

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – May 2020

COVID-19 cases started a steep increase reaching more than 5000 by the end of May. Medical experts warn of a system on the brink of collapse as millions and millions of dollars continue to flow to the JOH regime without any discernible effect. A very strict lockdown is imposed by violence. More and more Hondurans have to choose between exposing themselves to state violence and a deadly virus on the one hand and trying not to starve on the other hand. In the midst of this, Honduras should prepare for the coming electoral cycle already accompanied by various problems. JOH's situation continues to worsen as his former police chief accused in April for drug trafficking may cooperate with US authorities. 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

As in the previous two months, let us first look at the dengue situation in Honduras before covering the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ The number of dengue cases have been substantially higher than last year, there are 3488 more cases, 11,977 in total. The good news is that there are 90 fewer severe dengue cases.² The latest number reported in May was 12'311 cases and 19 suspected deaths.³ The New York Times also reported on the "two-front public health battle" in Honduras as both dengue and the coronavirus ravage the country. "The outbreak hit Honduras particularly hard, overwhelming a public health system that had already been weakened by budget cuts and pervasive corruption and was barely equipped to meet usual demands, much less an epidemic of record size. By the end of 2019, Honduras had suffered about 61 percent of the dengue deaths in Central America."⁴

May started with less than 800 COVID-19 cases and 75 deaths. By the end of the month, the numbers had risen to 5202 and 212 respectively.⁵ This even surpassed the prediction of an IHSS model which predicted 5000 cases only by the end of June.⁶ The testing capacity is still very low in Honduras, but over the month it increased from some 200 per day to over 500 per day. At the beginning of the month, Deputy Secretary of Health, Nery Cerrato, announced that five new virology labs will be installed in different regions to increase the capacity to perform more daily tests.⁷ This would be more than welcome. On May 4, El Libertador reported that Honduras had only conducted 4810 tests, while the much smaller El Salvador conducted over 30'000.⁸ Honduras has even one of the lowest testing rate in all Latin America.⁹

The testing capacity is also a very political subject highlighted by the following incident this month. There was a disagreement between the UN and the JOH regime. The later asked the UN for 250'000 testing kits. The UN denied this request saying that they had donated already 85'000 functional testing kits to Honduras.¹⁰ But according to the special commissioner for the pandemic of the JOH regime, Lisandro Rosales, they only received 5600 tests.¹¹ Talking to deputy secretary of Health Nery Cerrato, El Tiempo highlighted that one problem with the Honduran testing capacity is not just the access to testing material but the lack of people qualified to do the testing.¹²

1 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/mientras-se-combate-al-coronavirus-el-dengue-hace-de-las-suyas-en-honduras/>

2 <http://elpulso.hn/aumenta-casos-de-dengue-sin-signos-de-alarma-pero-disminuyen-los-graves/>

3 <https://tiempo.hn/casos-dengue-ascienden-a-12311-reportan-muertes/>

4 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/world/americas/virus-central-america-dengue.html>

5 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1383533-466/honduras-muertos-212-5202-infectados-covid19-pandemia-31-mayo>

6 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1380116-466/modelo-del-ihss-visualiza-5000-contagiados-de-covid-19-a-junio>

7 <https://confidencial.hn.com/salud-instalara-cinco-laboratorios-para-realizar-mas-pruebas-diarias-de-covid19/>

8 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/1982-honduras-el-que-menos-investiga-infeccion-del-covid-en-la-region>

9 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1382682-528/coronavirus-curva-cuarentena-honduras>

10 <https://confidencial.hn.com/onu-recuerda-a-embajadora-lizzy-flores-que-la-oms-dio-a-honduras-85-mil-pruebas-para-detectar-el-coronavirus/>

11 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/honduras-aclara-que-solo-ha-recibido-kits-de-extraccion-para-5-600-pruebas-de-parte-de-onu.html>

12 <https://tiempo.hn/onu-dono-honduras-85-mil-pruebas-pcr-solo-aplicado-15-mil/>

State Reaction

Throughout the month, the state of exception was prolonged, always one week at a time, also keeping up the very strict limitation on mobility. Hondurans are only allowed to leave their house once every two week based on the last digit of their identity card. Matters made worse for many Hondurans when Congress passed a law to force the use of masks. If someone does not, or rather cannot, comply, they have to pay a 200 Lempiras fine.¹³ This was denounced as criminalizing poverty.¹⁴ According to ConexiHon, the underlying law is unconstitutional.¹⁵

Radio Progreso summarized the main challenge with the measures by the JOH regime in Honduras. "All those voices are right, both those demanding to stay home and those explaining why it is not possible to stay home. The fundamental problem is not to go out or not to go out, or who pays attention or not, the fundamental problem is in the confidence you have in the person who tells you to stay at home. (...) Nobody in their right mind trusts a president who was not elected by the will of the people, a president with a brother who was extradited and convicted of drug trafficking, a president who is investigated and charged with drug trafficking in the United States, a government where almost all of its members are accused of looting public institutions, a cabinet that has criminalized and assassinated those they claim to represent. Well, that president with all that criminal record is the one who shows up every night telling us not to leave the house and warns us that the worst is yet to come, the same one who wants to stay in power and manages the emergency as an electoral political campaign, the same one who, while embezzling emergency funds, begs God to bless Honduras. (In this scenario of confinement and death, two challenges can be seen: first, as a society we must avoid pointing out the victims as victimizers and winking at the executioner, and second, avoid the continuity of JOH. There are no recipes for this, but there is no executioner who can cope with the inventiveness and transforming power of the people."¹⁶

While Hondurans continued to suffer, the JOH regime continued to get financial support in the millions of dollars from multilateral bodies (see also the last two months). There was a \$20 million loan from the World Bank, officially to purchase medical goods.¹⁷ The IMF came to an agreement with the JOH regime to expand its credit line by another \$222 million to \$530 million.¹⁸ The BCIE approved financing for the economic reactivation of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises worth \$300 million. The Honduran Bank for Production and Housing (Banhprovi) will be responsible for channeling these resources.¹⁹ Congress approved another \$170 millions for the executive to spend on the crisis²⁰, \$111.65 million were a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (BID).²¹ During the remainder of the month, the BCIE announced another \$250

13 <https://criterio.hn/autoritarismo-congreso-de-honduras-aprueba-ley-para-obligar-el-uso-de-mascarillas/>

14 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/ley-de-uso-obligatorio-de-mascarilla-criminaliza-la-pobreza-en-honduras/>

15 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1566-ley-de-uso-obligatorio-de-mascarillas-es-inconstitucional>

16 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/np/de-victimas-y-victimarios/>

17 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/prestamo-del-bm-por-20-millones-es-para-comprar-insumos-medicos-explica-ministra-de-finanzas.html>

18 <https://tiempo.hn/fmi-acuerda-honduras-ampliar-credito-530-millones/>

19 <https://tiempo.hn/bcie-aprueba-financiamiento-ayudar-mipyme-despues-crisis/>

20 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-nacional-de-honduras-sigue-endeudando-al-pais/>

21 <https://confidencial.hn.com/legislativo-aprueba-otro-prestamo-por-20-millones-de-dolares-para-combatir-el-covid19-en-honduras/>

million packet for Honduras²² and on May 28, Congress approved a \$100 million loan from the BCIE intended to support the reactivation of the Honduran economy. The loan could later be increased to up to \$300 million.²³ The BCIE, with the support of the German Financial Cooperation through KfW and the European Union, also launched a \$350 million Financial Sector Support Facility for the financing of micro, small and medium enterprises affected by the corona crisis.²⁴

FOSDEH denounced the speed with which these loans are approved. This started on April 2, when Congress gave the Secretary of Finance (Sefin) permission to directly acquire debt up to \$2.5 billion.²⁵ Instead of paying heed to these warnings, Congress went the other way suspending for a maximum of two years the multi-year rules of fiscal performance for the non-financial public sector which means that Sefin is authorized to exceed the deficit above 1% of GDP in the next two years.²⁶

On May 16, Sefin announced that hey had signed and managed \$797.3 million so far with international organizations to address the corona crisis.²⁷ It is unclear how this number came out, as in reality, the JOH regime received much more in the last three months. It could be that Sefin only refers to the money executed at this time. But only two days later, the Secretariat of Strategy and Communications announced that the JOH regime had spent some 3.3 billion Lempiras from the beginning of the crisis to May 8, i.e. \$132 million.^{28 29} It just highlights again the complete lack of transparency.³⁰ On May 20, Secretary of Finance, Rocío Tábor, announced that another \$1.05 billion would be disbursed to address the corona-crisis³¹ and two days later they said that the amount spent up to May 18 had increased to 3.8 billion Lempiras.³² By the end of the month, this number had risen to 4.1 billion Lempiras.³³ Honduras' foreign debt, meanwhile, rose to \$9.7 billion, 29.8% of GDP and 7.8% higher than a year ago.³³

All this money has left little discernible positive impact on the lives of Hondurans. One group especially hit by the crisis, the elderly, are still abandoned. "In Honduras, where only 6% of the population belongs to this age group, public policies have not prioritized attention to this population, which suffers from abandonment, mistreatment and discrimination. As if that were not enough, the State is responding to the pandemic by redirecting pension funds to address the crisis, in a questionable process."³⁴

22 <https://radiohm.hn/mas-de-500-millones-de-dolares-ha-recibido-honduras-por-parte-del-bcie/>

23 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/prestamo-de-bcie-es-para-apoyar-reactivacion-de-las-empresas-explica-ministra-de-finanzas.html>

24 <https://www.proceso.hn/economia/6-economia/bcie-kfw-y-ue-aportan-350-millones-para-mipymes-afectadas-por-covid-19.html>

25 <https://tiempo.hn/fosdeh-preocupa-rapidez-aprueban-prestamos-covid-19/>

26 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/cn-autoriza-a-sefin-poder-sobrepasar-el-deficit-arriba-del-1-del-pib-en-los-proximos-dos-anos.html>

27 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/un-total-de-797-millones-de-dolares-se-han-gestionado-para-atender-la-emergencia-del-covid-19.html>

28 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/gobierno-ha-invertido-mas-de-1-3-340-millones-para-hacer-frente-a-lucha-contra-el-covid-19.html>

29 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/1-48-millones-en-gel-y-1-1-180-millones-en-hospitales-moviles-figuran-en-gastos-del-gobierno-por-pandemia.html>

30 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/desconfianza-y-dudas-en-manejo-de-los-fondos-de-emergencia-covid-19/>

31 <https://tiempo.hn/aumentan-fondos-para-atender-covid-19-desembolsaran-1047-millones/>

32 <https://confidencial.hn.com/finanzas-informa-que-a-tres-mil-824-millones-de-lempiras-ascienden-recursos-asignados-para-crisis-sanitaria/>

33 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/deuda-externa-de-honduras-llega-a-los-9-737-4-millones-de-dolares-en-3-meses.html>

34 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/05/02/adultos-mayores-trabajan-y-son-discriminados-en-crisis-por-covid-19/>

Corruption

Various corruption cases have been highlighted in the last two monthly reports. Criterio published a helpful overview of the role of Invest-H.³⁵ One consequence of the coverage was that its head, Marco Bográn, canceled the acquisition of some 474,000 KN95 masks from the company GYT, after favoritism was revealed over the direct purchases of these biomedical supplies.³⁶ But the president of the Supreme Audit Court (TSC), José Juan Pineda, continued to negate that corruption was committed during the emergency purchases of the JOH regime. Furthermore, he started to threaten to sue media outlets which rightly point out the problematic link between his son living in the US and Marcos Bográn.³⁷ ASJ revealed that a company that participated in the embezzlement at the IHSS is also linked to the emergency purchases.³⁸ By the end of the month, GYT (see above) had not returned the advance payment of 20.3 million Lempiras given by the Government to guarantee the delivery. "On April 8, Invest-H issued purchase order 019-2020, which stipulates that GYT will provide that amount of masks at a unit price of 107.25 Lempiras, making a total amount of 50.8 million Lempiras. The company demanded an advance payment and Invest-H advanced 20,334,600 Lempiras., equivalent to 40% of the contract, supposedly to guarantee delivery in 7 days. GYT did not comply, asked to extend the delivery but Invest-H decided to cancel the purchase."³⁹

While the MP and its Attorney General continued to go after corruption at the highest level. Congressman Edgardo Castro said that Hondurans condemn the "mediocre attitude" of Attorney General Oscar Chinchilla for the lack of investigation into all the emergency purchases.⁴⁰ The US embassy, i.e. its chargé d'affaires Colleen Hoey met with him this month "on the importance of increasing anti-corruption initiatives".⁴¹ At least the MP intervened the municipality of El Progreso, Yoro, for alleged acts of corruption in the management of emergency funds related to the Honduras Solidarity program.⁴² But this is by no means the only case regarding this controversial program. Libre congressman Jorge Cálix denounced that the official of the Municipal Mayor's Office of the Central District (AMDC), Martín Fonseca, was moving the so-called solidarity bags to the facilities of his restaurant located in the colony Lomas de Mayab in Tegucigalpa.⁴³ The MP also interviewed the fired former head of COPECO, Gabriel Alfredo Rubí Paredes, as part of their investigation into the purchase of the abandoned mobile hospital in Villanueva, Cortés (see last month).⁴⁴

In an audit of the Honduras Solidarity program, the TSC did not find, or rather look for, corruption, but they found "administrative inconsistency".⁴⁵ The Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) presented the first verification report on the emergency spending of State institutions

35 <https://criterio.hn/tentaculos-de-la-corrupcion-sacuden-a-honduras-desde-invest-h/>

36 <https://confidencialhn.com/investh-cancela-a-reganadientes-contrato-de-mascarillas-a-gyt-por-denuncias-de-corrupcion/>

37 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/magistrado-del-tsc-niega-que-su-hijo-sea-proveedor-del-estado-y-dice-presenten-pruebas-sobre-corrupcion-en-compras-por-covid.html>

38 <https://tiempo.hn/asj-empresa-desfalco-ihss-vinculada-compras-emergencia/>

39 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1381216-528/empresa-recibi%C3%B3-l-20-millones-de-antico-por-mascarillas-cancel%C3%B3-compra-y>

40 <https://confidencialhn.com/califican-de-mediocre-desempeno-de-chinchilla-por-nula-investigacion-por-crisis-sanitaria/>

41 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1263179803986976770>

42 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/por-denuncias-de-corrupcion-en-la-entrega-de-alimentos-intervienen-municipalidad-de-el-progreso/>

43 <https://tiempo.hn/bolsas-solidarias-captan-funcionario-trasladandolas-a-su-restaurant/>

44 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/156-mayo2020/5779-mp-tomo-declaracion-a-exministro-de-copeco-por-denuncia-de-abandono-de-hospital-movil>

45 <https://tiempo.hn/tsc-revela-deuda-142-millones-dejo-entrega-bolsas-solidarias/>

belonging to the National Risk Management System (Sinager) and the municipalities. Of 305 institutions monitored, only 80 were rated "excellent", 60 "good" and 165 institutions were evaluated as "bad" and "deficient".⁴⁶

There were also various reports published this month by civil society organizations on corruption and irregularities in the response to the corona crisis. "For the Honduran Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development (FOSDEH), the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the serious flaws in the systems on which our daily lives are based."⁴⁷ CNA published its third report on corruption during the corona-crisis focusing on i) the purchase of 40 ventilators for 15.5 million Lempiras, ventilators which are incomplete and useless for intensive care patients; and ii) unfinished works at the National Cardiopulmonary Institute, better known as El Tórax worth almost another 4 million Lempiras.⁴⁸ ASJ has now published their own report on irregularities in the emergency purchases. Reflecting their closeness to the JOH regime, instead of speaking of corruption as previous reports clearly did, they write about "technical deficiencies". They looked at the purchase of the 450 mechanical ventilators and the 250'000 testing-kits.⁴⁹ CESPAD summarized these reports. "In this context, corruption and misuse of funds in times of COVID 19 accentuates social inequalities, denies the right to health and can even deny the right to life to people affected by COVID 19, when they do not access timely health care and/or do not have access to medicines. The constant demands made by the medical sector for the supply of biosecurity equipment, hospital equipment and the provision of medicines to hospitals and health centers have highlighted the shortcomings of our health system, in addition to the demands of the most vulnerable population for food. So corruption in this context diverts resources that should reach the poorest sectors and / or can serve to provide medical equipment and supplies, so the consequences in times of the pandemic COVID 19 are disastrous."⁵⁰

Health Sector

Still lacking biosafety gear and the medical equipment needed to address the corona crisis, Honduras' medical staff continue to avoid the worst for their fellow citizens – at a great cost for themselves. The labor union of the workers at the University Hospital announced that at least 11 employees tested positive for COVID-19.⁵¹ By May 19, the number rose to 26 confirmed cases.⁵² And according to the president of the National Association of Nurses and Assistants of Honduras (ANEEAH), Josué Orellana, 54 nurses have tested positive for COVID-19 at the national level. He raised concern that they had to continue to work while awaiting the test results possibly infecting more health workers and patients.⁵³ Five radiology technicians also tested positive for COVID-19.⁵⁴

46 <http://elpulso.hn/iaip-evalua-bien-a-invest-h-pero-reprueba-a-copeco/>

47 <https://www.fosdeh.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Propuestas-econo-covid19-III-parte.pdf>

48 <https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Corrupcio%CC%81n-en-tiempos-del-COVID-19-Parte-3.pdf>

49 http://asjhonduras.com/covid19/informe_ventiladores1.html

50 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/29/analisis-la-pandemia-de-la-corrupcion-quienes-pagan-los-costos/>

51 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/alarma-11-empleados-del-hospital-escuela-positivos-de-covid.html>

52 <https://tiempo.hn/26-empleados-hospital-escuela-contagiados-covid-19/>

53 <http://www.radioamerica.hn/aneeah-unas-54-enfermeras-han-dado-positivo-de-covid-19-nivel-nacional/>

54 <https://tiempo.hn/cinco-tecnicos-radiologia-positivo-covid-19/>

By the end of the month, some 350 people working in the health sector tested positive for COVID-19.⁵⁵ A nurse⁵⁶ and an auxiliary nurse were even laid off for a suspected infection.⁵⁷ On May 12, health workers celebrated the International Nurse Day "silently amidst the stigma, exploitation and vulnerability resulting from the ravages of Covid-19."⁵⁸ "In an interview with Radio Progreso, a nurse denounced that the owner of the apartment where she lived changed the key in her room without notifying her, leaving her on the street without her things, just because she worked in a public hospital, and he believed her to be the bearer of Covid-19."⁵⁹

Throughout the month, medical staff protested, giving ultimatums, to finally get the protection the needed for their work.⁶⁰ ⁶¹ ⁶² They also denounced the lack of medical expertise in the purchase of the JOH regime. Doctor Carlos Aguilar criticized the purchase of over-priced mobile hospitals as with the same money existing hospitals could have been prepared to confront the crisis while also having a long-lasting positive impact on the Honduran health system.⁶³ These mobile hospitals continued to cause more problems and they were supposed to solve. Installed last month (see previous report), they are still not functional. ENEE only this month began to install the electrical service. "It should be noted that the Villanueva mobile hospital cost more than 5.5 million Lempiras, not counting the cost of running the hospital, which has already been abandoned for more than 26 days and for which the Public Prosecutor's Office has initiated an investigation. "The Prosecutor's Office for Transparency and the Fight against Corruption, in San Pedro Sula, is conducting an investigation into why it is not working, it was found that there are no public services in the sector where the hospital is installed. Information has already been gathered and if a crime is committed, we will proceed once this investigation is completed," said Yuri Mora, spokesperson for the Public Ministry."⁶⁴ A few days later, Red Cross of Honduras withdrew from an agreement to run the mobile hospitals because the JOH regime never shared the required information with them.⁶⁵ They later denounced that the Health Secretariat owes them some 20 million Lempiras.⁶⁶

Problems abound at other hospitals and medical institutions as well. Radio Progreso reported on the lack of lung ventilators in the intensive care unit at the hospital in El Progreso.⁶⁷ El Heraldo even warned of an "imminent" "hospital breakdown" in the country.⁶⁸ The president of the Association of Physicians at the IHSS in San Pedro Sula, Carlos Umaña, warned that Honduras is fast approaching phase 5, which would mean the collapse of the health system.⁶⁹ He also denounced that at the

55 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1382764-528/coronavirus-covid-medicos-enfermeras-contagiados-honduras>

56 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/enfermeros-y-enfermeras-preocupados-por-despidos-en-medio-de-la-emergencia/>

57 <https://confidencialhn.com/ihss-despide-a-enfermera-por-sospechas-de-padecer-del-coronavirus/>

58 <https://criterio.hn/enfermeras-de-honduras/>

59 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/personal-de-salud-denuncia-discriminacion-y-estigmatizacion/>

60 <https://confidencialhn.com/un-plazo-de-48-horas-dan-medicos-internos-del-hospital-escuela-al-ejecutivo-para-que-les-de-insumos/>

61 <https://confidencialhn.com/radiologos-exigen-equipo-de-bioseguridad-para-atender-pandemia-del-sars-cov2/>

62 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/enfermeras-protestan-exigiendo-insumos-para-enfrentar-covid-en-hospital-catarino-rivas.html>

63 <http://elpulso.hn/con-dinero-de-compras-sobrevaloradas-se-pudo-mejorar-los-hospitales-publicos/>

64 <http://elpulso.hn/en-los-proximos-dias-se-habilitara-el-cuestionable-hospital-movil/>

65 <https://confidencialhn.com/cruz-roja-desmiente-al-ejecutivo-afirman-que-no-fueron-informados-sobre-hospitales-moviles/>

66 <https://confidencialhn.com/secretaria-de-salud-debe-mas-de-20-millones-de-lempiras-a-la-cruz-roja-hondurena/>

67 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/paciente-sospechosa-de-covid-19-a-punto-de-morir-por-falta-de-cupo-en-sala-de-uci-en-hospitales-de-san-pedro-sula/>

68 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1378319-466/honduras-contagio-comunitario-coronavirus-fase-5-covid19>

69 <https://radiohmn.honduras-se-acerca-al-colapso-del-sistema-sanitario-por-aumento-en-casos-de-covid-19-sinager-ya-colapso-umana/>

Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS), in San Pedro Sula, there were no reagents to perform COVID-19 PCR tests.⁷⁰ Then, there is a delay in the delivery of some 800,000 masks from China.⁷¹ Red Cross Honduras warned that their blood bank only has supplies for two more weeks to supply hospitals.⁷²

The JOH regime, meanwhile, boasted about the contraction of medical staff to attend the crisis. Some 1400 people were hired and more than 30 million Lempiras spend. But according to the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH), there are still only 3000 doctors when 15'000 would be needed and a lot of the newly employed people do not really work "in the field". "Santos mentions that many of them work in teleconsultations, attending patients via cell phones and on the other hand "other young people are given jobs in tents in subhuman conditions and others are given the comfort of working at home."⁷³ On May 29, the Deputy Minister of Health, Nery Cerrato, informed that permanent agreements for 3,000 employees in the health sector were granted for the duration of the corona crisis. In the agreement it is stated that the crisis will end on December 31, 2020.⁷⁴

Human Rights

COFADEH published its second human rights monitor of the corona-crisis covering the whole month of April. They documented, among other things, the arbitrary arrest of 11'000 people, five cases of torture and and death.⁷⁵

Honduras commemorated May Day in the midst of a global pandemic and with ten thousands of people losing their work in the recent weeks.⁷⁶ Social movements, civil society organizations and human rights organizations published their seventh joint statement on this occasion. They denounced that "business people not only despise human beings, as cheap labor, but they also destroy the environment, sucking up water with residential projects, as is the case with the destruction of La Tigra National Park. This is the "solidarity" of big private enterprise in the times of COVID-19. The contempt for the salaried working class, as well as for the immense population that lives in the logic of "coyol partido, coyol comido", has no limits on the part of this gloomy alliance. It is expressed in the continuity and increase of the electricity and water bills by EEH and SANAA, which puts the population that has been left without its source of income in a more precarious situation".⁷⁷ In a press release, the Honduran Women's Collective (CODEMUH) denounced that "transnationals that exploit workers, don't pay taxes which allows them to accumulate huge amounts of wealth. They very much can maintain salaries of their workers during crisis caused by COVID-19".⁷⁸

70 <https://tiempo.hn/el-ihss-de-san-pedro-sula-se-queda-sin-reactivos-para-las-pruebas-pcr-de-covid-19/>

71 <https://confidencialhn.com/informan-atraso-en-la-entrega-de-800-mil-mascarillas-provenientes-de-china/>

72 <https://confidencialhn.com/banco-de-sangre-de-la-cruz-roja-se-queda-sin-insumos-para-atender-hospitales/>

73 <http://elpulso.hn/personal-medico-contratado-no-trabaja-directamente-en-las-primeras-lineas/>

74 <https://tiempo.hn/covid-19-empleados-salud-gozaran-acuerdo-permanente/>

75 <https://defensoresenlinea.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2do-INFORME-SITUACION-C3%93N-DH-EN-HONDURAS-marco-Covid19-abril20.pdf>

76 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/1978-amargo-1-de-mayo-125-mil-hondurenos-quedaron-sin-empleo-durante-la-pest>

77 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/manifiesto-publico/>

78 <https://twitter.com/hondurasol/status/1256439597841743872>

In a joint press release, over 100 civil society and human rights organizations wrote an open letter to the governments of Honduras and Colombia. "In response to the increased vulnerability of human rights defenders brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, a broad assortment of civil society organizations today urged the governments of Honduras and Colombia to adopt all measures necessary to guarantee the human rights of defenders, social leaders, and ethnic communities in those countries. Defenders and social leaders are under increased attacks from armed groups illegally mobilized to harass and attack them as the defenders respect necessary social isolation orders."⁷⁹

On May 2, MADJ presented an action of protection before the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice asking for the restitution of their rights to defend rights, to freedom of movement and expression, which they consider violated by the validity of the decrees that impose the suspension of "guarantees" in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic.⁸⁰ Pasos de Animal Grande denounced that "[t]he different institutions of the State of Honduras have made a knot to prevent human rights defenders from carrying out their work in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, where there is repression against the population demonstrating in the streets due to lack of food or discrimination".⁸¹ The IACHR agreed. "The IACHR calls on States to protect and guarantee the work of human rights defenders in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic". "According to publicly available information, since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Americas, murders of human rights defenders have been recorded in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Honduras and Mexico."⁸²

OFRANEH's general coordinator Miriam Miranda denounced that the police was threatening to use tear gas against a group of young Garífuna safeguarding the community Travesía, Cortés.⁸³ Defensores en Línea reported on similar intimidation against indigenous Lenca in La Paz, organized by MILPAH, who also try to protect their communities.⁸⁴ Roxana Vasquez, HRD at ADEPZA, denounced that the militarization has been advancing on Zacate Grande through the biosecurity checkpoints, which are in charge of police and military. The corona crisis is used as a pretext to deepen this strategy of dispossession that aims to protect the interests of powerful families in Honduras.⁸⁵ Inhabitants of a neighborhood in Tegucigalpa protested against the burial of people who had died of COVID-19 in their cemetery. State security forces used tear gas to repress and evict them.⁸⁶ InSight Crime reported on these failures of state security forces in Honduras to peacefully enforce the lockdown. "Honduran authorities, particularly the PMOP, have come under fire on numerous occasions for the excessive use of force. Yet now in the middle of a pandemic, the flaws in a public security apparatus built around meeting violence with more violence are further

79 <https://earthrights.org/media/organizations-urge-governments-to-protect-activists-and-communities-threatened-by-armed-groups-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

80 <https://madj.org/index.php/2020/05/02/madj-pide-amparo-para-realizar-su-labor-de-defensoria-de-derechos-humanos/>

81 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2825-estado-de-honduras-un-solo-nudo-para-evitar-que-personas-defensoras-de-ddhh-ejerzan-su-labor-frente-a-las-arbitrariedades-en-la-emergencia-por-covid-19>

82 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/es/contexto/item/2822-senala-la-cidh-algunos-actores-estarian-aprovechando-las-medidas-de-excepcion-para-atentar-contr-personas-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos>

83 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1258051148382179328>

84 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/retenes-anti-covid-19-están-militarizados-en-la-paz/>

85 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2851-honduras-fuerzas-represivas-usan-el-miedo-y-la-intimidacion-para-someter-a-la-comunidad-de-zacate-grande>

86 <https://www.proceso.hn/portadas/10-portada/con-gas-lacrimogeno-desalojan-a-pobladores-que-impiden-entierro-de-muertos-por-covid.html>

exposed."⁸⁷ OACNUDH reminded the JOH regime that the prohibition of arbitrary detention is absolute even in times of public emergency.⁸⁸ They also met with the heads of various Honduran ministries as part of the "Articulation Mechanism to promote the guarantee of the socio-economic rights of people in a situation of vulnerability" in response to the corona-crisis.⁸⁹ The meeting did not show an immediate effect. Days later, Defensores en Línea reported: "At least nine agents of the National Police attacked and imprisoned Heidy and Roberto Amaya, yesterday in the municipality of Campamento, Olancho, hurting their personal and psychological integrity through beating and obscene words, especially against her."⁹⁰

The Human Rights Board published a press release on the failures of the JOH regime to address the corona pandemic. "All the measures taken by the government to date are undemocratic, tarnished by allegations of corruption, abuse of power, lack of transparency, lack of accountability and lack of genuine and legitimate citizen participation. (...) We view with concern how the government of Juan Orlando Hernández has weakened public institutions, taking advantage of them in the context of the COVID-19 emergency to quash the dissent of the various political opposition sectors, obstruct the work of human rights defenders and evade the social monitoring carried out by the various sectors of society, undermining the rule of law and further deteriorating democratic institutions to the detriment of human rights." They further call on Congress to impeach JOH as well as Attorney General Oscar Fernando Chichilla. Last but not least, they call on the multilateral banks to "suspend support for this illegitimate, illegal, and human rights-violating regime. Their continued support may contribute to the prolongation of this serious crisis and the further deterioration of democracy."⁹¹ International civil society and human rights organizations "urge the Honduran government to end excessive use of force by security forces and cease the restrictions and abuses that make it difficult for human rights defenders and journalists to carry out their vital work. (...) We urge the international community to withhold funding for security forces, as called for in the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act. We urge the international community to strongly press the Honduran government to comply with these urgent recommendations to protect the rights of its citizens".⁹²

C-Libre has documented at least 180 protests since March 23, 2020.⁹³ According to the Honduran police, some 30'000 Hondurans have been detained since March 15 for violating the lockdown orders.⁹⁴ For more on repression, see also the State Security Section below.

87 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/honduras-coronavirus-lockdown-gunpoint/>

88 <https://oacnudh.hn/covid-19-no-es-una-excusa-para-la-privacion-ilegal-de-la-libertad-grupo-de-expertos-de-la-onu-sobre-la-detencion-arbitraria/>

89 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1260396167134875649>

90 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/olancho-detencion-golpes-y-amenazas-policiales-contrahermanos-en-campamento/>

91 <http://ciprodeh.org.hn/index.php/noticias-principales/506-la-crisis-solo-puede-ser-superada-con-un-gobierno-legitimo>

92 <https://www.lawg.org/wp-content/uploads/Civil-Society-Organizations-Denounce-Abuses-in-Honduras-in-the-Course-of-the-COVID-2-May-20.pdf>

93 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/1568-honduras-protestas-se-agudizan-en-la-emergencia-por-mal-manejo-de-la-cuarentena>

94 <https://www.latribuna.hn/2020/05/30/unos-30000-detenido-por-violar-toque-de-queda-y-otras-faltas/>

Economy and Poverty

A new study by the Institute for Economic and Social Investigations (IIES) estimates that between 300'000 and 500'000 Hondurans could lose their jobs in the coming months.⁹⁵ More than 2,000 university teachers at the UNAH will become unemployed after authorities decided to dispense with their services, citing financial problems caused by the corona crisis.⁹⁶ Additionally, remittances will fall by 14% in the second semester according to the Honduran Central Bank (BCH).⁹⁷ Radio Progreso reported on the installation of community soup kitchens as a response to the crisis.⁹⁸

Throughout the month, there was a vivid discussion on when and how to reopen the Honduran economy again. Already in late April, some restaurants were able to open again which caused criticism due to the still exponentially growing case numbers.⁹⁹ The former Health Minister Elsa Palou rightly pointed out that "people cannot die of hunger" in the face of the consequences of the corona crisis.¹⁰⁰ If only the billions received by the JOH regime would be used for the benefit of the Honduran people.

According to COHEP, Honduras suffered a 80-90 billion Lempiras blow to GDP due to the corona crisis and the lockdown measures.¹⁰¹ The labor minister Carlos Madero estimated that over 268'000 people lost their job in the hotel sector.¹⁰² According to the National Association of Informal Economy Workers of Honduras, the number of street vendors had increased by 50%.¹⁰³ The transport sector is also hit hard and there were various protests throughout the month.^{104 105}

On May 11, the construction sector started to operate again and already on the first day, four workers at the site of the Palmerola airport were tested positive.¹⁰⁶ Criterio denounced that the Ministry of Labor and Social Security is allowing the violation of human rights by exposing workers to Covid-19 infection, by not ensuring compliance with biosecurity protocols.¹⁰⁷ On this topic, OACNUDH wrote: "As countries begin to ease the recent restrictions put in place by the coronavirus pandemic, a group of UN human rights experts is urging governments and companies to ensure that all workers are protected from exposure to COVID-19."¹⁰⁸

JOH, meanwhile, claimed that 17'000 jobs were created by the maquila industry to produce biosafety equipment.¹⁰⁹ And he announced a collaboration with Israel to address the corona crisis.¹¹⁰

95 <https://www.tunota.com/hasta-500-mil-personas-desempleadas-en-honduras-podria-dejar-el-covid-19-segun-estudio>

96 <https://criterio.hn/docentes-por-hora-de-la-unah-se-quedan-sin-empleo/>

97 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/remesas-a-honduras-sufriran-caida-de-14-en-segundo-semester.html>

98 <https://radioprogreso.hn/noticias-nacionales/comedores-comunitarios-la-apuesta-de-mujeres-para-sobrevivir-en-medio-de-la-pandemia/>

99 <http://elpulso.hn/sin-control-y-con-escalada-de-casos-de-covid-19-gobierno-prepara-reapertura-economica/>

100 <https://tiempo.hn/palou-sobre-apertura-restaurant-no-es-ideal-pero-realidad-se-impone/>

101 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/unos-180-mil-millones-de-su-pib-ha-perdido-honduras-por-el-covid-segun-sikaffy.html>

102 <http://elpulso.hn/desempleo-masivo-y-aumento-de-la-pobreza-los-efectos-devastadores-del-covid-19/>

103 <https://confidencial.hn.com/en-un-50-por-ciento-sube-la-economia-informal-en-honduras-por-actual-emergencia-sanitaria/>

104 <https://confidencial.hn.com/transportistas-bloquean-la-carretera-ca5-sur-para-exigir-bonos-al-ejecutivo-ya-que-no-pueden-laborar/>

105 <https://confidencial.hn.com/taxistas-realizan-protestas-para-exigir-el-reinicio-de-operaciones-son-reprimidos-con-dureza/>

106 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2004-honduras-cuatro-empleados-de-palmerola-con-covid-en-reinicio-de-construccion>

107 <https://criterio.hn/cerveceria-hondurena-pone-en-riesgo-salud-de-sus-trabajadores-en-complicidad-con-el-gobierno/>

108 <https://oacnudh.hn/todo-trabajador-es-esencial-y-debe-protegerse-de-covid-19-pase-lo-que-pase-afirman-expertos-de-la-onu/>

109 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1258861751665377280>

110 <https://forbescentroamerica.com/2020/05/08/honduras-e-israel-acuerdan-unir-esfuerzos-contra-pandemia-de-covid-19/>

The Honduran Bank for Production and Housing (Banhprovi) was granted a 30 million Lempiras credit line for the pig-farming sector.¹¹¹ Lear Corporation, a manufacturer for Ford and General Motors, announced a 1000 new jobs for June and July.¹¹² The international airport in Tegucigalpa also plans to start with commercial operations soon.¹¹³ The maquila industry promised 5000 new jobs and claimed that just in a few weeks they will be back at the 168'000 jobs plus the 5000 new ones.¹¹⁴

At the end of May, the JOH regime presented a reopening plan.¹¹⁵ CESPAD commented on this plan. "There are several reasons to doubt the coherence and sustainability of the intelligent plan for economic openness and to reaffirm the public's distrust of the fact that the remedy for economic recovery is more harmful than the disease of the pandemic. First of all, the government strategy to combat the pandemic has neither technologies for the detection and control of the infected population nor massive testing. On the contrary, the plan has the original sin of lacking objective epidemiological information, because the number of tests has been insufficient. (...) Secondly, the country does not have the conditions required to ensure that the economy is reopened safely. In a prototype assessment of these conditions, prepared by the World Bank, it is pointed out as a key indicator for such reopening that propagation trends have been reduced, which is far from being the case in Honduras. (...) The other key indicator, which is also not met, is that public health and health care systems are ready to contain new outbreaks and care for patients, which involves testing, contact tracing and isolation, the ability to test health workers, among others, and the availability of ICU beds, ventilators and other medical equipment. (...) Finally, among other factors, the Plan relies on the ability of companies to comply with biosecurity protocols and of the government to monitor compliance, but these conditions are not easily met given the shortcomings of both actors."¹¹⁶

Agriculture

One important sector deciding on how many people will additionally fall into poverty or remain in it, is the agricultural sector. There were some hopeful news from the FAO. "Honduras will not have food production problems due to the problems generated by the coronavirus around the world, according to Dennis Latimer, representative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Honduras."¹¹⁷ But CESPAD did not share this conclusion taking an in-depth look at the Honduras agricultural sector. They call the current situation in Honduras a "counter-reform" of the agrarian sector. "During the period from May 11 to 17, two events marked the country's situation in terms of human rights and constitutional political freedoms: 1) The entry into force of Executive Decree PCM-041-2020 on agriculture, published in the Gazette on May 11, 2020, which derives from Executive Decree PCM-030-2020, published in the Gazette on April 9,

111 <https://www.laprensa.hn/economia/1378405-410/millones-aprobados-sector-porcicultor-afectados-emergencia-coronavirus>

112 <https://confidencialhn.com/maquiladora-lear-anuncia-mil-nuevas-plazas-de-trabajo-para-contratar-entre-junio-y-julio/>

113 <https://confidencialhn.com/aeropuerto-de-toncontin-se-prepara-para-reiniciar-operaciones-comerciales/>

114 <https://www.latribuna.hn/2020/05/30/maquilas-en-honduras-estiman-generar-unos-5000-empleos/>

115 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1383558-466/luz-verde-a-la-fase-preparatoria-de-reapertura-inteligente-el-1-de>

116 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/31/analisis-honduras-que-tan-inteligente-es-el-plan-de-reapertura-que-proponen-los-grupos-de-poder/>

117 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/honduras-no-tendra-problemas-de-produccion-de-alimentos-post-pandemia-segun-la-fao.html>

2020. 2) Approval of a loan request for US\$55 million from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the "Comprehensive Rural Development and Productivity Project".¹¹⁸ Peasant farmers fear that their land could be confiscated.¹¹⁹ La Vía Campesina denounced: "They are taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to grant concessions for national and ejido lands, all this is only for the benefit of Agribusiness, and no involvement of small and medium producers".¹²⁰

PCM-030-2020 was also linked to the forest fires in the National Park La Tigra. "The Program for Assuring Food Sovereignty and Security, approved in the PCM-030-2020, states in article 4 that it will make available to the Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) the fiscal lands that can be used for agricultural production, of which a rate of one hundred Lempiras. per year per manzana will be established. "The fires began after the publication of the PCM in the Official Gazette, in which it allows to rent at a low cost the fiscal lands to big farmers and we know that in the mountain of the Tigra there are fiscal lands, as a result of that we believe that fires have come, we already know how this mafia of the government acts and it makes us think many things", explained the farmer, Lesly Soto of the Commission Pro defense of the Communities of the Tigra."¹²¹

Human Rights and Their Defenders

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

Soldiers detained José Trochez, member of the general coordination of COPINH, while he was handing out food in indigenous communities this month. José was in possession of papers allowing him to do humanitarian work.¹²² He was later released and COPINH announced that they would press charges against a soldier for the illegal detention.¹²³ Francisco Celedonio Ramírez, survivor of the massacre at the El Tumbador farm, , was taken to the courts of Trujillo, Colón, accused of usurpation – the go-to accusation to criminalize land defenders in Honduras. COFADEH presented a Habeas Corpus in his defense.¹²⁴ On May 16, Faustino Mejía, a campesino leader in Puerto Grande on Zacate Grande, was arrested by the police for collecting dry wood. After REDEHSUR involved COFADEH, he was released 4 hours after his arrest.¹²⁵ Also on Zacate Grande, the peasant leader and beneficiary of precautionary measures, Elía Hernández, has received on several occasions threats from an alleged employee of the Facussé family. Hernández is also a social communicator at the community radio station La Voz de Zacate Grande.¹²⁶ On May 30, two indigenous leaders in Yoro were sent to detention while awaiting initial hearing in the first week of June. Both leaders were arrested during an eviction of piece of land collectively farmed by the

118 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/18/reporte-semanal-4-covid-19-y-la-crisis-de-los-derechos-ciudadanos-en-honduras-la-contrarreforma-agraria-en-tiempos-de-covid-19/>

119 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/21/analisis-mas-mercados-territoriales-menos-mercados-depredadores/>

120 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1570-programa-de-soberania-alimentaria-deja-en-vulnerabilidad-a-pequenos-productores>

121 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1554-incendios-en-la-tigra-iniciaron-despues-que-el-gobierno-aprobo-programa-de-soberania-alimentaria>

122 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1260019972857716738>

123 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1260039635826282503>

124 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-interpone-habeas-corpus-por-detencion-de-victima-de-el-tumbador/>

125 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/por-recoger-lena-seca-policia-captura-a-campesino-en-zacate-grande/>

126 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/empleado-de-terratiente-amenaza-integrante-de-adezpa/>

Tolupán community.¹²⁷ The same day, human rights and land defender Renan Zelaya Vasquez was threatened by mayor of Reitoca municipality for denouncing illegal logging.¹²⁸

Indigenous Peoples

The new UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, José Francisco Cali Tzay, expressed serious concern about the devastating impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on indigenous peoples, beyond the health threat.¹²⁹ The IACHR held a webinar on the human rights of indigenous peoples in times of corona.¹³⁰

The UN Population Fund reported on the response by the Garífuna community to the corona-crisis. "As countries grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are among the most vulnerable, with many facing poverty, poor health-care access and limited information. In Honduras, members of these communities are joining together to ensure information and resource reach the most vulnerable. "We have had to get creative in these times," said Yimene Calderón, head of the Organization for Ethnic Development, which is working with the Garífuna community to raise awareness of infection control measures and provide support to households in need. They are "being resilient, relying on our traditional medicine and foods, and seeking support and solidarity to receive assistance from the government -- not individually, but collectively, and operating as a network," she said."¹³¹ In explaining why a simple return to "normal" is not an option for Honduras, Karen Spring also used the example of OFRANEH and its work with Garífuna communities. "Like in La Travesía, and other Garifuna communities along the coast, Hondurans from all parts of the country are finding ways to protect themselves and gathering together, like in Tegucigalpa, to organize food distribution networks to support the families most in need. These efforts are ways that Hondurans hope to avoid returning to "normal" which according to Miriam Miranda, "would be irresponsible." "The pandemic really calls upon us to reflect about how the current ferocious, murderous, capitalist system that kills our environment and natural resources does not work for humanity" says Miranda, "we should not go back to the same as before."¹³²

Last month, a court ordered the provision of sufficient and quality food to all members of the Tolupán community of San Francisco de Locomapa, in the department of Yoro. This ruling was disobeyed by the municipality of that area and the mayor has not been criminally sanctioned so far.¹³³ OFRANEH wrote an open letter to the UNDP representative in Honduras, Richard Barathe, regarding the RECOVER Honduras program on biodiversity and ecosystems. The project neighbors Garífuna communities which were neither informed nor consulted.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1266869813516709889>

¹²⁸ <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1267279231668547584>

¹²⁹ <https://oacnudh.hn/covid-19-esta-devastando-a-las-comunidades-indigenas-del-mundo-y-no-solo-se-trata-de-la-salud/>

¹³⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVFGFbIIPPg>

¹³¹ <https://www.unfpa.org/news/indigenous-afro-honduran-communities-join-together-fight-pandemic>

¹³² <https://taskforceamericas.org/honduras-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-why-we-shouldnt-go-back-to-normal/>

¹³³ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2840-municipalidad-de-yoro-desobedece-a-juzgado-que-ordeno-dotar-de-alimentos-y-otras-necesidades-a-tolupanes-de-locomapa>

¹³⁴ <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1265049650605809664>

Assassination

OFRANEH denounced that on May 1, the body of Edwin Noel Sacaza Flores, from the community of Sambo Creek, was found inside a container on the campus of the La Ensenada Thermoelectric Plant. "The Ensenada power plant was immediately militarized with the presence of about 40 elements, while members of the Garifuna community of Sambo Creek, were present in front of it, demanding justice and closure of the plant, for the alleged murder of Edwin, who worked as a security guard of the power plant."¹³⁵ A week later, there was still no official version of what happened and OFRANEH wondered "how much is the life of a Garifuna in Honduras worth?". "The Laeisz Group - owner of the thermoelectric plant in question - and the municipal authorities are hermetically silent, thus confirming the inappropriate style with which they have handled their relations with the Garifuna communities of Sambo Creek and Corozal, which are located a few kilometers from the thermoelectric plant, and will be affected by contamination from the burning of Bunker C fuel (Fuel #6) which is considered highly toxic and is banned in several countries."¹³⁶

On May 21, the Garífuna community suffered an other assassination. OFRANEH denounced that Edwin Fernández was killed in front of his children, probably by drug traffickers, for not handing out the key to the Rio Tinto community security gate, which was established as a preventive measure in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.^{137 138}

The Case of Berta Cáceres

50 months have passed since the assassination of Berta Cáceres, 50 months of demanding justice.¹³⁹ While the intellectual authors are still not being investigated, even the partial justice reached in the case of the material authors is now in danger as COPINH denounced plans to release the main ones from prison¹⁴⁰ COPINH also presented another request demanding that the MP indict Daniel Atala Midence¹⁴¹ for Berta's murder as an intellectual author.¹⁴² "There is strong evidence about the participation of Daniel Atala Midence, in the persecution, criminalization and surveillance resulting in the assassination of Berta Cáceres, for which this person should be prosecuted and brought to justice."¹⁴³ In a series of videos, Victor Fernandez, attorney on COPINH's legal team, explained in detail how the MP so far had not indicted Daniel Midence Atala.^{144 145} "Delayed justice is no justice".¹⁴⁶

135 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/05/02/aparece-muerto-garifuna-dentro-del-plantel-de-termoelectrica-llega-en-sambo-creek/>

136 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/05/12/cuanto-vale-la-vida-de-un-garifuna-en-honduras/>

137 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/05/21/aparente-grupo-de-narcos-liquidan-a-garifuna-encargado-de-vigilancia-de-la-comunidad-de-rio-tinto/>

138 <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/05/alerta-urgente-honduras-por-no-entregar-llave-de-porton-de-bioseguridad-asesinan-al-companero-de-ofraneh-edwin-fernandez/>

139 <https://copinh.org/2020/05/actualizacion-causa-berta-caceres-2/>

140 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1256741853724135424>

141 <https://copinh.org/2020/05/quien-es-daniel-atala-midence/>

142 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1257314229213749248>

143 <https://copinh.org/2020/05/daniel-atala-midence-responsible-for-the-murder-of-berta-caceres-must-be-prosecuted-and-punished>

144 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1260339293312221184>

145 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1263854595186593793>

146 <https://copinh.org/2020/05/video-la-justicia-tardia-no-es-justicia/>

Next month, on June 2, the book "Who Killed Berta Cáceres? Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender's Battle for the Planet" by Nina Lakhani will be published. Hilary Goodfriend published a review. "A full investigation into the murder of Honduran indigenous leader Berta Cáceres doesn't just uncover the story behind her assassination. It also provides a glimpse into the US-backed militarized narco-state of post-coup Honduras."

LGBTIQ

Rihanna Ferrera, director of the Human Rights Association Cozumel Trans, was physically attacked this month.¹⁴⁷

On May 17, Honduras commemorated the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.¹⁴⁸ "[A] group of United Nations and international human rights experts* call on States and other stakeholders to urgently take into account the impact of COVID-19 on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse (LGBT) persons when designing, implementing and evaluating the measures to combat the pandemic."¹⁴⁹ OACNUDH tweeted in solidarity with the LGBTIQ community.¹⁵⁰

Assassinations

The trans woman Luz Clarita was found dead on May 1 in La Ceiba. OPROUCE denounced it as a hate crime.¹⁵¹

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

Journalists and social communicators denounce the limited access to reliable sources, the lack of biosecurity equipment, the loss of jobs and the unreliable information from the state authorities in Honduras.¹⁵² Pasos de Animal Grande described the difficult situation of journalists for doing their work in this pandemic using the example of journalist Oscar Castro. Working for Channel 50 in San Lorenzo, Valle, he denounced the lack of access to information while at the same time suffering an economic blow as all the advertisement money has stopped.¹⁵³ "Under the argument of the economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 250 information workers in Honduras have been victims of dismissals, suspensions, salary reductions and non-payment of salaries".¹⁵⁴ Journalist Josué Quintana Gómez started a hunger strike. He was fired from La Tribuna

147 <https://criterio.hn/rihanna-ferrera-defensora-de-ddhh-es-victima-de-agresion-y-robo/>

148 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2845-en-el-dia-internacional-contra-la-homofobia-imparables-las-violaciones-contras-los-derechos-humanos-de-las-personas-lgbt-en-honduras>

149 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25884&LangID=E>

150 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1261823879556804610>

151 <https://criterio.hn/transfemicidio-asesinan-a-mujer-trans-en-la-ceiba/>

152 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2836-periodistas-estan-entre-el-virus-la-cancelacion-de-la-pauta-publicitaria-y-la-violacion-a-derechos-laborales>

153 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2837-el-periodismo-en-la-zona-sur-de-la-pandemia-a-la-falta-de-acceso-a-la-informacion-y-precariedad-economica>

154 <https://criterio.hn/medios-de-comunicacion-en-honduras-argumentan-pandemia-para-afectar-derechos-de-sus-trabajadores/>

because he refused to accept a 20% salary cut as an act of "solidarity" with the corporate media outlet.¹⁵⁵

Journalist Francisco Javier Aguirre was the victim of threats and physical aggression by Sabino Montes, municipal councilor of El Triunfo, Choluteca.¹⁵⁶ Journalist Ely Vallejo denounced that a police agent harassed him by filming him. "Channel 36 denounced what happened to Vallejo on its website www.cholusatur.com as an obstruction to his journalistic work. "In the style of the 80's, he profiled the communicator by taking photographs and videotaping him."¹⁵⁷ Something similar took place in Tegucigalpa when Military Police agents tried to stop journalists from covering their work.¹⁵⁸ HispanTV denounces an ongoing harassment of them. In the newest incident, their correspondent was illegally detained for more than an hour, threatened and suffered physical aggression.¹⁵⁹ ¹⁶⁰ Two journalists and a cameraman were violently attacked by the National Police in Choluteca when they were covering a protest.¹⁶¹

UNE TV denounced a defamation campaign against them.¹⁶² Journalist Renato Álvarez criticized that after pointing out issues related to JOH and the trial of his brother no public official comes to the program anymore.¹⁶³ Reporteros de Investigación denounced that some 200 journalists have been fired since part of the mainstream press and JOH fell out of love when the former covered the trial of JOH's brother Tony Hernández.¹⁶⁴ Pasos de Animal Grande reported that Dr. Gloria Fajardo, Departmental Director of the Health Office in Copán and spokesperson for the National Risk System, SINAGER, sent a note to Channel 49 Telecaes, announcing she would not give interviews anymore to the journalist Santiago López justifying by claiming that he "always throw things at me".¹⁶⁵ Violeta Rodríguez, deputy director of the Honduran Production and Housing Bank (BANHPROVI), had the two journalists Oscar Morán Méndez and Erick Murillo removed for asking uncomfortable questions.¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷

On May 25, Honduras commemorated the Day of the Honduran Journalist.¹⁶⁸ Pasos de Animal Grande denounced the lack of coverage by the main media outlets on the attacks suffered by journalists in Honduras. Just during the lockdown, Pasos de Animal Grande

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1176-periodista-despedido-por-no-firmar-deduccin-de-su-salario-inicia-huelga-de-hambre>

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1160-regidor-municipal-amenaza-y-agrede-a-periodista-en-zona-sur>

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1163-policia-impide-cobertura-y-perfila-a-periodista-de-zona-norte>

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1162-policia-militar-restringe-cobertura-de-suceso-en-tegucigalpa>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.hispantv.com/noticias/honduras/466454/detencion-corresponsal-orlando-hernandez>

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2847-policas-detienen-amenazan-con-arma-de-fuego-y-tratan-de-quitarle-la-camara-al-periodista-dassae-aguilar-de-hispanTV>

¹⁶¹ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2855-dos-periodistas-y-un-camarografo-resultados-agredidos-por-antes-policiales-cuando-cubrian-la-entrega-de-un-donativo-a-personal-de-salud>

¹⁶² <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1167-une-tv-denuncia-campana-de-desprestigio>

¹⁶³ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1166-ningun-funcionario-de-gobierno-viene-al-programa-denuncia-periodista>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/05/21/despidos-y-ataques-a-la-prensa-se-suman-a-la-amenaza-del-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2839-directora-salud-y-vocera-de-sinager-en-santa-rosa-de-copan-niega-entrevistas-al-periodista-santiago-lopez-sobre-covid-19>

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2843-tambien-por-preguntas-incomodas-funcionaria-de-banhprovi-ordena-expulsion-de-dos-periodistas-y-se-disculpa>

¹⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/RCVHonduras/status/1260617576759144452>

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/1564-labor-periodistica-indispensable-para-la-sociedad-hondurena>

documented 18 attacks against journalists. All in all, they documented 29 attacks, 5 against women journalists.¹⁶⁹

Reporteros de Investigación lists 19 journalists facing prison after being sued for their work.¹⁷⁰

Violence against Women

HRD María Felicita explained that because of the confinement due to the pandemic, the attention given to women in their community has been complicated. The distance and lack of resources, even a phone call or access to a telephone, leaves the victims more vulnerable.¹⁷¹ "Care for women in reproductive health and in cases of sexual violence has always been restricted in Honduras. It took three weeks from the time a quarantine was decreed for the Ministry of Health to ensure that the care centers would provide contraceptives. Although there are no official figures for cases of sexual violence during the pandemic, organizations and institutions that care for women claim that there is an increase, and with the confinement measures, access to health and justice is decreasing."¹⁷² By the beginning of May, Doctors without Borders had already attended 54 cases of sexual violence during the corona crisis.¹⁷³ Based on data by all the offices by the MP in Honduras, at least 651 have accused their partners for domestic violence since the start of the lockdown mid-March.¹⁷⁴ Some 200 men have been arrested for domestic violence in the capital in recent weeks, according to the authorities.¹⁷⁵ Between March 15 and May 27, there were at least 45 femicides in Honduras and some 200 reports of domestic violence per day.¹⁷⁶

Honduras commemorated Mother's Day while also highlighting the difficulty faced by women living in Honduras. Defensores en Línea wrote about the mothers of the disappeared, the assassinated and the political prisoners.¹⁷⁷ And then, there are the mothers too young to be mothers. 33'000 girls and teenagers between the ages of 10 and 18 gave birth in Honduras last year.¹⁷⁸

Political Prisoners

On May 30th, Rommel Herrera Portillo will have suffered one year of unjust imprisonment. The young teacher, 23, is being held in a psychiatric hospital awaiting trial, after being the victim of a false positive from a tire fire in front of the entrance to the U.S. Embassy in Honduras.¹⁷⁹ "The crime he is charged with, in addition to being disproportionate, does not admit of preventive detention, although the court that heard the case played its established role in sustaining the

169 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2850-mujeres-periodistas-no-escapan-de-los-ataques-periodistas-han-enfrentado-mas-de-dos-docenas-de-agresiones-en-lo-que-va-del-2020>

170 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/05/14/periodistas-en-prision-en-honduras/>

171 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2829-instituciones-estatales-sin-respuestas-contundente-ante-el-incremento-de-la-violencia-en-la-emergencia>

172 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/05/08/mujeres-con-menos-acceso-a-la-salud-durante-pandemia/>

173 <http://elpulso.hn/mas-de-50-personas-han-sido-atendidas-por-violencia-que-sigue-en-aumento/>

174 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/mujeres-han-denunciado-a-651-hombres-por-violencia-durante-periodo-de-aislamiento-social.html>

175 <https://confidencialhn.com/dpi-informa-que-200-hombres-han-sido-detenido-por-agredir-a-sus-parejas-sentimentales/>

176 <http://elpulso.hn/al-menos-45-mujeres-han-sido-asesinadas-durante-la-pandemia-del-covid-19/>

177 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/las-madres-de-los-desaparecidos-asesinados-y-presos-politicos-siguen-clamando-justicia/>

178 <https://tiempo.hn/honduras-33000-mujeres-se-convirtieron-en-madre-entre-los-10-a-18-anos/>

179 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/nunca-dejaremos-de-luchar-por-rommel/>

dictatorship and has kept him in preventive detention for a year, affecting his professional development. At the time of his arrest he was a professional student at two universities, in addition to his profession teaching children. Rommel Baldemar has not enjoyed the right to a fair trial, as established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the relevant international instruments accepted by the State of Honduras."¹⁸⁰

Aleyda Huete, leader of the opposition group "Bastion of the South", wanted to bring food to the political prisoner Antonio Esquivel. She found out that the prison authorities changed the rules and not only canned food can be brought to inmates, something that poor people cannot afford.¹⁸¹ On May 20, COFADEH denounced that the JOH regime failed to follow UN recommendations to liberate the political prisoners. Therefore, they, together with the Committee for the Liberation of Political Prisoners and the Convergence against Continuity (CCC), sent another letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet.¹⁸²

Extractive Industries

OFRANEH denounced in a Twitter feed, including videos, how the JOH regime through MiAmbiente continues to force through projects without consultations and that MiAmbiente currently even grants "express environmental licenses".¹⁸³

Agriculture

"In Honduras, the current crisis generated by COVID-19 has generated a series of economic, political, environmental and social measures that are generating an unprecedented crisis in the human rights of the Honduran population. In a context of food crisis, one of the fields prioritized by the political elite and the business sector has been the agrarian field, which through Executive Decree PCM-030-2020 aims to reconfigure the current agrarian policy of the country through greater control and presence of the agro-industrial and agro-export sector, while displacing the peasant sector, small and medium producers and worsening the food crisis."¹⁸⁴ For more on this, see also the Agriculture sub-section in the COVID-19 Crisis section.

ZEDES

¹⁸⁰ <http://defensoresenlinea.com/el-prolongado-autoritarismo-y-abuso-de-poder-de-juan-orlano-afecta-profundamente-la-vida-de-un-joven-maestro-desde-hace-un-ano/>

¹⁸¹ <http://defensoresenlinea.com/ni-comida-dejan-llevar-a-carcel-de-choluteca/>

¹⁸² <http://defensoresenlinea.com/coronavirus-regimen-se-niega-a-adaptar-recomendaciones-de-la-onu-para-liberar-a-los-presos-politicos/>

¹⁸³ <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1256309932854595585>

¹⁸⁴ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/05/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-el-pcm-030-2020-y-la-agudizacion-de-la-crisis-alimentaria-en-honduras/>

La Prensa reports on a planned Employment and Economic Development Zone (ZEDE), the former charter cities, on Roatán.¹⁸⁵ ¹⁸⁶ OFRANEH denounces them as unconstitutional and "paradises for drug trafficking and corruption"¹⁸⁷ and a "charter city within a narco state"¹⁸⁸.

Corruption and Its Enemies

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

Instead of taking up the task to improve the new Penal Code, Congress took the newest prolongation of the *vacatio legis* (see sub-section in *Varia* below) as a change to further worsen it. Congress approved a bill which mandates the MP has to announce previously, if they go and seize important documents linked to an investigation.¹⁸⁹ The head of UFERCO, Luis Santos, denounced that this makes almost impossible to investigate new cases.¹⁹⁰ He further tweeted: "'Not only does it bureaucratize, it limits the action of the Public Prosecutor's Office, especially in the investigation of corruption cases. This is extremely serious, and we see it as something normal, even worse when within those who promote these initiatives there are people who are publicly known to be investigated."¹⁹¹ The MP published a short analysis of this change concluding that "contrary to helping investigations of illicit acts, it hinders the fight against corruption at a time when democratic societies demand more transparency and the proper use of public resources".¹⁹² But do not dare protesting against such things as the new Penal Code includes penalties for up to 30 years for this.¹⁹³

The organization Democracy without Borders presented a new report, "Social Audit of the Court and the Criminal Courts with National Competence in matters of Corruption". In order to create the Anti-Corruption Courts, the Supreme Court of Justice had approved an agreement in 2016 later also approved by Congress, but with the entry into force of the new Penal Code four crimes that are within the competence of this circuit disappear and it does not have competence to judge the "highest officials". Furthermore, the report also finds that the court "lacks the necessary competencies to punish the corrupt, it can extend its jurisdiction to simple cases to guarantee the continuity of its work, but it risks diluting its purpose of punishing corruption".¹⁹⁴

A previous blow to anti-corruption efforts was the end of the MACCIH, widely covered in previous monthly reports. Radio Progreso adds a new spin to the story. "The work of the Mission of Support against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, Maccih, had a relatively low impact because they did

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.laprensa.hn/economia/1378478-410/zede-en-roat%C3%A1n-busca-diversificar-y-fortalecer-econom%C3%ADa-de-la-isla>

¹⁸⁶ <https://prospera.hn/>

¹⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1259189391270064130>

¹⁸⁸ <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1264908463244787713>

¹⁸⁹ <https://criterio.hn/congreso-nacional-impone-nueva-barrera-al-ministerio-publico-para-combate-a-la-corrupcion/>

¹⁹⁰ <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1263653985665376256>

¹⁹¹ <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1263875106973061121>

¹⁹² <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/156-mayo2020/5829-mp-se-pronuncia-sobre-reforma-tacita-hecha-por-el-congreso-nacional-en-torno-a-articulos-relacionados-con-el-comiso-y-secuestro-de-documentos>

¹⁹³ <https://criterio.hn/nuevo-codigo-penal-castigara-hasta-con-30-anos-de-prision-por-manifestarse/>

¹⁹⁴ <http://fdsf.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Informe-Veedur%C3%ADa-Social-al-Circuito-en-Materia-de-Corrupci%C3%B3n.pdf>

not manage to have the necessary legal instruments to reinforce their objectives to extend the investigation processes to key figures of the political elites linked to government and private corruption in that country, who also opted to legislate initiatives to reinforce impunity and limit the accusations of that investigative body. The continuity of the Maccih and a more effective performance depended on the role that various interest groups in that nation, genuinely committed to the fight against corruption, were able to play. In this series of eight installments, Expediente Público highlights the strong personal motives of Mauricio Oliva, president of the National Congress and the main inquisitor, to get the Maccih out of the country."¹⁹⁵

CESPAD investigated the discourse used by the JOH regime to justify its corruption. "One of the spokespersons for the MACCIH, Luis Guimaraez Marey, coined the phrase that corruption in Honduras "is in the open", because it is done by leaving evidence totally visible. This means that it is not difficult to investigate and follow the money trail, but it is very difficult to achieve results in justice because of the impunity that protects people and groups in power or with power. When institutions do not work, impunity is so widespread that it not only increases corruption and proliferates corruption networks, but also generates a kind of culture of the corrupt, like acting "in the open". But, in addition, they construct discourses with which they seek to justify themselves before the Honduran society. Some are more cynical than others, let's see some examples."¹⁹⁶

The Narcopolitics Case

In the Narcopolitics corruption case, the former mayor of Tegucigalpa, Miguel Rodrigo Pastor, has to remain in pre-trial detention.¹⁹⁷

The Pandora Case

The Pandora case was one of the most important ones by MACCIH, but as the other cases, it led nowhere. Reporteros de Investigación (RI) gave an update focusing on the key witness Fernando Suarez. "Menjivar [his lawyer] told RI that "Fernando Suarez, a witness in the Pandora case, denounced all the corruption through which President Juan Orlando Hernández plundered the state through a network that used NGOs, ghost companies and front men to plunder state funds and finance his political campaign. (...) According to Menjivar, his client decided to come forward and collaborate with the Public Prosecutor's Office by offering all the information he had available, which included "not only the looting of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock, which is why the Pandora case was formulated, but the looting of other state institutions, practically all the institutions that manage the significant budget, including the Pani, the Secretariat of Health and Education, the National Congress, Banadesa and Infop. All this information was left in the custody of the Public Prosecutor's Office. "Since that date, the Public Prosecutor's Office has not issued any

¹⁹⁵ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/especiales/lucha-contr-la-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

¹⁹⁶ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/26/analisis-los-discursos-de-la-corrupcion-y-de-la-falta-de-transparencia-en-el-contexto-covid19/>

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2007-honduras-exedil-miguel-pastor-seguira-presos-por-narcopolitica>

judicial decision that would imply what the procedural treatment to be given to Fernando Suárez will be".¹⁹⁸

State Security Forces

As a consequence of the newest accusations, coming from the US, against former police chief "El Tigre" Bonilla (see last month), questions regarding the police purge in Honduras rightly rose to prominence again. CESPAD published a great analysis on the topic. "Scandals such as that of Juan Carlos "El Tigre" Bonilla[1], puts more doubts on a process of police purging, which has been full of enormous flaws and criticisms. In this area it is important to consider that the purge is not reduced to the change of some police leaderships that are replaced by others through administrative channels; nor is it reduced to the massive departure of police of different ranks for different reasons; there are always doubts about whether all those who should have left have done so; on the other hand, very few - without having conflicts of interest - would risk ensuring that all the criminal networks that have operated within the police disappeared."¹⁹⁹ Radio Progreso did not mince words – for them the accusations against Bonilla had laid bare once again the farce that is the police purge.²⁰⁰

Also this month, Congress reformed the Law of the MP to expand the investigative powers of the Technical Agency of Criminal Investigation (ATIC).²⁰¹

Repressions

Since the start of the lockdown, the already high levels of police repression continued to grow (see also the COVID-19 Crisis section and the Freedom of Expression section). COFADEH denounced a case of torture against a 18-year old, César Arnulfo Blandón Merlo, by the police in the Jamastrán valley in El Paraíso.²⁰² In another case, Miguel Padilla was brutally beaten by the Military Police. "Miguel has been bedridden for eight days because of the multiple blows caused by the state's repressive elements, just for asking the reason for the arrest of his brother-in-law".²⁰³ A third case reported by COFADEH: Noé Alexander Velázquez López was attacked in the town center of Danli, El Paraíso, by the police.²⁰⁴ Two brothers were arrested and beaten by police in the community of Pavana, Choluteca. They were accused of having violated the lockdown.²⁰⁵ Pasos de Animal Grande denounced that the suspension of constitutional guarantees had placed young people as a specific target of state security forces.²⁰⁶

198 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/05/06/fernando-suarez-en-peligro/>

199 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/08/analisis-acusaciones-desde-nueva-york-contr-el-tigre-bonilla-que-paso-con-la-depuracion-policial/>

200 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/caso-del-tigre-bonilla-demuestra-que-depuracion-policial-es-una-farsa/>

201 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-reforma-ley-del-ministerio-publico-para-ampliar-facultades-a-la-atic/>

202 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/policia-amenaza-a-joven-tras-torturarlo/>

203 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/con-fracturas-y-lesiones-se-encuentra-el-joven-agredido-por-la-pmp-en-guarizama-olanchito/>

204 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/sigue-la-brutalidad-policial-en-diferentes-partes-del-pais/>

205 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/policia-detiene-y-golpea-a-hermanos-en-choluteca/>

206 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2844-nadie-detiene-los-abusos-jovenes-en-honduras-son-un-blanco-de-amenazas-y-abusos-por-agentes-policiales>

A protest by the transport sector was violently repressed and at least one person was injured, beaten by the police, and detained.²⁰⁷ A protest by mototaxi drivers in Pespire, Choluteca, was also brutally repressed by state security forces.²⁰⁸

Penitentiary System

On May 4, the Judiciary informed that more than 1000 inmates had been released earlier from prison as a response to the corona crisis.²⁰⁹

The president of the Association of Relatives of Prisoners, Delma Ordóñez, once again requested this month that those inmates prone to contracting the coronavirus be allowed to leave prison.²¹⁰ But instead, the number of COVID-19 cases in prison continued to rise. On May 15, a case was detected at the Támara prison just north of Tegucigalpa. An emergency was declared and no more inmates were taken up.²¹¹ On May 19, El Porvenir, also in Francisco Morazán, confirmed its first case.²¹² Two days later, another inmate from El Pozo was tested positive for COVID-19.²¹³ And by May 22, there were already 15 cases at the Támara prison.²¹⁴ Later, the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) informed yesterday that already 28 inmates tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, two guards also tested positive.²¹⁵

ContraCorriente described the situation of Honduras' penitentiary system as "the realm of precariousness, violence and militarism that the pandemic has reached".²¹⁶ This was further confirmed, when a prison riot in the Támara women's prison took place this month. At least six inmates died and two were wounded.²¹⁷ OACNUDH reminded the Honduran State about its responsibility to guarantee the life and integrity of inmates and demands an exhaustive investigation.²¹⁸ The Network of Civil Society Organizations for Persons Deprived of Liberty urged the JOH regime to reform the parole system; evaluate prison staff and the situation of women prisoners to avoid further loss of life.²¹⁹ There are currently 897 inmates held at a this prison built for 450.²²⁰ Radio Progreso called on the Honduran society to join the voice of Glenda Ayala of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CONAPREV), who had courageously demanded the immediate dismissal of the

207 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1261505842060251137>

208 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/con-golpes-danos-y-criminalizacion-responde-policia-militar-a-motoristas-en-pestpire/>

209 <https://tiempo.hn/mil-reos-preliberados-durante-cuarentena-poder-judicial/>

210 <https://confidencialhn.com/familias-de-reos-exigen-libertad-inmediata-de-quienes-son-propensos-al-coronavirus/>

211 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/declaran-emergencia-y-prohiben-ingreso-de-mas-reos-a-la-carcel-tamara-tras-primer-caso-de-covid-19.html>

212 <https://criterio.hn/declaran-emergencia-en-carcel-de-el-porvenir-tras-detectar-brote-de-covid-19/>

213 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1381406-466/reo-de-el-pozo-se-contagia-de-coronavirus-al-estar-hospitalizado-en>

214 <https://hch.tv/2020/05/22/se-reportan-15-casos-de-coronavirus-en-penitenciaria-de-tamara11/>

215 <https://confidencialhn.com/unos-28-reos-y-dos-miembros-de-la-seguridad-de-la-penitenciaria-nacional-dan-positivo-al-nuevo-coronavirus/>

216 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/05/21/prisiones-de-honduras-el-reino-de-precariedad-violencia-y-militarismo-al-que-llego-la-pandemia/>

217 <https://confidencialhn.com/seis-mujeres-muertas-y-varias-heridas-deja-reyerta-en-carcel-femenina-de-tamara/>

218 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1264988787635077120>

219 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2849-red-de-organizaciones-y-familiares-exigen-respuestas-del-estado-hondureno-ante-muertes-de-privadas-de-libertad-en-penitenciaria-de-mujeres>

220 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/nuevos-enfrentamientos-en-carcel-femenina-esta-tarde.html>

director and deputy director of this prison for negligence and complicity.²²¹ As a first consequence to the mass killing, some inmates were transferred to the minimum-security prison El Porvenir.²²²

Militarization

The Military Police added 407 new members, even though there is continuing national and international criticism of this unit.²²³ The president of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH), Suyapa Figueroa, denounced the involvement of the Armed Forces in the health sector, they will administer two mobile hospitals. "We wonder what the objective of this is, they have already been given the resources to manage the agro-economic sector, nothing has been done about it, they have been given the distribution of food, really the role of them (the military) is to protect the territory and to enforce the constitution".²²⁴

International Community

US

President Hernandez thanked Donald Trump for the support the United States has been giving Honduras in different areas, including the fight against the coronavirus.²²⁵ Back in Honduras and according to journalist Jeff Ernst, the US Chargé d'Affaires had her first public appearance with JOH since his brother was convicted of drug trafficking last year. "If I'm not mistaken, this is the first public appearance by the chargé d'affaires with President Hernandez since the day after his brother was convicted of drug trafficking. Great way to commemorate Memorial Day!"²²⁶ Even more cynical, the same day she was present during the inauguration of the Combined Interagency Operations Center meant to fight drug trafficking.^{227 228}

So it came as no surprise that at the end of the month, the US State Department once more certified Honduras, i.e. the JOH regime, for receiving millions in US assistance. The certification includes the assessment that the JOH regime fights corruption and drug trafficking. But at the same time, a source at the State Department told EFE that "Washington still has major "concerns" about the degree of compliance with those points in the region, particularly "the alleged links with drug trafficking" of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez".

221 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/hp/sumandonos-a-la-voz-de-conaprev/>

222 <https://confidencial.hn.com/traslada-a-privadas-de-libertad-desde-la-carcel-de-mujeres-al-penal-de-el-porvenir-tras-cruenta-reyerta/>

223 <https://twitter.com/PMOP016/status/1261001843121029121>

224 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/militares-ocultaran-informacion-de-hospitales-moviles-suyapa-figueroa/>

225 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/honduras-agradece-ayuda-de-eeuu-en-medio-de-pandemia-que-deja-156-muertos.html>

226 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1265053124638773251>

227 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1265032868939644929>

228 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/hernandez-inaugura-centro-de-operaciones-interagencial-y-sanciona-ley-de-proteccion-del-espacio-aereo.html>

EU

Banco Ficohsa signed a subordinated loan with the eco.business Fund for \$10 million "to boost the economic development of the country". "The seed capital was provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the German Development Bank KfW acting as the main sponsor, Finance in Motion, a leading impact investment company is also an investor."²²⁹

El País held an interview with the EU ambassador to Honduras, Alessandro Palmero, talking about EU support for Honduras. "We are working on a program that initially could be up to EUR 30 million and this for the relatively short term and then to program a significant amount of funds but this is not yet known for the six successive years 2021-2027."²³⁰ EU Parliamentarian Miguel Urbán Crespo, meanwhile, denounced a "democratic crisis" in Mexico and Central America highlighted by the management of the corona crisis. In the case of Honduras, he denounces the ongoing criminalization of social movements and HRDs as in the case of Guapinol, the attacks and murder of Garífuna defenders, and the ongoing impunity in the Berta Cáceres case. He further denounces "the inoperability of the Protection Mechanism, a resource that continues to receive European funds through the Eurojustice program".^{231 232}

Drug Trafficking

At the beginning of the month, David Adams reported for Univision on the situation of former Liberal congressman Yani Rosenthal. "Yani Rosenthal, a 54-year-old former Honduran politician who twice ran for president, is seeking early release from a Miami federal jail where he is serving time for drug money laundering, arguing that his health is in jeopardy amid the coronavirus pandemic. The former politician who twice ran for president, pleaded guilty in 2017 to one count of money laundering in the United States and received a substantially reduced three-year sentence after paying a \$2.5 million fine. (...) Rosenthal is one of a long list of Honduran politicians and businessman accused of aiding drug traffickers in recent years, including another former legislator, Tony Hernandez, brother of the current president Juan Orlando Hernandez. Tony Hernandez was convicted of drug crimes last year and is awaiting sentencing in New York. President Hernandez has denied any ties to drug traffickers."²³³ The former Liberal congressman Fredy Renán Nájera Montoya, meanwhile, agreed to cooperate with US authorities and changed his testimony. He now pleaded guilty for drug trafficking and possession of fire arms. The sentencing is planned for June 23.²³⁴ Journalist Jeff Ernst writes that his cooperation "could further entrench several politicians, in particular Oscar Najera (no relation), Victor Sabillon & President Hernandez".²³⁵

229 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1377725-466/banco-ficohsa-y-ecobusiness-fund-firman-pr%C3%A9stamo-subordinado-por-10-millones>

230 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/05/13/union-europea-apoyara-lucha-contra-covid-19-y-la-recuperacion-economica-de-honduras/>

231 <https://twitter.com/MiguelUrban/status/1266685563790413825>

232 <https://twitter.com/MiguelUrban/status/1266685565610741765>

233 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/powerful-honduran-businessman-seeks-compassionate-release-from-us-prison-due-to-coronavirus>

234 <https://criterio.hn/en-acuerdo-con-fiscalia-de-nueva-york-fredy-najera-se-declara-culpable/>

235 <https://twitter.com/jeffernst/status/1265321521142210560>

InSight Crime picked up the recent investigative work by Expediente Público on the drug trafficking links of Congress' president Mauricio Oliva. "The report, published by Central American magazine Expediente Público, details how Mauricio Oliva Herrera, president of the National Congress, allegedly acquired a series of properties in Tegucigalpa from a business associate at Inversiones Acrópolis, a company linked to a notorious Honduran drug trafficking family known as the Cachiros. This news came as Oliva Herrera, of the of the National Party (Partido Nacional – PN), confirmed he would run for president of Honduras, ahead of elections in March 2021."²³⁶

On May 16, the former Nationalist congressman Hugo Pinto was murdered in El Paraíso, Copán.²³⁷ In 2015, while still in Congress, various goods belonging to him, his brothers and other family members were seized. On several occasions, he had been linked to organized crime and drug trafficking.²³⁸ InSight Crime analyzed that his murder "suggests a shift in criminal power in one of the country's prized drug trafficking enclaves. (...) The Pinto family was also prominently mentioned in the 2019 drug trafficking trial of Tony Hernández, the brother of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. During the trial, Alexander Ardón, a former mayor of El Paraíso currently imprisoned in the United States, revealed that Los Pinto had been his drug trafficking partners in Copán."²³⁹

And also this month, 1.4 tons of cocaine was seized in France in a shipping container with Honduran coffee.²⁴⁰

Tony Hernández

Another reaction to the accusations against former police chief "El Tigre" Bonilla (see State Security Forces section) came from the US Senate. . "Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, said Thursday that he and others in Congress had for years urged the U.S. to cut ties with Bonilla. "Those warnings were ignored, and our embassy treated him as a credible partner. That was inexcusable," he said." Regarding the role of the US, history professor and Honduran expert Dana Frank said: "It's very clear that the U.S. has known all these years who they were working with. They've chosen to look the other way. And chosen to pour money into this government and its security forces".²⁴¹

The Pro Honduras Network reported that the Southern District Attorney's Office in New York presented evidence against Juan Orlando Hernandez. "Declassified documents in the case of Juan Antonio Hernandez involve Juan Orlando Hernandez and other Co-Conspirators in drug trafficking to the United States."²⁴² CESPAD published an analysis of the situation JOH currently finds himself in. "It is a fact that the accusations of the U.S. Attorney's Office also represent a strong incentive for

²³⁶ <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/president-honduras-congress-cachiros/>

²³⁷ <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1380248-466/matan-al-exdiputado-nacionalista-hugo-pinto-en-cop%C3%A1n>

²³⁸ <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/05/17/asesinan-a-ex-diputado-del-caso-ak-47-con-diamantes-que-seria-del-presidente-de-honduras/>

²³⁹ <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/honduras-hugo-pinto-murder/>

²⁴⁰ <https://criterio.hn/en-francia-incautan-1-4-toneladas-de-cocaina-procedente-de-honduras-en-contenedor-de-cafe/>

²⁴¹ <https://apnews.com/2afdedc283ac07ead5e6d9ea8cd34371>

²⁴² <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/05/02/narcopresidente-enjuiciado-en-nueva-york/>

Juan Orlando Hernández to continue in power and avoid for a long time to face an eventual trial in the U.S. courts, either through the use of the extraordinary powers granted by the state of health emergency or, through the violation of the schedule of the 2021 elections."²⁴³ By the end of the month, it was unclear where "El Tigre" Bonilla is. But El Tiempo reported that he would collaborate with the New York City District Attorney's Office in the United States and would be a protected witness against Honduran drug traffickers.²⁴⁴

This month, the Judicial Power granted the extradition of José Rafael Sosa Méndez to the US. He is accused of drug trafficking.²⁴⁵ And Congress approved a new Law for the Protection of the Sovereignty of the Air Space sent by the Executive claimed to strengthening the fight against drug trafficking in the country.²⁴⁶

Varia

JOH

JOH's Honduras continues to be violent, even under a lockdown. Since its beginning on March 14, at least 391 people were murdered in Honduras and seven mass-killings took place.²⁴⁷ In the first week of this month, 5 women were murdered.²⁴⁸ The grave situation in Honduras was also highlighted by another international ranking.²⁴⁹ "The Economist's Intelligence Unit publishes the annual Democracy Index, a ranking that measures the democratic strength or fragility of 165 countries in the world. (...) Honduras has been classified as a hybrid regime and a link away from being totally authoritarian, characterized by the lack of an independent judiciary, widespread corruption, harassment and pressure on the media, low levels of citizen participation and pressure on the political opposition. In addition, the Bertelsmann Index, which measures the processes of transformation towards democracy, which is the result of the collaboration of nearly 300 countries' academics, recently pointed out that Juan Orlando Hernández turned Honduras into an autocracy. (...) Is there anyone who objectively believes that we live in a democracy?"²⁵⁰

Some even see monarchic elements taking hold in Honduras. OFRANEH's Miriam Miranda denounces that after the death of the mayor of Santa Rosa de Aguán in Colón, Pablo Castro, the National Party forced through that his son takes up his position instead of the Garífuna deputy mayor. "Let them explain to us when the system of government in Honduras changed, it is now monarchical, parents inherit the government to their children."²⁵¹

For more on JOH, see also the Tony Hernández sub-section above.

²⁴³ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/02/analisis-joh-entre-las-acusaciones-de-la-fiscalia-estadounidense-y-la-tentacion-de-continuar-en-el-poder/>

²⁴⁴ <https://tiempo.hn/tigre-bonilla-colaborara-eeuu-casos-narcos-hondurenos/>

²⁴⁵ <https://confidencialhn.com/corte-suprema-de-justicia-concede-a-ee-uu-extradicion-de-hondureno-por-distribucion-de-droga/>

²⁴⁶ <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1379987-410/congreso-nacional-aprueba-ley-protector-espacio-aereo>

²⁴⁷ <http://elpulso.hn/en-medio-de-toque-de-queda-se-han-perpetuado-siete-masacres/>

²⁴⁸ <https://criterio.hn/cinco-mujeres-asesinadas-en-tiempos-de-confinamiento/>

²⁴⁹ <https://atlas.bti-project.org/>

²⁵⁰ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/np/una-autocracia-llamada-johonduras/>

²⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1267171534902382592>

Penal Code

May began with PEN International, Reporters without Borders and other human rights organizations denouncing in a joint press release the new Honduran Penal Code planed to come into force on May 10.²⁵² Even the former Human Rights Minister, Ana Pineda, joined the critics.²⁵³ The Coalition against Impunity has started to collect signatures calling for an extension of the vacatio legis, i.e. the time until the new Penal Code comes into force.²⁵⁴

On May 7, OACNUDH published an important press release. "OACNUDH calls for a process of review and reform of the new Penal Code in accordance with the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms of the universal and inter-American systems. It is important that this process be broad, transparent and participatory and include broad sectors of Honduran civil society."²⁵⁵ The same day, the Judicial Power dismissed the initiative presented by the CNA demanding that the Penal Code would not come into force.²⁵⁶ The picture look very grim so it came to some surprise, that Congress decided to prolong the vacatio legis for another 45 days to June 25.²⁵⁷ But at the same time, they rejected a citizen's initiative by the CNA demanding the complete revision of the reform.²⁵⁸ The Nationalist secretary of Congress, Tomás Zambrano, even pretended that civil society organizations had only complaint about the reform without proposing alternatives completely ignoring all the substantial contributions to the debate.²⁵⁹ ²⁶⁰ Pasos de Animal Grande linked to some of the proposals made.²⁶¹

It is questionable if the 45 days will be well-used, if they represent enough time, and if it is even legal to reform the reform. "From civil society's analysis, this is not enough time to reform the Code. Representatives of the Coalition against Impunity, assure that there is a problem of origin, and it is that according to the Constitution a law cannot be reformed without first entering into force, but this was violated in Congress, because in the first stage of socialization of the Code, reforms were applied to several articles of the Code."²⁶² "Guillermo López Lone, judge of the Sentence Court in Tegucigalpa and member of the Association of Judges for Democracy (AJD) points out that this extension of the vacatio legis is "a measure of a political nature to please the critical voices that exist from society, private enterprise and different sectors. The board of directors of the Congress is doing nothing more than a measure of legislative populism". In addition, López Lone assures that the overstated interest in its coming into force is suspicious and is confirmed by civil society's arguments that this is a criminal code that has already established its addressees: "It is the high government officials who in a few years will no longer be civil servants and could be

252 <https://pen-international.org/es/noticias/honduras-nuevo-codigo-penal-exhibe-a-un-estado-que-criminaliza-la-libertad-de-expresion-y-el-acceso-a-la-informacion>

253 <http://elpulso.hn/nuevo-codigo-penal-no-corresponde-a-lo-que-se-aprobo/>

254 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/recolectan-firmas-para-pedir-ampliar-vacatio-legis-del-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

255 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-llama-a-desarrollar-un-proceso-de-revision-y-reforma-del-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

256 <https://confidencial.hn.com/poder-judicial-desestima-peticion-del-cna-y-reafirma-entrada-de-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

257 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-suspende-por-45-dias-vigencia-del-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

258 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1259190245834326016>

259 <https://radiohm.hn/sectores-que-se-quejan-del-codigo-penal-tienen-45-dias-para-presentar-propuestas-tomas-zambrano/>

260 <https://criterio.hn/prorroga-de-vacatio-legis-es-un-acto-demagogico-del-poder-en-honduras/>

261 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/nuevo-codigo-penal/item/2835-nuevo-codigo-penal-entre-la-derogacion-y-la-reforma>

262 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/se-debe-presionar-para-derogar-delitos-que-favorecen-la-corrupcion-y-violan-derecho-humanos/>

investigated and taken to court, who would be interested in the fact that as the penalties in the new code are established, which are quite light penalties, whatever they would be accused of, there are several benefits from which they could benefit. It is a criminal code that arises to favor certain sectors of the public administration and persons who have already been sentenced."²⁶³

Of course, with the prolongation of the *vacatio legis*, criticism of its content did not stop. Pasos de Animal Grande denounced that a precept, described in article 232 of the new Penal Code, "completely disrupts the right to freedom of expression by making insulting and defamatory statements a criminal offense, thereby aggravating them in the concept of publicity, which entails an increase in the penalty".²⁶⁴ The CNA also published a new 75-page study on the Penal Code with an "approach based on a democratic state and the rule of law". The CNA "was able to identify a series of irregularities within Legislative Decree No. 130-2017, in that the legislative technique used by the deputies does not respond to Honduran legal culture. Similarly, the structure of how this penal norm was developed was not correct because there was a breach between the general part and the special part of the Penal Code." "This code presents marked inconsistencies in the theory of punishment. On the one hand, it advocates a new and broad catalog of penalties that represent an alternative to the deprivation of liberty, and, paradoxically, it imposes the penalty of life imprisonment in the commission of certain crimes, in contravention of constitutional principles."²⁶⁵ The CNA additionally started a four-part publication on the "Penal Code of Impunity".²⁶⁶ ConexiHon explained how the new Penal Code leaves women having suffered violence "completely defenseless".²⁶⁷

Elections

Mauro Oliva, Nationalist president of Congress, wants to run for the presidency next year. He seems to be already in election mode. "Since Wednesday, residents of the area adjacent to the entrance of Danlí, shared through social networks their discomfort at being surprised by an excessive number of advertising posters that exalt the president of the legislature." This, of course, violates the law which only allows campaigns 50 days before the election, in this case on January 31, 2021, 50 days before the primaries.²⁶⁸ The former president Pepe Lobo, meanwhile, announced that he would support the opposition to make sure that JOH does not stay in power.²⁶⁹ The Minister of the Presidency Ebal Díaz, meanwhile, felt the need once more to assure everyone that JOH would not run for president again.²⁷⁰

The uncertainty regarding the coming electoral process next years stems from the lack of electoral reform, including the lack of a new census and a new identity card. Nevertheless, Congress' vice-

²⁶³ <https://contracorriente.red/2020/05/24/juez-guillermo-lopez-lone-es-un-codigo-penal-con-destinatarios-ya-establecidos/>

²⁶⁴ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/nuevo-codigo-penal/item/2817-nuevo-codigo-penal-sutil-censura-desde-el-concepto-de-difusion-de-injuria-y-calumnia-a-traves-de-publicidad>

²⁶⁵ <https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ESTUDIO-FINAL-Y-ANA%CC%81LISIS-AL-DECRETO-LEGISLATIVO.pdf>

²⁶⁶ <https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Estudio-al-Co%CC%81digo-Penal-Tomo-I.pdf>

²⁶⁷ <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/35-mujeres/1542-nuevo-codigo-penal-dejara-en-completa-indefension-a-mujeres-victimas-de-violencia>

²⁶⁸ <https://criterio.hn/mauricio-oliva-utiliza-pandemia-para-arrancar-prematura-e-ilegal-campana-proselitista/>

²⁶⁹ <https://confidencialhn.com/expresidente-lobo-asegura-que-se-sumara-a-la-oposicion-para-forzar-la-dimision-de-herandez/>

²⁷⁰ <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/la-oposicion-le-tiene-miedo-pero-tranquilos-el-presidente-herandez-no-se-va-reelegir-ebal-diaz.html>

president Antonio Rivera Callejas claimed that the elections will go through as planned next year, i.e. the primaries in March and the general election in November.²⁷¹ An analysis by CESPAD showed that this is not certain.²⁷² The National Persons Registry (RNP) tried to calm the public by announcing that there will be a new census and new identity card ready for the elections.²⁷³ But there are still a lot of questions.²⁷⁴ The National Electoral Council (CNE) also confirmed that they want to follow the electoral schedule.²⁷⁵ Later, the National Party also announced that they wanted to go ahead with the planned primary and main elections as scheduled.²⁷⁶

According to the political analyst Raúl Pineda, the actions of the political opposition will determine if there are transparent elections in Honduras.²⁷⁷ Libre reiterated that they won't accept the primary and general elections based on the current census.^{278 279} Without a new census and a new identity card "we are on the verge of a new mega electoral fraud," warned Doris Gutiérrez, congresswoman for the Innovation and Social Democratic Unity Party (Pinu-SD)".²⁸⁰ At the same time, talks flared up again regarding an opposition alliance against the National Party.^{281 282}

On May 20, Ricardo Álvarez withdrew his hat for the Nationalist presidential race and joined the campaign of Mauricio Oliva.²⁸³ The latter promised that the electoral reforms will be approved by September.²⁸⁴ But there is still JOH, who continued to send mixed messages regarding his will to stay in power.²⁸⁵ According to Radio Progreso, neither of them represents the politicians Honduras really needs. "The politicians we need after the confinements are the sowers and builders of a new generation that understands public offices and positions as the responsibility to contribute to the common good, from a State that exercises sovereignty over all public and common goods and services to put them at the service of the welfare of the whole society."²⁸⁶

More than 50% of Hondurans are dissatisfied with democracy, resulting in the weakening of the democratic political regime according to a study by the University Institute of Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS).²⁸⁷ It remains to be seen if new candidates could change this abysmal picture. The president of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH), Suyapa Figueroa, is thinking about running for president for the Liberal Party.²⁸⁸ The Liberal Party, meanwhile, has split in at

271 <https://confidencialhn.com/vicepresidente-del-legislativo-dice-que-en-2021-habran-elecciones-primarias-y-electorales/>

272 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/05/10/y-entonces-de-quien-es-el-plan-de-suprimir-las-elecciones-primarias-y-generales-en-honduras/>

273 <http://elpulso.hn/rnp-asegura-que-para-2020-habra-nuevo-censo-e-identidad/>

274 <http://elpulso.hn/prometen-nuevo-censo-e-identidad-para-elecciones-pero-justificaciones-no-convencen/>

275 <https://tiempo.hn/cne-pide-elecciones-voto-electronico-menos-20-ciudades/>

276 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/partido-nacional-acuerda-que-elecciones-se-realicen-como-se-encuentra-establecido-en-la-ley-electoral.html>

277 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/papel-de-la-oposicion-determinara-si-las-elecciones-son-transparentes-o-no-segun-analista.html>

278 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/libre-rechaza-ir-a-elecciones-con-el-actual-censo-electoral.html>

279 <http://www.hondurastierralibre.com/2020/05/honduras-comunicado-del-partidolibre-no.html>

280 <https://tiempo.hn/doris-gutierrez-estamos-puertas-mega-fraude-electoral/>

281 <http://elpulso.hn/una-nueva-alianza-la-unica-opcion-para-derrotar-al-partido-nacional/>

282 <https://criterio.hn/lideres-opositores-analizan-enfrentar-en-alianza-al-oficialismo/>

283 <https://criterio.hn/mauricio-oliva-y-ricardo-alvarez-se-unen-en-busca-de-la-presidencia/>

284 <https://confidencialhn.com/oliva-asegura-que-reformas-electorales-estaran-aprobadas-en-septiembre-proximo/>

285 <https://criterio.hn/zozobra-ante-senales-de-utilizacion-reeleccionista-de-la-pandemia>

286 <https://radioprogreso.hn/np/la-politica-y-los-politicos-que-necesitamos-para-despues-de-los-encierros/>

287 <http://elpulso.hn/mas-de-la-mitad-de-poblacion-hondurena-no-cree-en-instituciones-y-democracia/>

288 <https://tiempo.hn/suyapa-figueroa-postulacion-presidencia-partido-liberal/>

least two groups, one around former presidential candidate Luis Zelaya and the other around Mario Segura.²⁸⁹

Migration

At the beginning of the month, Doctors without Borders called for a stop of deportations flights from the US to other countries, mostly Central America and Mexico.²⁹⁰ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported on their work in Honduras with deported migrants.²⁹¹ Since March, some 100 Hondurans per day have been deported from the US. Even though, this is less than last year,²⁹² it is still very high given the global pandemic. CEPR is keeping tabs on US deportation flights in the midst of the pandemic. Honduras displaced Guatemala as the primary destination. There were ten flights in the first two weeks of May.²⁹³ By mid-month, 9,475 people had been deported from the United States and 3867 from Mexico.²⁹⁴ According to COIPRODEN, 2408 Honduran children have been deported from Mexico and the US so far this year.²⁹⁵

COFADEH, meanwhile, presented a habeas corpus for stranded migrants in the south of Honduras.²⁹⁶ The UNHCR informed about internal displacement due to violence in Honduras. "According to government statistics, some 247,000 Hondurans are estimated to have been internally displaced within the country since 2004 – the vast majority of them fleeing extortion, coercion and targeted threats by gangs and other criminal organizations."²⁹⁷ The UNHCR also warns that this situation is aggravated by COVID-19.²⁹⁸

And Light at the End of a Month

ERIC-SJ celebrated its 40th anniversary at the end of May.²⁹⁹ "ERIC, together with Radio Progreso, is a social apostolate work that articulates the social with the communication, the investigation with the defense of human rights, the denunciation with the accompaniment from the faith to the victims. We are an institution of analysis, of political and cultural education, but also a promoter of joy from our closeness to the organized communities in movement."³⁰⁰

289 <https://confidencialhn.com/se-divide-el-liberalismo-surge-bando-leal-a-luis-zelaya-y-su-jefe-sera-mauricio-villeda/>

290 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/05/05/medicos-sin-fronteras-pide-frenar-deportaciones-desde-ee-uu-por-el-covid-19/>

291 <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-usaid-deliver-15000-covid-19-tests-honduras>

292 <https://tiempo.hn/por-covid-19-deportacion-de-hondurenos-se-reduce-un-35/>

293 <https://twitter.com/JakobJohnston/status/1260637167593938945>

294 <https://radioprogresohn.net/noticias-nacionales/pandemia-incrementa-desplazamiento-y-migracion-de-familias-hondurenas/>

295 <https://radioprogresohn.net/instante/alarmante-numero-de-menores-deportados-en-medio-de-cuarentena/>

296 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-interpone-habeas-corpus-a-favor-de-ciudadanas-cubanas/>

297 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/5/5eb0a3b94/honduran-family-starts-new-life-across-country-terror-far.html>

298 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2020/5/5ebe47394/central-americas-displacement-crisis-aggravated-covid-19.html>

299 <https://radioprogresohn.net/noticias-nacionales/eric-sj-celebra-40-anos-de-caminar-junto-a-las-comunidades-organizadas-y-en-movimiento/>

300 <https://radioprogresohn.net/np/el-eric-mas-que-siglas/>

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