiras, after a new line of investigation for corruption in the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS)".¹⁷⁷ ¹⁷⁸ On June 15, two accused in the newest line of investigation into the IHSS corruption case were sent to pre-trial detention.¹⁷⁹ At the end of the month, "[t]he Public Prosecutor's Office, through the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Organized Crime (FESCCO), in a trial hearing obtained a sentence of definitive deprivation of ownership over 74 assets divided into real and personal property, commercial companies, financial products and vehicles, property of several persons linked to the embezzlement of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS)."¹⁸⁰

Narcopolitics

In light of the upcoming elections, CESPAD published an overview of the Narcopolítica corruption case. "The "Narcopolitics" case, which was prosecuted by MACCIH-UFECIC, reveals how drug trafficking and organized crime networks have been linked to national political elites, with the central axis being the financing of political campaigns and bribes to receive protection from the military and police institutions. This connection between organized crime networks and political elites has reached such a high level that it even involves presidential candidates."¹⁸¹

State Security Forces

CESPAD published an important analysis on the nine years of the police purge program.¹⁸²

Going back to the coup d'état in 2009, a military official was finally sentenced to 3.5 years in prison for the assault on Channel 36.¹⁸³

"The Human Rights Prosecutor's Office (FEDH) of La Ceiba filed a prosecutorial accusation against military officers Imer Azael Mondragón Zelaya, Edwin Armando Acosta Padilla, Dany Enrique Almendarez Villafranca, William Josué Zapata Figueroa and Kelvin Jesús Roque Suchite for alleged cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by a public official and injuries to the detriment of José Mario Cantillano Funes."¹⁸⁴

"The Prosecution Unit for Support to the Police Purification Process (UF - ADPOL) obtained an order to open a trial in the case against the general commissioner of the National Police, Leonel

177 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7854-detencion-judicial-en-contra-de-bertetty-y-abogada-por-lavado-de-mas-de-14-millones-lempiras-de-fondos-del-ihss>

178 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7852-nuevas-acusaciones-y-aseguramientos-de-bienes-por-corrupcion-en-el-ihss-2>

179 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7878-prision-preventiva-contra-involucrados-en-nuevo-caso-de-corrupcion-en-el-ihss>

180 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7976-nueva-sentencia-de-privacion-definitiva-de-dominio-de-bienes-ligados-al-saqueo-del-ihss>

181 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/29/6621/>

182 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/24/fracaso-o-exito-a-9-anos-un-analisis-de-la-depuracion-policial-en-honduras/>

183 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7881-sentenciado-coronel-de-las-ffaa-por-delito-contra-los-medios-de-comunicacion>

184 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7832-cuatro-personas-condenadas-y-cinco-militares-acusados-en-la-ceiba>

Luciano Saucedo Guifarro and his wife Patricia Sbeltlana Estrada Pacheco for the crime of money laundering."¹⁸⁵

Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations

In a case going back to the post electoral repression of late 2017, early 2018, "[c]ourt agents of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Human Rights (FEDH) recently obtained a formal indictment against the officer of the Military Police of Public Order (PMOP) Edgardo Rodríguez Andrades, for the crime of violation of the duties of officials, to the detriment of a minor".¹⁸⁶ "Although the process against the soldier has been confirmed, Kevin's lawyer, Nidia Castillo, has denounced that the Prosecutor's Office eliminated the crimes of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; according to them, after being shot in his leg, the young man was surrounded and beaten to exhaustion by a military squadron."¹⁸⁷

Repression

On June 18, the Honduras Solidarity Network reported on police repression. "Right now, state security forces are firing live rounds & tear gas at protesters in San Pedro Sula who are demanding that the government reconstruct the levees on the rivers that flooded thousands of homes during the two hurricanes last year".¹⁸⁸ ¹⁸⁹ "Hundreds of residents of one of the largest and most vulnerable sectors of San Pedro Sula gathered on the morning of Friday, June 18 to request the government to repair the protective embankments. In response they were gassed and beaten."¹⁹⁰

ConfidencialHN reported on a second incidence of police violence. ""It was natural, I did not think about it, I just put my body as a shield when I saw that my father was being assaulted" said one of the sons of Marco Orellana, the man whose video went viral, since it is possible to observe the National Police officers with excessive use of force against the father and his two children. Orellana said that it all started when he saw that a policeman hit his young son being a minor, the action generated indignation and when he complained to the aggressor, the response he received was a beating, seconds later Marco's other son rushed on his father to protect him with his body, however he was also brutally beaten."¹⁹¹

185 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7827-a-juicio-oral-y-publico-comisionado-general-de-policia-implicado-en-lavados-activos>

186 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7813-fiscalia-de-derechos-humanos-logra-auto-de-formal-procesamiento-contra-miembros-de-la-pmop>

187 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2985-honduras-perdonan-delitos-de-tortura-y-crueldad-a-militar-que-disparo-a-menor>

188 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1405893496309829634>

189 <https://confidencialhn.com/con-gas-lacrimogenos-policia-nacional-desaloja-protestantes-en-zona-norte-de-honduras/>

190 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/06/18/brutalidad-e-indiferencia-estatal-reciben-pobladores-de-chamelecon-que-exigian-reparacion-de-los-bordos/>

191 <https://confidencialhn.com/les-dimos-el-voto-nosotros-se-los-podemos-quitar-dice-padre-brutalmente-agredido-en-chamelecon/>

Assassinations

On June 3, "OACNUDH notes with concern the two violent deaths that occurred on Saturday, May 28 in the municipality of Silca, Department of Olancho, and in the municipality of Yoro, where elements of the Municipal Police are allegedly involved."¹⁹²

On June 18, "[t]he Local Prosecutor's Office of Marcala obtained the arrest of the active military officer, Luis Fernando Ramos López, who was captured for allegedly being responsible for the crime of homicide to the detriment of Rubén Antonio Martínez."¹⁹³

Penitentiary System

Six people were injured during a confrontation inside the maximum security prison El Pozo.¹⁹⁴ OACNUDH later announced to monitor the human rights situation in several prisons.¹⁹⁵ But the situation got even worse. On June 17, four inmates were murdered in a riot.¹⁹⁶ According to El Heraldo, a grenade exploded and different gang factions shot at each other for minutes.¹⁹⁷ OACNUDH visited the prison to document the riot.¹⁹⁸ In total, 8 inmates were killed so far this year and 240 in the last decade.¹⁹⁹ Given the violence inside Honduras' prison system, Proceso Digital called them "prisons of maximum INsecurity".²⁰⁰ CONADEH highlighted the problems with the militarization of the prisons.²⁰¹ The Association of Relatives of Prisoners called for the immediate intervention of penitentiary centers.²⁰² Instead of addressing the problems, the JOH regime through the National Anti-Maras and Pandilla Task Force and through the Military Police attacked NGOs working on prisoners' rights.²⁰³

InSight Crime later reported: "A massacre between the Barrio 18 and MS13 gangs in Honduras' most notorious prison raises questions on whether the military is having any impact since taking over responsibility for security in December 2019. (...) Over the eighteen months that Honduras' armed forces have been guarding prisons, there have been no measurable signs of progress. And after the latest killings at La Tolva, serious questions are being raised as to whether the situation has only worsened. Foremost among these was how gang members were able to get their hands on military-grade weaponry, including grenades and semi-automatic rifles. (...) The immediate response from authorities was not reassuring. When asked to respond to this call for their removal, instead of promising substantive changes, military officials counter-attacked. In a television interview, the head of the country's anti-gang task force, Colonel Amilcar Hernández, accused

192 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHNN/status/1400489468516306945>

193 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7905-militar-es-capturado-por-homicidio-en-san-jose-la-paz>

194 <https://confidencialhn.com/unas-seis-personas-resultaron-heridas-tras-enfrentamiento-en-carcel-de-el-pozo-en-ilama-santa-barbara/>

195 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHNN/status/1402823519839326208>

196 <https://confidencialhn.com/a-cuatro-sube-cifra-de-los-privados-de-libertad-fallecidos-en-reyerta-en-la-tolva/>

197 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1471517-466/cinco-muertos-39-heridos-reyerta-la-tolva>

198 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHNN/status/1406058399746428931>

199 <https://proceso.hn/en-la-ultima-decada-240-privados-de-libertad-fueron-asesinados-en-carceles-de-honduras/>

200 <https://proceso.hn/carceles-de-maxima-inseguridad/>

201 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1866-militarizacion-de-carceles-en-honduras-evidencian-las-graves-violaciones-a-los-derechos>

202 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/ante-ingobernabilidad-piden-intervenir-los-centros-penales/>

203 <https://proceso.hn/defensores-de-ddhh-y-ongs-reciben-dinero-de-maras-y-pandillas-acusa-comandante-de-la-fnamp/>

Ordoñez and her organization of having been bribed by gangs to exaggerate what is happening in prisons."²⁰⁴

Militarization

Quite a while ago, a controversial program initially worth over 4 billion Lempiras was granted for the Armed Forces to boost agriculture production. After heavy criticism, the budget was decreased. This month, they claimed it was "only" 100 million Lempiras. According to the Armed Forces, they had spent 35 million.²⁰⁵

CESPAD published a report written by Eugenio Sosa on "US security policy and militarization in Latin America in the context of democracy".²⁰⁶

International Community

JOH visited Germany, Israel and Spain this month.²⁰⁷

"The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has approved a US\$45 million loan to finance the Potable Water and Sanitation Program in Honduras, which will benefit nearly 31,000 households in rural areas and towns of up to 30,000 inhabitants by providing them with new and improved access to these basic services."²⁰⁸ The BCIE approved \$9.4 million for the RNP to continue with the Identify Yourself Project to hand out new identity cards.²⁰⁹

US

The US Chargé d'Affaires met with the Minister of Human Rights as well as with JOH himself, giving the latter an questionable opportunity for a photo-op.²¹⁰

Marisa León-Gómez Sonet wrote an article for NACLA about US policy toward Central America. "If the United States truly wants to stem the increase of immigrants and immigration on the southern border, it must first speak to the root causes of the situation, including the fragile, dangerous reality people and communities in Central America face every day. President Biden has tasked Vice President Kamala Harris and Special Envoy for the Northern Triangle Ricardo Zúñiga with addressing the root causes of migration from that region. The administration announced \$4 billion in aid over four years, in addition to \$310 million in emergency Covid-19 aid to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Although aid should be a crucial aspect of addressing economic

204 <https://insightcrime.org/news/honduras-army-faces-backlash-after-continued-prison-violence/>

205 <https://proceso.hn/segun-las-ffaa-este-ano-han-apoyado-a-mil-123-productores-bajo-programa-agricola-encomendado-por-el-ejecutivo/>

206 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/16/la-politica-de-seguridad-de-los-estados-unidos-y-la-militarizacion-en-america-latina-en-el-contexto-de-la-democracia/>

207 <https://proceso.hn/presidente-herandez-visitara-esta-semana-alemania-israel-y-espana/>

208 <https://www.iadb.org/en/news/honduras-improve-drinking-water-and-sanitation-services-support-idb>

209 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-aprueba-226-millones-de-lempiras-al-rnp-para-finalizar-proyecto-identificafe/>

210 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1405337061650055171>

problems, it can have consequences that contradict its intentions, particularly if the money goes to the military and police forces."²¹¹

"On the heels of Vice-President Harris' first trip to Central America, over 130 organizations in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and the United States are urging Congress to "re-consider several key aspects" of U.S. economic development assistance towards the region. A "good-faith effort" by the U.S. to address the root causes of forced migration from Central America, they wrote in a letter to the chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, "would begin with a process of awareness and accountability for how the United States has, historically and in recent years, contributed to the current conditions in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala that continues to cause thousands of people to have to leave their homes in order to survive."²¹²

Also this month, USAID announced "to support the economic reactivation actions coordinated by the Cortés Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIC) in the business sector of northern Honduras."²¹³ USAID administrator Samantha Power visited Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala from June 13 to 17.²¹⁴ "U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power traveled to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on June 13, 2021, to assess USAID humanitarian assistance activities and programs that promote economic growth, security, and good governance in the country. (...) The United States is proud of our longstanding partnership and friendship with the people of Honduras. Through programs that advance security, prosperity, and good governance, USAID is working side-by-side with Hondurans to foster the conditions to build a brighter future in Honduras. During her visit, the Administrator announced nearly \$24 million to expand employment opportunities and promote election participation and integrity in Honduras."²¹⁵

On June 30, US Congresswoman Norma Torres announced "numerous provisions focused on U.S.-Central America policy that she included in the fiscal year 2022 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill".²¹⁶

EU

On June 28, Congress approve the Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the European Union for forest law enforcement, improved governance and trade in timber products to the European Union (AVA FLEGT).²¹⁷ This agreement has been denounced by Garífuna and indigenous peoples for its problem with previous, free and informed consent.²¹⁸

"In the framework of the III Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and Spain, the director of

211 <https://nacla.org/news/2021/06/08/immigration-policy-must-look-beyond-border>

212 <https://cispes.org/article/over-130-organizations-join-letter-congress-amidst-discussions-biden-funding-request-urge>

213 <https://proceso.hn/usa-id-apoyara-reactivacion-economica-de-empresas-en-la-zona-norte-de-honduras/>

214 <https://tiempo.hn/jefa-de-usaid-llegara-a-honduras-para-abordar-causas-de-migracion/>

215 <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/jun-14-2021-administrator-samantha-power-visits-honduras>

216 <https://torres.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/torres-influences-central-america-policy-key-appropriations-bill>

217 <http://www.fao.org/honduras/noticias/detail-events/es/c/1414233/>

218 https://twitter.com/sandra_marybel/status/1409836521599995907

Human Rights Watch (HRW), José Miguel Vivanco, urged the Spanish president, Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, to make a statement regarding the deterioration of human rights in the region. (...) In Honduras, he highlighted the accusations against President Juan Hernández for collaborating with organizations linked to drug trafficking. In addition, he denounced the concentration of powers and institutions, carried out by the National Party over the last decade, and which involves the co-optation of the Supreme Court of Justice, where its head has absolute power to select, appoint, dismiss or apply disciplinary measures to all judges in the country."²¹⁹

"The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) signed an agreement on Tuesday with the European Union (EU) for more than 9.2 million euros (11.2 million dollars) to support the Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience Program in the Dry Corridor (Eurosán) in Honduras."²²⁰

Israel

The JOH regime inaugurated the Honduran embassy in Jerusalem.²²¹ "Several parliamentary committees traveled to Israel to accompany President Juan Orlando Hernández at the opening of the Honduran embassy in Jerusalem, an act described as a waste and embezzlement of public funds."²²²

"In the opinion of analyst Raúl Pineda Alvarado, Honduras has become involved in a problem that should have remained on the sidelines, because it has claimed the lives of many innocent people. "Our foreign policy is contradictory and incoherent, because in the previous Honduran government we recognized the Palestinian State", he said, remarking that this action can generate distancing between the government and the Palestinian community, which is very numerous in the country. Pineda believes that the transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem does not respond to the interests of the State of Honduras, but to personal protection, referring to the Honduran president and several of the officials who are being accused by the US justice system."²²³

Drug Trafficking

The sentencing of JOH's drug trafficking partner Geovanny Fuentes was postponed to August 31, 2021.²²⁴ On June 22, "Judge Kevin Castel, who has been in charge of the cases of several Hondurans who have been charged in the Court for the Southern District of New York for drug trafficking crimes, presented a document called "Opinion and Order" in which he established the legal arguments and a summary of the evidence presented during the trial of Geovanny Fuentes Ramirez, an alleged businessman who operated in the northern part of Honduras. By means of said arguments the judge denied the request presented by Fuentes' defense on April 23, in which they requested a new trial for their client, who was found guilty of three crimes of drug trafficking and

219 <https://criterio.hn/human-rights-watch-insta-a-presidente-de-espana-a-que-denuncie-deterioro-de-dd-hh-en-centroamerica/>

220 <https://proceso.hn/la-cooperacion-espanola-y-la-ue-apoyaran-la-seguridad-alimentaria-en-honduras/>

221 <https://proceso.hn/el-presidente-de-honduras-llega-a-israel-para-abrir-embajada-en-jerusalen/>

222 <https://confidencialhn.com/la-bandera-de-honduras-ya-flamea-en-su-nueva-embajada-en-jerusalen/>

223 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/joh-estaria-buscando-proteccion-con-apertura-de-embajada-de-honduras-en-jerusalen-senala-analista/>

224 https://twitter.com/Prohn_Honduras/status/1403357570094469122

use of machine guns and destructive devices for the distribution of cocaine to the United States, said judge was also in charge of the case of drug trafficker and former deputy for the National Party of Honduras Juan Antonio Hernandez".²²⁵ On June 24, the MP seized 27 properties and businesses linked to Geovanni Fuentes Ramírez, convicted drug trafficker in the US and alleged JOH ally.²²⁶

On June 7, Proceso Digital reported that Honduras had received a new extradition request from the US, from a Texan court.²²⁷

Varia

Coup d'état

Honduras commemorated the 12th anniversary of the coup d'état on June 28.^{228 229 230}

JOH

JOH still tries to paint a very different picture of him and his regime at the international level. He "presented himself on Wednesday at the United Nations Summit against Corruption as an "unwavering defender" in the "fight against corruption and organized crime", while defending himself from accusations linking him to drug trafficking."²³¹ But even business representative now stray from JOH's line. "The President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Cortes, CCIC, Pedro Barquero, said in Radio Progreso that Honduras lost 70% of foreign investment in the last 9 years. He assures that, the lack of rule of law, the government's links with corruption and drug trafficking, have been the main obstacles for foreign investment and the fight against poverty."²³² And new acts of corruption may follow.²³³ "A reform made to the General Budget of Revenues and Expenditures took away constitutional powers from the National Congress and, instead, granted privileges to the Executive Branch to make transfers and budget approvals without any oversight, reveals an analysis by the Center for the Study of Democracy (Cespad)."²³⁴

Last month's electoral reforms raised the fear of another JOH reelection again.²³⁵ "Article 213 of the new Electoral Law has generated concern due to the fact that the article gives the authorities of the political institutions the power to appoint at their discretion persons to replace candidates for elected office who resign or die."²³⁶ Former president Pepe Lobo also joined the discussion: "It is not fear, it

225 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2021/06/22/juez-kevin-castel-niega-solicitud-de-un-nuevo-juicio-a-socio-de-juan-orlando-herandez-en-el-narcotrafico/>

226 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/177-junio2021/7946-mp-asegura-27-bienes-y-empresas-a-estructura-de-geovanni-fuentes-ramirez-condenado-en-eeuu-por-narcotrafico>

227 <https://proceso.hn/csj-recibe-nuevo-pedido-de-extradicion-y-reconfirma-entrega-de-diaz-contreras/>

228 <https://radioprogressohn.net/np/doce-anos/>

229 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3199-12-anos-sin-tregua-el-golpe-de-estado-en-honduras-establecio-un-patron-de-ataques-abusos-y-discriminacion>

230 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/28/analisis-honduras-a-doce-anos-del-golpe-de-estado-como-resolver-la-crisis-heredada/>

231 <https://confidencialhn.com/joha-afirma-en-la-onu-que-honduras-es-hostil-para-la-corrupcion>

232 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/por-falta-de-estado-de-derecho-honduras-perdio-el-70-de-inversion-extranjera/>

233 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/02/analisis-la-reforma-al-presupuesto-general-y-su-implicacion-para-la-campana-electoral-del-partido-de-gobierno/>

234 <https://criterio.hn/reforma-al-presupuesto-permite-al-ejecutivo-hacer-transferencias-sin-vigilancia/>

235 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/cuestionan-que-articulo-213-de-ley-electoral-puede-habilitar-candidatura-de-joh/>

236 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/01/articulo-213-de-ley-electoral-genera-alarma-por-una-nueva-candidatura-de-joh/>

is real the intention that he wants to remain in power by pushing Tito Asfura aside, or that Asfura goes, but it is the same thing, there is no difference in that matter, because Tito is JOH's candidate."²³⁷ Additionally, JOH suddenly "discovered" the minimum wage. "President Juan Orlando Hernandez, said on Wednesday during the celebration of the Honduran Policeman's Day that the country's working class needs a fair minimum wage and that in the absence of agreements to determine it, he will be the one who will end up defining the percentage."²³⁸ His statement led to widespread criticism of presidential overreach.²³⁹ ²⁴⁰ FOSDEH warned that "the government runs the risk of encouraging the closure of companies if it defines the adjustment to the minimum wage without consensus with the other sectors involved".²⁴¹ On June 15, it was made public that the minimum wage will increase by 4%-8% on July 1, 2021.²⁴²

On June 22, the Ministry of Security, unconvincingly claimed that the homicide rate was at its lowest in 15 years.²⁴³ The Violence Observatory at the UNAH said that just compared to last year, the homicide rate is 13% higher.²⁴⁴ Additionally, its director Migdonia Ayestas criticized the widely rejected "security tax" (tasa de seguridad). ""The Security Tax has been used for the purchase of presidential airplanes, luxury cars, weapons and rental of patrols," she said. The expert in security issues said that "it is difficult for the State to justify having discretionary resources, they are not very transparent and many resources have been managed as they have wanted". Data from the organization show that around 90 percent of the population does not feel safe."²⁴⁵

El Pulso reported on the 17 interventions of state organizations under the JOH regime these last eight years which had nothing to show for them.²⁴⁶ But he surely scored points by considering Nationalist activists as front line workers when it came to vaccine prioritization.²⁴⁷

Elections

Last month, the budget for the CNE to conduct the general elections was approved, 600 million Lempiras. This month, they demanded an increase.²⁴⁸

Proceso Digital summarizes well the upcoming elections. "14 parties, 34 independents and no plan to govern Honduras".²⁴⁹ Criterio wrote of a "flood of independent candidacies".²⁵⁰

237 <https://confidencialhn.com/porfirio-lobo-reafirma-que-son-reales-las-intenciones-de-joh-para-quedarse-en-el-poder/>

238 <https://proceso.hn/si-las-cupulas-no-toman-decisiones-sobre-el-salario-minimo-me-tocara-a-mi-decidirlo-presidente-herandez/>

239 <https://confidencialhn.com/joha-hace-demagogia-con-el-nuevo-salario-minimo>

240 <https://radioprogressoh.net/aplicacion-movil/gobierno-de-joh-sigue-dando-largas-al-aumento-del-salario-minimo/>

241 <https://proceso.hn/gobierno-podria-fomentar-cierre-de-empresas-en-decision-sobre-el-salario-minimo-segun-el-fosdeh/>

242 <https://proceso.hn/aumento-al-salario-minimo-entre-el-4-y-8-a-partir-del-1-de-julio/>

243 <https://confidencialhn.com/tasa-de-homicidios-es-la-mas-baja-en-los-ultimos-quince-anos-alejandra-herandez/>

244 <https://proceso.hn/homicidios-incrementaron-13-este-ano-en-honduras-segun-el-ov-unah/>

245 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/23/el-tason-de-seguridad-ha-servido-para-la-compra-de-aviones-presidenciales-carros-de-lujo-armas-y-alquiler-de-patullas/>

246 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/21/joh-nombro-17-interventoras-en-ocho-anos-muchas-expectativas-y-nulos-resultados>

247 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-justifica-vacunacion-de-activistas-politicos-argumentando-que-pertenecen-a-primera-linea/>

248 <https://proceso.hn/cne-pedira-ampliacion-de-los-1-600-millones-para-garantizar-elecciones-generales/>

249 <https://proceso.hn/14-partidos-34-independientes-y-ningun-plan-para-gobernar-honduras/>

250 <https://criterio.hn/lluvia-de-candidaturas-independientes-para-elecciones-2021-en-honduras/>

CESPAD's analysis on the budget reform (see above) also has implications for the electoral process. "In this scenario, the central purpose is to have total availability of money for the social programs and projects promoted by the governing party, in view of the general elections. Although the approved reform contains technical administrative issues, they are of a marginal nature, because the central objective is to continue sustaining a robust budget for social assistance for the proselytizing purposes of the PNH. An effective mechanism for political clientelism and electoral propaganda. If these reformed articles, among others, represented matters that should be urgently addressed, why was this not done when the Budget of the Republic was approved, in December 2020, but changes are introduced four months later, in an election year?" Congress reformed another article of the electoral law. Political parties are now exonerated from paying taxes. The reform had the support of the three main parties, Liberal, National and Libre. But it was rejected and criticized by representatives of smaller parties.²⁵¹

One month after the approval of the contested electoral reforms (see last month), the political party FAPER filed an appeal before the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice.²⁵² Political debt, the amount of money given to parties, is a controversial topic in Honduras. With the new reform, the total amount won't decrease as hoped²⁵³, but rather change its distribution in favor of large parties.²⁵⁴ And then, there is also the problem with the Clean Politics Unit. "The new electoral law in force subsumes the law of clean politics in a series of articles in good faith, but without the necessary claws for the Clean Politics Unit to enter with force to track the illicit money that enters the political campaigns."²⁵⁵ "A new and harsh message from the Episcopal Conference of Honduras (CEH) to the political class was disseminated a little less than six months before the general elections. It asks voters not to elect drug traffickers and corrupt people and criticizes the 14 political parties because none of them has presented, at this stage of the process, a national plan or a concrete government proposal."

"The presidential candidate of the Honduran National Opposition Unity (UNOH), Doris Gutiérrez, warned this Tuesday that some 500 thousand votes from rural areas will not be transmitted immediately in the general elections, because there is no technology to do so in those parts of the country. According to Gutiérrez, there are many communities in the country that do not even have electric power and, according to calculations, some 500 thousand votes from those rural areas will not be transmitted immediately in the November 28 elections and there is a risk that the same will happen in 2017."²⁵⁶ "Because it is a constitutional mandate, the National Electoral Council (CNE) must disqualify those political candidates who are concessionaires and contractors of the State, said Wednesday former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana. "If the Constitution mandates it, you cannot evade that responsibility without incurring liability", said the lawyer and university professor to Criterio.hn. Article 199 of the Constitution states that State concessionaires for the exploitation of

251 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/10/diputados-aprueban-exonerar-del-pago-de-impuestos-a-partidos-politicos/>

252 <https://proceso.hn/faper-presenta-amparo-contr-nueva-ley-electoral/>

253 <https://proceso.hn/obispos-piden-a-votantes-castigar-a-corrup-tos-y-narcos/>

254 <https://proceso.hn/con-nueva-ley-electoral-no-baja-pago-de-la-deuda-lo-que-aumenta-es-cuota-para-partidos-mayoritarios/>

255 <https://proceso.hn/ley-electoral-resta-brillo-al-financiamiento-de-campanas-politicas/>

256 <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-500-mil-votos-rurales-no-seran-transmitidos-inmediatamente-el-dia-de-las-elecciones-preve-doris-gutierrez/>

natural resources or contractors of services or public works that are paid for with State funds and those who, for such concepts, have outstanding accounts with the State, cannot be deputies."²⁵⁷

CESPAD published an analysis on the use of public funds for political campaigns by the National Party. "During the 2017 election year, the central government of Honduras increased the budget for propaganda and advertising from 32.2 to 83.4 million lempiras. To achieve this, the Executive Branch used a portion of the "tax expenditure" to promote the figure of the President of the Republic, Juan Orlando Hernández, through the Law for the Rescue, Promotion and Development of the Communications Sector (Decree No. 86-2013 dated May 21, 2013) in mass media such as television, radio and written press. To date and in view of the 2021 elections process, this Law is still in force."²⁵⁸ But there are still some observers believing that there is a chance for the not-united-opposition to defeat the National Party. "According to Sosa, there is enormous discontent in society and a huge rejection of how the administration of President Juan Orlando Hernandez has handled the coronavirus pandemic, the promotion of the Employment and Economic Development Zones (Zedes) and the increase of poverty by more than 70 percent and extreme poverty to 50 percent."²⁵⁹

Migration

By May 31, almost 23'500 Hondurans were deported to Honduras this year.²⁶⁰ That is a 6.6% increase compared to 2020.²⁶¹ By mid-June, the number rose to 26'088 Honduran, of which 2204 were minors.²⁶²

On June 7, bad news arrived in Honduras from the US. "A unanimous Supreme Court on Monday said immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally cannot apply for green cards simply because they enjoy Temporary Protected Status, or TPS. The decision is a setback for thousands of U.S. residents who are temporarily protected from deportation because of unsafe conditions in their home countries and now want to remain permanently in the U.S."²⁶³ Additionally, during her recent visit to Guatemala, US vice-president Kamala Harris clearly stated that people should not try to come to the US, that they would not be received.²⁶⁴ She somehow forgot about the right to seek asylum.

Amnesty International published a new report: "The governments of the USA and Mexico have deported tens of thousands of unaccompanied migrant children to their countries of origin, without adequate screenings for potential irreparable harm they could face there. Authorities of both countries have also denied unaccompanied migrant children access to asylum procedures through pushbacks at their respective borders. In some cases, this has resulted in the forced return of asylum-seeking children to ill-treatment (refoulement). As a matter of policy, the Biden administration continues to return almost all unaccompanied Mexican children to Mexico, while the

257 <https://criterio.hn/cne-debe-inhabilitar-a-candidatos-que-son-concesionarios-y-contratistas-del-estado-edmundo-orellana/>

258 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/06/21/analisis-por-que-en-las-elecciones-2021-la-publicidad-estatal-podria-continuar-favoreciendo-al-candidato-del-partido-de-gobierno/>

259 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/21/afirman-que-lideres-opositores-tienen-posibilidades-de-derrotar-al-oficialismo/>

260 <https://criterio.hn/en-2021-mas-de-23000-hondurenos-han-sido-retornados-al-pais/>

261 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-ha-recibido-23-mil-454-deportados-en-este-ano-un-6-6-mas-que-en-2020/>

262 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/06/22/mas-de-26-mil-hondurenos-han-sido-deportados-se-anuncia-nueva-caravana-migrante/>

263 <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/supreme-court-green-card-tps-holders-illegal-entry/story?id=78131003>

264 <https://proceso.hn/no-vengan-dice-kamala-a-migrantes-mientras-enfatiza-en-lucha-anticorrupcion/>

Mexican government has likewise repatriated the majority of unaccompanied Central American children without adequately assessing what harm they could face."²⁶⁵

But there was also some good news from the US. "Attorney General Merrick B. Garland reversed on Wednesday Trump-era immigration rulings that had made it all but impossible for people to seek asylum in the United States over credible fears of domestic abuse or gang violence, marking one of the Justice Department's most significant breaks with the previous administration. (...) The decisions — applicable to all cases in the system, including appeals — will affect tens of thousands of migrants. Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans fleeing gang extortion and recruitment and women fleeing domestic abuse have arrived in the United States since 2013, and many cases are still being adjudicated, given an enormous backlog in immigration courts."²⁶⁶ Additionally, the "State Department and Department of Homeland Security announced this week that they are expanding eligibility for legal migration to the U.S. for some minors from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. The Central American Minors (CAM) program allows immigrant parents or U.S.-based guardians with legal status in the country to petition for their children's resettlement in the U.S. The Biden administration restarted the program in March after a four-year halt."²⁶⁷

And Light at the End of a Month

"The Association for Participative Citizenship (ACI-Participa) inaugurated the Central Psychosocial Support Unit (UCAP) for human rights defenders."²⁶⁸

265 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/4200/2021/en/>

266 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/16/us/politics/asylum-domestic-abuse-gang-violence.html>

267 <https://www.voanews.com/usa/immigration/us-expands-migration-eligibility-some-central-american-minors>

268 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/06/10/aci-participa-inaugura-oficina-de-atencion-psicosocial-para-personas-defensoras/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

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Upcoming Activities:

-

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