

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – July 2021

The verdict of the David Castillo trial was announced this month – he was found guilty! The general elections come ever closer, but the Nationalist-controlled Congress still does not want to equip the electoral bodies with sufficient funding. The JOH regime received already more than two million vaccine doses, but has itself only bought less than 200'000 and has so far only vaccinated a bit more than 1% of its population. The ZEDEs continue to be met with widespread rejection, this month reaching even the Catholic church, as local communities organize town hall meetings to raise their voices against them. The US made headlines in Honduras with the publication of the Engel's List of corrupt officials, but everyone wonders why JOH is not on the list. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	3
The COVID-19 Crisis.....	4
State Reaction.....	4
Health Sector.....	4
Corruption.....	7
Economy.....	7
Poverty.....	7
Education.....	8
Human Rights and Their Defenders.....	8
Assassinations.....	9
Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment.....	9
Indigenous Peoples.....	10
The Case of Berta Cáceres.....	11
LGBTQ.....	12
Freedom of Expression and Journalists.....	12
Violence against Women.....	13
Protection Mechanism.....	13
Political Prisoners.....	14
Extractive Industries.....	14
ZEDEs.....	14
Mining.....	15
Guapinol.....	15
Corruption and Its Enemies.....	16
The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies.....	18
Nasry Asfura.....	18
Hermes.....	19
Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo.....	19
Pandora.....	19
Patuca III.....	19
State Security Forces.....	20
Assassinations.....	20
Penitentiary System.....	20
Militarization.....	20
International Community.....	20
US.....	21
EU.....	21
Drug Trafficking.....	21
Varia.....	22
JOH.....	22
Elections.....	22
Migration.....	25
Insecurity.....	25
And Light at the End of a Month.....	26

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

There are 67% less reported dengue cases this year in Honduras.¹

July started with 263'376 COVID-19 cases detected in Honduras and there were 7030 confirmed deaths.² At the same time, the Funeral Homes Association reported over 15'000 deaths.³ By mid-July, their number rose to over 15'500 deaths.⁴ This month, the JOH regime stopped to publish daily updates on corona infections. The latest numbers are from July 29 with 294'561 COVID-19 cases detected and 7793 confirmed deaths.⁵

State Reaction

The JOH regime has so far received \$250 million from the BCIE for its corona response.⁶ Rather fittingly, Radio Progreso published an interview with former deputy Health Minister José Manuel Matheu about the deadly mix of corruption and a pandemic.⁷

Health Sector

At the beginning of the month, Proceso Digital gave an overview of the health crisis. "Since the arrival of the pandemic, the health crisis has been worsening in the country, which has been hit for more than 15 months, not only by the aggressiveness of the virus and its mutations, but also by the lack of access to supplies, medicines and vaccines. The health crisis has been marked by the purchase of seven mobile hospitals that should be operating to address the pandemic, as well as a series of lines of investigation for alleged corruption and multiple complaints from various sectors of Honduran society."⁸ More than 100 triage and stabilization centers for covid-19 patients have suspended their work in Honduras due to a lack of financial resources, according to a report released by the National Convergence Forum (Fonac).⁹ Piedad Huerta, representative of the Pan American Health Organization in Honduras, also warned about the situation in the country.¹⁰

On July 9, there was more reporting on the dire situation in the capital. "COVID-19 patient stabilization centers in the Central District are running out of oxygen due to the high demand in recent weeks, while hospitals report maximum occupancy and only release slots when there is a deceased or eventually a recovered patient."¹¹ "Dr. Franklin Gómez, deputy director of the Hospital Escuela in the capital, describes what is happening in the country's main health care center as a

1 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/23/casos-de-dengue-en-honduras-se-han-reducido-en-2021-hasta-un-67-por-ciento/>

2 <https://proceso.hn/julio-inicia-con-25-muertos-y-616-nuevos-contagios-de-la-covid-19-en-honduras/>

3 <https://confidencialhn.com/asociacion-de-funerarias-registra-siete-mil-628-muertes-por-covid-19-en-el-primer-semester-de-2021/>

4 <https://criterio.hn/asociacion-nacional-de-funerarias-contabiliza-8375-muertos-por-covid-19-en-2021/>

5 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-reporta-1592-nuevos-casos-de-covid-19-para-un-total-de-294561/>

6 <https://confidencialhn.com/250-millones-han-sido-entregados-por-el-bcie-a-honduras-destinados-a-la-emergencia-del-covid-19/>

7 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/corupcion-y-pandemia-combinacion-mortal-en-honduras>

8 <https://proceso.hn/triajes-y-hospitales-los-otros-detonantes-de-la-pandemia-en-honduras/>

9 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1475493-466/fonac-reporta-mas-100-triajes-cerrados-16-departamentos-honduras>

10 <https://confidencialhn.com/ops-reitera-preocupacion-ante-alto-indice-de-casos-covid-19-en-honduras/>

11 <https://proceso.hn/triajes-se-quedan-sin-oxigeno-hospitales-no-aguantan-contencion/>

tragedy and calls on the authorities to take drastic action. "A closure is practically imminent, we are already collapsed", it is understood that there is opposition to a closure of cities because of the economy, but it should be valued when it comes to life, said the doctor."¹²

On July 13, "[d]ifferent doctors and personnel working in the triage and hospitals of Tegucigalpa, capital of Honduras, protested in front of the facilities of the Health Secretariat (Sesal) demanding that the authorities grant permanent positions to health personnel under contract and giving a period of 48 hours, otherwise they will hold informative assemblies."¹³ The next day, Proceso Digital warned that the collapse of the health system spread from the capital¹⁴ to the north of the country.¹⁵ On July 21, the mobile hospital in San Pedro Sula reported maximum capacity.¹⁶ At the triage centers, staff is too scarce to handle the inflow of patients.¹⁷ Health workers call on the government for much needed support.¹⁸

On July 27, Criterio reported on the death of various patients in triage centers because they did not get a place in a hospital.¹⁹ Additionally, Honduras lost another doctor to COVID-19, Laura Julia Salgado Elvir. She had only received one shot of Sputnik V by that time. 89 doctors have died during the pandemic.²⁰ At the end of the month, "[t]he Instituto Nacional Cariopulmonar Tórax, informed through a communiqué, that they will not accept the admission of any COVID-19 patient given the high number of patients they have admitted at the moment".²¹ And there was also more reporting on people dying at triage centers because they could not be transferred to hospitals.²²

Last month, the JOH regime unexpectedly announced to prolong the time between the application of the two vaccine doses. This led to widespread rejection. On July 2, the JOH regime backtracked.²³ At the same time, JOH claimed that over 900'000 Hondurans had been vaccinated, but only 58'125 had been vaccinated twice.²⁴ On July 8, 54'990 doses of the Pfizer vaccine arrived in Honduras, one of the few deliveries actually paid for by the JOH regime.²⁵ Two days later, 187'200 more vaccine doses arrived through the COVAX mechanism.²⁶ By that time, there was rising pressure on the JOH regime to get more Sputnik V vaccine doses as people were awaiting their second shot. The Health Secretariat claimed to do everything in its power and also alluded to a

12 <https://confidencialhn.com/estamos-colapsados-director-del-hospital-escuela-pide-el-cierre-de-ese-centro-asistencial/>

13 <https://criterio.hn/personal-de-salud-da-ultimatum-al-gobierno-para-que-otorgue-plazas-laborales/>

14 <https://confidencialhn.com/no-hay-cupos-en-el-hospital-escuela-confirma-doctor-franklin-gomez/>

15 <https://proceso.hn/centroamerica-desbordada-por-covid-honduras-al-tope-en-hospitales/>

16 <https://confidencialhn.com/no-hay-cupo-para-pacientes-covid-19-en-hospital-movil-de-sps/>

17 <https://confidencialhn.com/es-insuficiente-el-personal-en-los-triajes-ante-repunte-de-contagios-por-la-covid-19-en-el-distrito-central/>

18 <https://criterio.hn/medicos-del-torax-exigen-al-gobierno-incrementar-medicamentos-y-oxigeno-para-pacientes-con-covid/>

19 <https://criterio.hn/hondurenos-fallecen-en-los-triajes-por-falta-de-cupos-en-los-hospitales/>

20 <https://proceso.hn/fallece-por-covid-19-en-ihss-tegucigalpa-la-doctora-laura-julia-salgado/>

21 <https://criterio.hn/el-hospital-el-torax-no-ingresara-mas-pacientes-graves-de-covid/>

22 <https://confidencialhn.com/continuan-falleciendo-ciudadanos-en-triajes-ante-la-falta-de-cupos-en-los-hospitales-capitalinos/>

23 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1475200-466/vacuna-coronavirus-pandemia-astrazenaca>

24 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1475739-466/joh-honduras-900-mil-vacunados-covid>

25 <https://confidencialhn.com/llega-a-honduras-segundo-lote-de-54990-dosis-de-vacunas-de-pfizer/>

26 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-recibe-187-200-vacunas-de-astrazeneca-del-mecanismo-covax/>

Plan B but without giving any details.²⁷ Nevertheless, JOH promised on national television that the second shot was guaranteed.²⁸

By mid-July, more than one million Hondurans had received one vaccine shot, but only 79'737 had received both shots, 0.8% of the population.²⁹ Additionally, only some 200'000 vaccine shots were directly bought by the JOH regime, while several times more vaccine shots had been donated or purchased by the IHSS.³⁰ The JOH regime has only used up 31% of its 2.2 billion budget to purchase vaccines.³¹ On July 22, Honduras received another 1.5 million vaccine doses from the US through the COVAX mechanism.³² And later another 42'120 more vaccine doses arrived.³³ By July 26, there were still only 1.3% of Hondurans who had been fully vaccinated. But at least, more than 1.7 million Hondurans had received at least one shot.³⁴

Questions around vaccines are highly political, be it internationally (vaccine diplomacy), but also nationally and this especially in Honduras. "This day transcended through social networks what citizens, doctors, opposition deputies and analysts called "extortion of vaccine for vote", since the National Party used buses with political propaganda of the mayor of the Central District, Nasry Asfura wrongly called "Papi a la Orden" and the transport businessman who seeks for the third time a deputation Blas Ramos. Inside a well conditioned bus, Nationalist activists and followers were transported and inside the bus a nurse with a Government uniform and logo was applying a supposed anti-virus vaccine, and according to the photographs, members of the Permanent Contingency Commission (Copeco) attended the vaccination process."³⁵ This coincided with the news that somehow 1.8 million vaccine doses disappeared³⁶ and general denouncements about of irregularities.^{37 38 39} On July 17, El Libertador reported again on how the JOH regime favored Nationalists to get the vaccine first.⁴⁰ Additionally, ContraCorriente reported: "Complaints about the politicization of vaccines by the National Party have worsened in Honduras. But it is not only the wrongdoing of the central government that is being denounced, but also that of some mayors who are taking advantage of the situation to obtain sympathy and translate it into votes in the general elections, scheduled for the last Sunday of November."⁴¹

27 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-ante-el-desafio-de-la-vacuna-sputnik-v/>

28 <https://confidencialhn.com/segunda-dosis-esta-asegurada-dice-mandatario-herandez-en-cadena-nacional/>

29 <https://proceso.hn/apenas-el-0-8-de-los-hondurenos-completo-la-vacunacion-contr-la-covid-19/>

30 <https://confidencialhn.com/arriba-tercer-lote-de-las-vacunas-pfizer-compradas-por-honduras/>

31 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-ha-ejecutado-afinas-el-31-de-2200-millones-presupuestados-para-la-compra-de-vacunas/>

32 <https://hn.usembassy.gov/es/gobierno-de-los-estados-unidos-de-america-realiza-nueva-donacion-a-honduras-de-1-5-millones-de-dosis-de-vacunas-contr-covid-19/#.YPmyF-QPSzw.twitter>

33 <https://confidencialhn.com/llegan-42-mil-120-vacunas-pfizer-contr-la-covid-19-compradas-por-el-gobierno/>

34 <https://confidencialhn.com/194020-hondurenos-han-sido-inmunizados-con-dos-dosis-contr-la-covid-19/>

35 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3049-honduras-delito-extorsion-del-partido-nacional-vacuna-por-voto>

36 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/12/denuncian-perdida-aplicacion-y-venta-ilegal-de-vacunas-contr-el-covid-19/>

37 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/13/cuestionan-irregularidades-en-compras-de-vacunas-anticovid/>

38 <https://confidencialhn.com/autoridades-de-la-sesal-piden-al-mp-perseguir-delito-de-comercializacion-y-trafico-de-vacunas-anticovid/>

39 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3050-honduras-por-que-el-gobierno-ordeno-secreto-para-contratos-con-pfizer-y-sputnik>

40 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3058-honduras-gobierno-prioriza-vacuna-para-activistas-nacionalistas>

41 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/07/31/vacunaton-honduras-uso-de-vacunas-para-campanas-electorales/>

Corruption

Proceso Digital published an update on the mobile hospitals one year after the arrival of the first two to Honduras. "Of the seven mobile clinics purchased through an opaque transaction and paid in advance, only those in San Pedro Sula and Santa Rosa de Copán attend COVID cases, those located in Tegucigalpa and Choluteca attend patients with other pathologies, while the remaining three sleep the sleep of the just. (...) The fraudulent operation has three defendants in the Honduran courts: the former director of Invest-H, Marco Bográn; the administrator, Alex Moraes; and the Guatemalan intermediary, Axel López, to whom the Public Prosecutor's Office has seized assets for around 100 million lempiras in the US."⁴²

Economy

Public debt in Honduras has reached the highest levels in the last two decades.⁴³

ContraCorriente reports on a worrying case of labor rights violation in Honduras. "Mario Aguilar and Gilberto Paredes must be at work every day at 7 a.m. They never know what time they will return home. Nor do they know if they will get a salary that day or if they will return without a peso. They work for a large food processing company, but they do not appear on their payroll. They have never received their thirteenth and fourteenth salary. They have no vacation and, if they are called in, they have to work holidays. There is no possibility to complain because they are told that they are not employees of the company. On many occasions, they have had to leave after 10 p.m. and some in the early hours of the morning, but religiously they have to report at 7 a.m. It sounds like a quasi-novelistic story of modern slavery, but it is real. The company Industrias Molineras S. A. (IMSA) is located in the jurisdiction of Choloma, in northern Honduras, specifically on the boulevard that connects the cities of San Pedro Sula and Puerto Cortés, where the largest and most profitable commercial machinery in Honduras moves. Gilberto and Mario work there."⁴⁴ The situation is in general dire in Honduras. "Delta Apparel, a transnational clothing manufacturer, dismissed 430 workers during the pandemic. Many of them had work-related musculoskeletal conditions. Thousands more were furloughed without pay. The Ministry of Labor shut down for six months amid widespread labor abuses."⁴⁵

Poverty

"The poverty rate in Honduras could increase from 70 to 75% by the end of 2021 due to the economic crisis caused by the covid-19 pandemic, the high cost of living and the lack of job opportunities, warned economists consulted by Efe on Monday."⁴⁶ Such a development would also likely worsen the situation of child labor in Honduras. "The child population in Honduras is 2,472,798, that figure represents 26% of a country with more than 9.4 million; of this number of

42 <https://proceso.hn/hospitales-moviles-el-caso-mas-oscuro-en-la-pandemia-a-un-ano-de-su-llegada-al-pais/>

43 <https://criterio.hn/deuda-publica-en-honduras-en-su-nivel-mas-alto-de-las-ultimas-dos-decadas-fosdeh/>

44 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/07/17/los-43-cargadores-que-se-cansaron-de-una-procesadora-de-alimentos/>

45 <https://contracorriente.red/en/2021/06/30/people-sick-or-incapacitated-due-to-working-conditions-fired-with-pandemic-as-the-excuse/>

46 <https://proceso.hn/la-pobreza-en-honduras-podria-aumentar-de-70-a-75-en-2021-por-la-covid-19/>

minors, 412,122 are children and adolescents who work for a living, that is to say that 16.67% perform work that represents a risk, according to figures from the National Institute of Statistics (INE)."⁴⁷

Education

""We see with great concern that more than 1,200 teachers, active and retired, have died from covid-19 and the government cares little or nothing about the lives of teachers. We are losing invaluable colleagues in the public education system and we are still not a priority for vaccination", lamented the teachers' leader, Onán Cáliz. We are losing invaluable colleagues in the public education system and we are still not a priority for vaccination", lamented the teachers' leader, Onán Cáliz."⁴⁸ Given this situation, it seems logical that announcements by the JOH regime to open up schools again was met with rejection. "It is impossible to return to on-site classes at this moment, number one because many educational centers are in total abandonment and number two because teachers have not been inoculated against Covid-19, said the teachers' leader, Eulogio Chávez, on Tuesday."⁴⁹ "The infrastructure of schools is 82% destroyed, and there are only 12 thousand teachers vaccinated against COVID-19, so it would be suicide to return to semi-presential and face-to-face classes, said Wednesday the president of the College of Pedagogues of Honduras (Colpedagogosh), Edwin Hernandez."⁵⁰

Given the widespread rejection, the plans to open up schools disappeared by mid-July only to reappear at the end of the month again.⁵¹ Teachers' organization denounced this decision.⁵² There were also parents who opposed the decision⁵³ and medical experts also warned about its consequences.⁵⁴ At the same time, Honduras is only one of eight countries with closed schools⁵⁵ and a solutions needs to be found - of course, an effective vaccine policy would help.

Human Rights and Their Defenders

"Human rights defenders have high expectations that the proposed draft of the Anti-discrimination Equality and Equity Law (LIE) will be approved, which will contribute to improve the conditions of the populations that are discriminated against in the country."⁵⁶

47 <https://proceso.hn/el-trabajo-infantil-un-lastre-que-se-acentua-en-honduras/>

48 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/13/al-gobierno-no-le-interesa-la-educacion-esta-preocupado-por-planificar-fraude-electoral/>

49 <https://confidencialhn.com/es-imposible-regresar-a-clases-en-este-momento-eulogio-chavez/>

50 <https://proceso.hn/regreso-a-clases-seria-un-suicidio-por-infraestructura-destruida-y-falta-de-vacunas-reitera-el-magisterio/>

51 <https://proceso.hn/anuncian-apertura-de-clases-semipresenciales-a-partir-del-16-de-agosto-en-municipios-con-bajo-nivel-de-contagios/>

52 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/28/magisterio-rechaza-retorno-a-clases-por-pandemia-y-deterioro-en-infraestructura-educativa/>

53 <https://confidencialhn.com/padres-de-familia-rechazan-retorno-a-clases-anunciado-por-autoridades-de-educacion/>

54 <https://confidencialhn.com/no-es-el-momento-de-abrir-las-escuelas-ante-el-repunte-de-contagios-en-el-pais-doctora-elsa-palou/>

55 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3087-desesperacion-honduras-entre-unicos-ocho-paises-del-mundo-con-educacion-cerrada>

56 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3220-crean-propuesta-de-ley-de-equidad-y-no-discriminacion-en-honduras>

Assassinations

"The Office in Honduras of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) condemns the violent death of Juan Manuel Moncada, human rights defender and leader of the peasant enterprise "Gregorio Chávez", who died as a result of gunshot wounds on Tuesday, July 6 in the municipality of Tocoa, department of Colón. Mr. Moncada had previously reported threats to the Public Prosecutor's Office and was a beneficiary of the National System for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators."⁵⁷

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

On July 10, Defensores en Línea published an update on one of the more recent criminalization case in Gualaco, Olancho. "The company M.T.S de R.L. de C.V., dedicated to the extraction of resin, accused Lauriano Escobar Guillén and Elvin Munguía Solís, peasants, descendants of the Náhuatl people, before the Catacamas courts, for the crime of land usurpation. Following details of the hearing held on Tuesday, July 6, in the courts of Catacamas, department of Olancho, it was learned that the Prosecutor's Office extended the crimes to include damages and threats against the landowner and timber merchant Nery Murillo, owner of the company M.T.S. de R.L. de C.V. Both Escobar and Munguía are members of the Environmental Committee of Gualaco, an organization that for decades has been fighting against the irrational exploitation of the forest and in favor of the conservation of the rivers and fauna in Olancho."⁵⁸

"Experts say that seized devices have become a trove of information for authorities cracking down on social movements and opposition leaders. (...) Fundación Acceso, a digital rights advocacy organization based in Costa Rica, said in a report last year that El Salvador and Honduras have both purchased licenses from the firm Cellebrite, while Guatemala has used Magnet AXIOM, digital investigation software that lets law enforcement recover deleted information from cellphones."⁵⁹

On July 18, the JOH regime targeted an international human rights defender. "Honduran immigration authorities prevented the entry into the country of human rights defender Marine Pezet, coming from France, this Sunday, July 18, 2021. Marine Pezet was a representative of the Honduras Accompaniment Program (PROAH), the first international organization that came to provide accompaniment and observation of human rights after the 2009 coup d'état".⁶⁰ Her husband Pavel Núñez denounced: "She was practically expelled from the country, under the verbal legal form they used of retained and returned and the reality is that they did not allow her to enter the country".⁶¹ "Following the denial of entry to Honduras of the international human rights defender, Marine Pezet, last July 18 at night, Councilor Donny Reyes requested that the Minister of the Secretariat of

57 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-del-defensor-de-derechos-humanos-juan-manuel-moncada-lider-de-la-empresa-campesina-gregorio-chavez/>

58 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/voracidad-de-teratenientes-esta-generando-la-criminalizacion-de-pueblos-indigenas/>

59 <https://restofworld.org/2021/latin-america-phone-security/>

60 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/autoridades-de-migracion-retiene-a-defensora-de-los-derechos-humanos/>

61 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-de-honduras-expulsa-defensora-francesa-de-derechos-humanos/>

Human Rights, Iris Rosalia Cruz and the Director of the National Protection System, Danilo Morales, provide a report to the Protection Council."⁶²

"The defender of the land and territory, Reynaldo Domínguez, was released at five o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, July 23, after being detained for an hour by elements of the national police. The Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Public Goods, through its page on the social network Facebook, informed of the capture and later that the acquittal of charges of the fellow defender, Reynaldo Domínguez, was confirmed through his letters of release."⁶³

At the end of the month, first, "[t]he Coalition Against Impunity (CCI) denounced (...) actions of harassment by the Technical Agency of Criminal Investigation (ATIC) against defenders of the territory in Bajo Aguán, department of Colón, in the northern part of Honduras."⁶⁴ Then, COFADEH sent out an alert. "Men dressed as police officers burst into the house of environmental defender Olga Velázquez, located in Valle de Siria, Francisco Morazán, without any justification."⁶⁵

Indigenous Peoples

"Silvia Bonilla, a Garífuna defender who has recently been detained and prosecuted for defending her ancestral territory [see last month] obtained a provisional dismissal in two open cases for the crimes of usurpation, damages, violence, intimidation and threats, a charge brought by the company Bienes Raíces JUCA S.R.L., which has criminalized 32 other people."⁶⁶ On July 9, "UN experts* (..) urged the Government of Honduras to put an end to the arbitrary detention and criminalization of human rights defenders from the Garífuna community".⁶⁷ But just two days later, OFRANEH denounced the arrest of Jenny Boden, a 63-year old Garífuna woman traveling from the US to Honduras. She hasn't been in the country for three years but is now criminalized for usurpation.⁶⁸ Once again, the disputed new Penal Code is being used for that.⁶⁹

Mid-July, a global call of solidarity was launched in light of the one year anniversary of the forced disappearance of the young Garífuna defenders from Triunfo de la Cruz.⁷⁰ OACNUDH published a press release on this occasion. "OACNUDH calls on the authorities to redouble their efforts to search for the five missing persons alive and to clarify the facts, through effective investigations that result in the punishment of all those responsible."⁷¹ The IACHR also called on Honduras to redouble its efforts to find the forcefully disappeared Garífuna men.⁷² As part of their call for justice, Garífuna defenders marched to the MP demanding justice for the forcefully disappeared

62 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/monitoreo/item/3222-donny-reyes-consejo-nacional-de-proteccion-debe-conocer-informe-detallado-del-por-que-gobierno-de-honduras-no-permitio-ingreso-de-defensora-internacional-de-ddhh>

63 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/continua-la-persecucion-contra-defensores-de-guapinol/>

64 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-a-la-atic-por-hostigamiento-y-sobornos-en-perjuicio-de-defensores-en-el-bajo-aguan/>

65 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-urgente/>

66 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3208-defensora-garifuna-logra-dos-sobresesimientos-provisionales-en-procesos-penales-por-defender-su-territorio-ancestral>

67 <https://oacnudh.hn/honduras-debe-dejar-de-criminalizar-la-defensa-de-los-derechos-humanos-de-las-comunidades-garifunas-advierten-expertos-de-la-onu/>

68 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1414323038997385220>

69 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1414204203568934912>

70 <http://im-defensoras.org/2021/07/llamado-global-de-solidaridad-muestra-tu-solidaridad-con-las-victimas-de-desaparicion-forzada-del-pueblo-garifuna-de-triunfo-de-la-cruz-sus-familiares-y-la-ofraneh/>

71 <https://oacnudh.hn/a-un-ano-de-las-desapariciones-en-la-comunidad-garifuna-de-triunfo-de-la-cruz-oacnudh-reitera-la-obligacion-del-estado-para-el-esclarecimiento-de-los-hechos/>

72 <https://twitter.com/CIDH/status/1417213098918883331>

Garífuna men.⁷³ "The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras, Ofraneh, requested the Public Prosecutor's Office to appoint a Special Prosecutor to investigate and search for the four residents of the Garífuna community of El Triunfo de la Cruz, Tela, Atlántida."⁷⁴

On July 27, OACNUDH and the IACHR published a joint press release calling "on the State of Honduras to adopt measures to prevent the criminalization of Garífuna human rights defenders, particularly those who defend land, territory and natural resources. They also urge to guarantee an environment free of hostilities for the defense of human rights and to intensify measures to respect and protect the rights of the Garífuna people over their lands, territories and natural resources in accordance with international and inter-American standards".⁷⁵

The Case of Berta Cáceres

The trial against David Castillo came to a conclusion at the end of June with a verdict still outstanding. While waiting, there were several important statements published. "The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (OACNUDH) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) call on the Honduran authorities to guarantee effective access to justice, to establish the truth of what happened and to punish the perpetrators and masterminds of the murder of Berta Cáceres, in order to avoid impunity."⁷⁶

On July 5, the highly expected verdict⁷⁷ was announced: Guilty! David Castillo was convicted as co-perpetrator of the murder of Berta Cáceres.^{78 79} "The verdict was welcomed by Cáceres's family, friends and colleagues as an important step in their struggle to hold to account all those who had a role in ordering, financing and enabling the murder – as well as in the attempted cover-up that followed. Outside court, Laura Zúniga Cáceres, Berta's youngest daughter and the only family member allowed to attend the trial, said: "Today is a day of victory in a long process. This is one more step on that long path to justice. We will keep contributing to this process so that [such crimes] are not repeated, but also so that the judicial process can lead to healing."⁸⁰ The struggle continues to bring to justice all involved, #FaltanLosAtala.^{81 82 83} "The Honduran justice system has taken an important step in the case of the murder of Berta Cáceres by finding David Castillo, former executive director of the company Desarrollos Energéticos SA (DESA), guilty as co-intellectual author. The family of the environmentalist and her defense will continue to fight until the other material and intellectual authors of the murder of indigenous leader Berta Cáceres are brought to justice and sentenced. Víctor Fernández, lawyer for Cáceres' family, told Criterio.hn that the

73 <https://criterio.hn/organizaciones-garifunas-exigen-al-ministerio-publico-respuestas-ante-rapto-de-cuatro-activistas/>

74 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/piden-a-un-fiscal-especial-para-investigacion-y-busqueda-de-garifunas-desaparecidos/>

75 <https://oacnudh.hn/cidh-y-oacnudh-llaman-al-estado-a-abstenerse-de-criminalizar-a-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos-garifunas-en-honduras/>

76 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-y-cidh-hacen-un-llamado-a-garantizar-el-acceso-efectivo-e-imparcial-a-la-justicia-en-el-juicio-por-el-asesinato-de-berta-caceres/>

77 Full transcript: <https://www.observacionbertacaceres.org/post/full-transcript-court-rules-david-castillo-guilty-for-murder-of-berta-c%C3%A1ceres-in-honduras>

78 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/autor-login/178-julio2021/8002-mp-demuestra-la-culpabilidad-del-presidente-de-des-a-en-el-asesinato-de-berta-caceres>

79 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/7/5/verdict-david-castillo-is-found-guilty-of-berta-caceres-murder>

80 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/05/berta-caceres-assassination-roberto-david-castillo-found-guilty>

81 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/05/tras-fallo-contradictorio-familia-de-berta-exige-se-sigan-sentenciando-a-culpables/>

82 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-trabaja-en-identificar-a-otros-autores-intelectuales-del-asesinato-de-berta-caceres/>

83 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/especial/berta-caceres/item/3219-victor-fernandez-el-enjuiciamiento-de-los-atala-sera-un-proceso-mas-duro-por-el-poder-que-tienen-pero-estamos-preparados>

assassination allowed them to build a strategy in different components which they call "Causa Berta Cáceres" and from the legal perspective involves a series of cases, one of them is the case of David Castillo."⁸⁴

The Dutch development bank FMO reacted to the guilty verdict. "We have taken notice of the verdict in the trial of David Castillo in Honduras. The assassination of Berta Cáceres was a tragedy. We have the deepest sympathy with all those affected by her death and hope this conviction brings some solace to her family and all those close to her. The verdict means we financed a company whose CEO has now been found guilty of being involved in murder. We are devastated by this."⁸⁵ COPINH later published a press release on another bank possibly linked to the case. "In the midst of the trial against the convicted murderer David Castillo, co-author of the assassination of our comrade Berta Cáceres, it was made public that the FICOHSA Bank of Camilo Atala, hired a firm of lobbyists in the United States to act against the Berta Cáceres Law for Human Rights, as well as against the anti-corruption law and human rights in Honduras. Banco FICOHSA hired former congressman Alan Wheat from a lobbying firm called Polsinelli, a firm of more than 900 lawyers, to act against legislative initiatives for human rights in Honduras led by congressmen and social organizations in the United States."⁸⁶

LGBTQ

Reporteros de Investigación looked at the consequences of the important IACtHR sentence last month week in the case of Vicky Hernández⁸⁷ (see previous monitor). "One effect of this judgment is the obligation of the State to reform the Constitution of the Republic of Honduras and the Law of the National Registry of Persons (RNP)."⁸⁸

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

Pasos de Animal Grande reported on a Research Project by Reporters without Borders, "which will be developed during the remainder of the year on the Mechanisms for the Protection of Journalists in Latin America, with the support of UNESCO, to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of protection programs for this sector in Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and Honduras".⁸⁹

Radio Globo denounced harassment against its director Héctor Amador.⁹⁰ In a second incidence, Marvin Ponce, adviser to Casa Presidencial, made a series of disparaging comments against journalist Marvin López Zuccin, during a press conference after the later asked a critical question regarding the lack of a vaccination strategy.⁹¹ Pasos de Animal Grande reported on acts of

84 <https://criterio.hn/causa-berta-caceres-no-termina-con-culpabilidad-de-david-castillo/>

85 <https://www.fmo.nl/news-detail/f88c7c19-f553-4279-91cf-2703aff5dbd8/fmo-s-reaction-to-the-verdict-in-the-trial-of-david-castillo>

86 <https://copinh.org/2021/07/ficohsa-bank-lobbies-in-the-u-s-against-the-berta-caceres-law-and-lies-again/>

87 <https://www.vice.com/en/article/y3d5dv/honduran-government-responsible-for-trans-womans-murder-watershed-court-ruling-says>

88 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/07/02/honduras-obligado-a-reformar-ley-y-reconocer-identidad-de-genero-sentencia-de-corteidh-por-transfemicidio/>

89 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/amenazas/item/3217-emmanuel-colombie-rsf-debemos-recordar-la-memoria-de-los-periodistas-que-los-asesinaron-porque-se-enfrentaron-al-poder>

90 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3026-alerta-honduras-desconocido-vigila-al-director-de-radio-globo>

91 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1373-asesor-presidencial-descalifica-a-periodista-que-cuestiono-lento-proceso-gubernamental-de-vacunas-anti-covid19>

intimidation by state security forces against journalist and human rights defender Cesario Padilla who should benefit from special protection measures.⁹²

"During the virtual forum "How is freedom of expression in Honduras", the manual "The regulation of freedom of expression in Honduras" was presented, with the presence of lawyer Edy Tábor, author of said document. This manual addresses everything related to protected and unprotected content, and explains the tools available to demand public information, which is usually denied. In addition, it delves into the regulatory obstacles that limit freedom of expression in our country."⁹³

Violence against Women

"The lesbian feminist organization Cattrachas will launch in the coming days the Keres Femicide Observatory, to measure different variables around this crime and generate insights to analyze the failures of the justice system in reducing impunity. The project will be operational during 2021 and 2022, said Cattrachas coordinator Indira Murillo."⁹⁴ At least 167 women violently lost their lives in Honduras so far this year.⁹⁵ CONADEH expressed concern.⁹⁶ At the end of the month, women's rights organization demanded answers from the National Defense and Security Council regarding the high number of femicides in Honduras.⁹⁷

On July 13, "[t]he Supreme Court of Justice of Honduras admitted an appeal of unconstitutionality against article 196 of the Penal Code that criminalizes abortion in its entirety".⁹⁸ Pasos de Animal Grande reported: "Suyapa Martinez, Director of the Center for Women's Studies-Honduras, CEMH, said that with the admissibility of the appeal of unconstitutionality against the prohibition of abortion on three grounds by the Supreme Court of Justice, sends a message to the National Congress to legislate in favor of women's rights, in addition to giving a boost to the struggle of feminists and women's movement that have historically fought for this right."⁹⁹

Another form of violence is the fact that every day, three minors below 19 give birth in Honduras.¹⁰⁰

Protection Mechanism

Given the murder of two lawyers this month¹⁰¹ (see below), the Bar Association of Honduras (CAH), since this year not anymore in the hands of the National Party, announced to withdraw from the Protection Mechanism denouncing its inefficiency in combating violence and crime against lawyers.¹⁰²

92 <https://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3225-el-riesgo-por-que-la-dpi-y-la-policia-nacional-casi-botan-la-puerta-de-la-casa-de-cesario-padilla>

93 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/07/30/la-regulacion-de-la-libertad-de-expresion-en-honduras-un-nuevo-manual-para-periodistas/>

94 <https://criterio.hn/cattrachas-lanzara-observatorio-del-femicidio-para-buscar-raices-de-la-impunidad-en-honduras/>

95 <https://criterio.hn/observatorio-de-cattrachas-registra-167-muertes-violentas-de-mujeres-hasta-el-19-de-julio/>

96 <https://criterio.hn/defensoras-de-derechos-humanos-preocupadas-por-alta-tasa-de-femicidios-en-honduras/>

97 <https://proceso.hn/feministas-demandan-respuestas-del-consejo-de-seguridad-por-muertes-de-mujeres/>

98 <https://criterio.hn/csj-admite-recurso-de-inconstitucionalidad-contr-a-articulo-que-penaliza-el-aborto/>

99 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3221-con-admision-de-recurso-sobre-despenalizacion-del-aborto-corte-suprema-manda-un-mensaje-claro-al-congreso-nacional-para-legislar-a-favor-de-las-mujeres>

100 <https://confidencial.hn.com/senalan-que-la-natalidad-en-mujeres-menores-de-19-anos-va-aumentando-en-honduras/>

101 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/07/31/carolina-echeverria-el-asesinato-de-una-candidata-cercana-a-la-familia-rosenthal/>

102 <http://tiempo.hn/colegio-de-abogados-retira-mecanismo-de-proteccion/>

Political Prisoners

Two lawyers were murdered this month, the Liberal congressional candidate Carolina Echeverría Haylock (see below) and on July 27, Cinthia Yarely Sierra Maradiaga.¹⁰³

Extractive Industries

On July 15, Congress approved the construction of new dams.¹⁰⁴ Radio Progreso denounced that the approval came without consulting the affected communities.¹⁰⁵

ZEDEs

CESPAD investigated the role of local government in resisting the ZEDEs.¹⁰⁶ Radio Progreso reported on the planed ZEDE Mariposa.¹⁰⁷

Last month, the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA), called on the Honduran population to collect signatures and present a citizen initiative before Congress to repeal ZEDEs. "The CNA also urged the Association of Mayors to collect signatures in all departments and municipalities, and called on the heads of the political parties' benches to strategically unite to continue collecting signatures at the national level. For their part, the board of directors of the Association of Mayors, representing 160 mayors, were present to sign the initiative at the CNA facilities."¹⁰⁸ By mid-July, the CNA had collected over 15'000 signatures.¹⁰⁹ On July 19, they presented them to Congress.¹¹⁰

The Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies (ICEFI) joined the ever longer list of institutions and organizations rejecting the ZEDEs.¹¹¹ At the same time, UNAH "will proceed to file legal actions to have the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE) declared unconstitutional. This was announced by the rector of the university, Francisco Herrera Alvarado, who stated that this is not a whimsical position, but a position based on the exclusive mandate to defend what the Constitution of the Republic mandates".¹¹² The challenge was presented on July 21.¹¹³ In a press release, the Diocese of Choluteca spoke out against the ZEDEs.¹¹⁴ Also in the south, in Amapala, under the leadership of the Association for the Development of the Zacate Grande Peninsula (Adepza), the municipal coordination against the Employment and Economic

103 <https://confidencialhn.com/asesinan-a-una-abogada-en-colonia-prados-universitarios-de-la-capital/>

104 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-aprueba-decreto-para-la-construccion-de-represas-en-14-sectores-del-pais/>

105 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/sin-consultar-a-las-comunidades-congreso-nacional-aprueba-construccion-de-represas-hidroelectricas/>

106 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/14/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-el-papel-de-los-gobiernos-locales-en-la-lucha-contra-las-zedes/>

107 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/zede-mariposa-un-paraiso-para-el-trafico-de-organos-y-personas/>

108 <https://criterio.hn/alcaldes-se-unen-al-cna-con-iniciativa-ciudadana-de-recoleccion-de-firmas-en-contra-de-las-zedes/>

109 <https://criterio.hn/mas-de-15-mil-firmas-a-favor-de-iniciativa-ciudadana-para-que-se-derogue-ley-de-las-zede/>

110 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1479119-466/consejo-nacional-anticorupcion-iniciativa-congreso-zede>

111 <https://criterio.hn/icefi-recomienda-derogar-la-ley-organica-de-las-zede/>

112 <https://confidencialhn.com/unah-prepara-recurso-de-inconstitucionalidad-contra-las-zede/>

113 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3224-argumentos-de-recurso-de-inconstitucionalidad-contra-las-zede-la-unah-nunca-habia-estado-tan-amenazada>

114 <https://proceso.hn/diocesis-de-choluteca-se-une-al-clamor-popular-y-rechaza-implementacion-de-zedes/>

Development Zones (ZEDE) was created.¹¹⁵ On July 12, another important new voice joined the opposition to the ZEDEs, the Fiscal Association of Honduras.¹¹⁶

On Friday, July 16, what were once anti-corruption protests on every Friday evening became an anti-ZEDEs protest.¹¹⁷ There were more protests in different parts of the country on July 20.¹¹⁸ On July 23, there was a protest in Choloma.¹¹⁹ Additionally, "[i]n recent weeks more than a dozen municipalities in Honduras have declared themselves free of Special Economic Development Zones, ZEDE. From La Ceiba to the municipalities in the south of the country, the west or east, citizens are pressuring their authorities not to allow the project promoted by the National Party and the government of Juan Orlando Hernandez, JOH."¹²⁰

On July 27, "[r]esidents of the sector of Las Tapias in San Marcos de Colón, Choluteca, denounced that the managers of the Employment and Economic Development Zone (ZEDE), Orquídea, threatened them with expropriation of their land if they do not sell".¹²¹ A day later, the Episcopal Conference of Honduras came out strong against the ZEDEs and demanded from Congress to derogate the laws giving life to them.¹²² At the end of the month, there were several town hall meetings where local communities rejected the ZEDEs.^{123 124 125}

Mining

Guapinol

"The international solidarity delegation "Vamos a la Milpa" will support the eight imprisoned Guapinol defenders until they are released and can defend themselves in freedom. They also intend to take the voices of the community outside of Honduras to be heard, to put an end to mining, with the cancellation of the environmental license of Inversiones Los Pinares-Ecotek. This July 7, 2021, through a press conference, the delegation was visiting the communities of Bajo Aguán, including Guapinol, where they pledged to take the petitions of the defenders of water and life to demand the release of those imprisoned because they are innocent."¹²⁶

¹¹⁵ <https://criterio.hn/municipios-de-honduras-continuan-organizandose-en-contra-de-las-zede/>

¹¹⁶ https://twitter.com/af_hond/status/1414764445369257985

¹¹⁷ <https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2021/07/16/mundo/marchan-en-honduras-contra-ciudades-modelo/>

¹¹⁸ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/inician-las-acciones-de-protestas-contra-las-zede/>

¹¹⁹ <https://proceso.hn/pobladores-de-choloma-protestan-contra-las-zedes/>

¹²⁰ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/ponada/mas-municipio-se-suma-al-rechazo-contra-las-zede/>

¹²¹ <https://proceso.hn/pobladores-denuncian-que-les-expropiaran-sus-terrenos-para-construccion-de-zede-en-san-marcos-de-colon/>

¹²² <https://proceso.hn/conferencia-episcopal-exige-al-cn-derogar-las-zedes/>

¹²³ <https://criterio.hn/sociedad-civil-de-tela-se-pronuncia-contra-las-zede-este-viernes/>

¹²⁴ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/pt/tela-ejerce-soberania-se-declara-libre-de-ciudades-modelo/>

¹²⁵ <https://criterio.hn/juticalpa-olancha-tambien-se-declara-libre-de-zede/>

¹²⁶ <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3218-delegacion-internacional-abogara-por-la-libertad-de-los-defensores-de-guapinol-desde-estados-unidos>

Corruption and Its Enemies

The highly anticipated Engel's List was published on the first day of July.¹²⁷ "Many of the cases were known in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, but the inclusion of names on the U.S. list buoyed the hopes of anti-corruption crusaders. The list was provided to the U.S. Congress in compliance with the "U.S.-Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act" pushed last year by U.S. Rep. Eliot Engel. (...) Ricardo Zúñiga, White House special envoy for the Northern Triangle, said Thursday that the list was not final and that pulling U.S. visas from those named does not exclude the possibility of other sanctions. The law requires the State Department to provide a list to Congress at least once a year. (...) Among the most prominent figures on the list are former Honduras President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo Sosa and former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo. The State Department report says Lobo Sosa took bribes from a drug cartel and his wife was involved in fraud and misappropriation of funds. Both deny the allegations. Bonilla's conviction on related charges was invalidated by the Supreme Court last year and she is awaiting a new trial. Perhaps as significant as Lobo Sosa's inclusion or that of more than a dozen current lawmakers, was the omission of current Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernández. U.S. prosecutors in New York have signaled Hernández as having funded his political ascent with bribes from drug traffickers, but he has not been formally charged. (...) Honduras analyst Raúl Pineda Alvarado, said there had been high expectations for the list, but that in general it did not include the top perpetrators, leaving him underwhelmed: "If this is the way the United States Congress wants to battle corruption in Honduras, it's like wanting to cure cancer with aspirin."¹²⁸ In a press conference, the US Special Envoy to the Northern Triangle, Ricardo Zúñiga, called the list "one tool among several ones" to help fighting corruption in the region.¹²⁹ The list contains 21 Hondurans, the great majority is linked to the National Party.¹³⁰ 19 out of the 21 had been accused in corruption cases by the MP, i.e. by cases brought forward by the now defunct MACCIH and replaced UFECIC.¹³¹ The MP announced to continue to go after them.¹³²

The former head of the MACCIH, Juan Jiménez Mayor, welcomes the list as "a true moral sanction".¹³³ This positive outlook is not widely shared. "The names of Juan Orlando Hernandez and company are absent. The names of Ebal Diaz, Reynaldo Sanchez, for example, do not appear. It seems that the list responds to a pact to remove the sector linked to Pepe Lobo, and leave Juan Orlando's gang and businessmen linked to acts of corruption in suspense", said Jesuit priest Ismael Moreno, "Father Melo", in an interview to Radio Progreso."¹³⁴ "The expert lawyer and political thinker, Raúl Pineda, observes the fear of the United States to lose its influence, that is why it would be protecting high corrupt officials of the Hernández Government that do not appear in the Engel's

127 <https://www.state.gov/u-s-releases-section-353-list-of-corrupt-and-undemocratic-actors-for-guatemala-honduras-and-el-salvador/>

128 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/us-publishes-list-of-corrupt-officials-in-central-america/2021/07/01/e18f5e0e-da8c-11eb-8c87-ad6f27918c78_story.html

129 <https://criterio.hn/senalados-en-lista-engel-pueden-ser-sancionados-con-ley-magnitsky-y-otras-leyes-en-ee-uu/>

130 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/01/lista-engel-mayoria-de-implicados-son-del-partido-nacional-dos-liberales-y-uno-de-libre/>

131 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1410738564766199808

132 <https://proceso.hn/mp-afirma-que-continuar-las-acciones-contra-senalados-en-la-lista-engel/>

133 <https://proceso.hn/para-juan-jimenez-mayor-la-lista-engel-es-una-verdadera-sancion-moral/>

134 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/padre-melo-lista-engel-es-pirrica-no-compensa-niveles-de-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

list, apparently, the most important thing is to maintain relations with the last two countries that are still loyal to them: Honduras and Guatemala, even if it means supporting impunity. The names of sectors that the State Department itself had announced did not appear either, among others, businessmen, military, evangelical and Catholic churches, police, social leaders, executives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and politicians of recognized criminal background who publicly support the abuse of power and corruption of the regime. To Pineda, this behavior of Washington with the regime of Juan Hernandez, reminded him of the famous phrase of former U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, about the dictatorship of Nicaraguan Anastasio Somoza, of whom he said: "Somoza is a son of a bitch, but he is our son of a bitch".¹³⁵

Criterio cites State Department official Rubén López saying that a second list will be published before the end of 2021. "The official also said that they are working on another list, which will be published before the end of the year and which includes relatives of current President Juan Orlando Hernandez."¹³⁶ The list also includes people running for office in November's election.¹³⁷ But according to the former Attorney General, the CNE does not have a legal basis to disqualify them for being on the list.¹³⁸

InSight Crime raised some criticism against the list. "[A]s with previous corruption lists, there were few surprises and some glaring omissions, which created the impression that these are just names on a list rather than one piece of a broader strategy to tackle graft in the region. (...) As with previous US corruption lists, the main sticking point from Honduras was once again the omission of current President Juan Orlando Hernández. (...) The State Department's decision to sanction former president Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo for having accepted bribes from Honduran drug traffickers will surely raise further questions about the consistency of the Engel List selections. (...) In absence of top-level officials, the brunt of the State Department's sanctions fell on congress, with 15 incumbent representatives accused of corruption."¹³⁹ The CNA asked the Attorney General to continue the investigation into those mentioned on the list.¹⁴⁰ And the Anti-Corruption Coalition asked the CNE to disqualify those candidates for Congress who appeared on the list.¹⁴¹ The Supreme Audit Court (TSC) claimed to have investigated those mentioned on the Engel's List and sent the information to the MP.¹⁴²

The US continued to make headlines also in the second half of July. "The United States is designating former Honduran President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo Sosa (Lobo) and former First Lady Rosa Elena Bonilla Avila (Rosa Lobo) due to their involvement in significant corruption. While in office, President Lobo accepted bribes from the narco-trafficking organization Los Cachiros in exchange for political favors. As First Lady, Rosa Lobo engaged in significant corruption through

135 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3030-en-lista-engel-eeuu-protege-altos-corrupitos-sus-serviles-analista-hondureno>

136 <https://criterio.hn/a-finales-de-2021-ee-uu-publicara-otra-lista-que-incluye-a-familiares-de-juan-herandez/>

137 <https://criterio.hn/ochro-diputados-senalados-en-lista-engel-buscan-reeleccion-en-elecciones-de-noviembre/>

138 <https://proceso.hn/eduardo-orellana-dice-que-cne-no-podra-inhabilitar-de-cargos-publicos-a-senalados-en-la-lista-engel/>

139 <https://insightcrime.org/news/criteria-undermines-us-corruption-list-central-america/>

140 <https://criterio.hn/cna-exige-al-ministerio-publico-proceder-contra-senalados-en-la-lista-engel/>

141 <https://criterio.hn/coalicion-anticorupcion-pide-al-cne-que-inhabilite-candidatos-a-diputados-de-la-lista-engel/>

142 <https://proceso.hn/senalados-en-lista-engel-han-sido-investigados-por-el-tsc-e-informes-fueron-enviados-al-mp-dice-magistrado-rodriguez/>

fraud and misappropriation of public funds for her personal benefit. While their corrupt acts undermined the stability of Honduras' democratic institutions, former President Lobo has not yet been convicted and Rosa Lobo has been released from prison awaiting a retrial."¹⁴³ But again, no word on JOH. On July 26, Pepe Lobo asked the MP to investigate him regarding the accusations coming from the US.¹⁴⁴

Proceso Digital investigated the link of the publicity of corruption in Honduras, e.g. through the Engel's List, and foreign investment in the country. "Kroll, a well-known digital services firm, pointed out in a document to its clients that, due to the Engel List allegations, they should be careful in their investments in the three countries marked by allegations of corruption. (...) Mauricio Diaz Burdett, coordinator of the Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development of Honduras (FOSDEH), in a conversation with Proceso Digital notes that the list in terms of the economic impact that the country may have, linked to the image abroad, can be long."¹⁴⁵

On July 15, the TSC informed about an important report regarding a \$20 million loan by Taiwán to the JOH regime and administered by the Honduran Coffee Institute (Ihcafé). The report highlighted administrative weaknesses as well as weaknesses in the internal control of the processes and areas involved in the registration and control of the funds¹⁴⁶

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

Congress continues to protect its members. In a corruption case going back to the MACCIH, Congress approved a mechanism to protect members of Congress Sara Medina and Román Villeda.¹⁴⁷ "Analysts consulted by Radio Progreso point out that the Public Prosecutor's Office only prosecutes cases when those implicated in acts of corruption are individuals or officials without power and political backing."¹⁴⁸

Nasry Asfura

Disappointingly, but as expected, the Supreme Court rejected an appeal by the MP to have a pre-trial against the Nationalist presidential candidate and mayor of Tegucigalpa, Nasry Asfura.¹⁴⁹ Journalist Thelma Mejía reacted: "Papi a la orden [Asfura's nickname], saved by the CSJ from a pre-trial and now it will be the TSC that has three years to say if something sticks regarding the diversion of millions of resources for which he is accused by the Uferco. A low blow to the Public Prosecutor who will have to wait three years. Due process, they call it."¹⁵⁰ Asfura also traveled to the US this month trying to convince them that he is the right person to follow JOH.¹⁵¹

¹⁴³ <https://www.state.gov/designations-of-former-honduran-president-porfirio-pepe-lobo-sosa-and-former-first-lady-rosa-elena-bonilla-avila-for-involvement-in-significant-corruption/>

¹⁴⁴ <https://confidencialhn.com/expresidente-porfirio-lobo-llega-al-ministerio-publico-a-pedir-que-lo-investiguen-por-acusaciones-en-su-contr/>

¹⁴⁵ <https://proceso.hn/deterioro-en-prestigio-e-inversion-efectos-de-la-lista-engels-en-ca/>

¹⁴⁶ <https://proceso.hn/prestamo-de-20-millones-de-taiwan-no-cumple-finalidad-de-beneficiar-a-productores-de-cafe-segun-informe-del-tsc/>

¹⁴⁷ <https://confidencialhn.com/legislativo-aprueba-mecanismo-para-exonerar-a-los-diputados-sara-medina-y-roman-villeda/>

¹⁴⁸ <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/critican-al-ministerio-publico-por-sus-acciones-timoratas-contr-actores-intelectuales-de-la-corrupcion/>

¹⁴⁹ <https://criterio.hn/la-corte-suprema-de-justicia-cancela-antejuicio-contr-nasry-asfura/>

¹⁵⁰ https://twitter.com/thelma_mejia/status/1419821161706401793

¹⁵¹ <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/27/nasry-tito-asfura-el-candidato-a-la-presidencia-de-honduras-que-quiere-convencer-a-los-estados-unidos/>

Hermes

CESPAD published a great overview of the Hermes corruption case which saw some interesting developments last month. "Two witnesses, out of five proposed by the Attorney General's Office, put seven of the eleven implicated in the Hermes case in check. Both told in the initial hearing that took place in the Honduran courts, how a front company was used for the looting of more than 122 million lempiras from the Presidential House. In addition, what role the accused played and who made the deposits to personal accounts of the beneficiaries. The Fiscal Unit Against Corruption Networks (UFERCO), identified that the deposits began to be made systematically once President of the Republic, Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, took office in his first term (2014-2018) of government. But Hernández, in his statement, according to the prosecutorial requirement presented to the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), said he was unaware of the entire administrative process that was handled; he only affirmed that everything was delegated to the Minister of Financial Management, Pedro Alexander Pineda Díaz."¹⁵²

Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo

This month, the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo should have returned to court.¹⁵³ She has "to answer for the diversion of more than 12 million lempiras from state coffers. This is the second time that Bonilla de Lobo appears in court for the same case, in which she had been sentenced to 58 years in prison by the Anti-Corruption Court, but was favored by the Criminal Court by ordering the repetition of her trial for detecting formal and substantive abnormalities".¹⁵⁴ But it did not come to this. First, the trial did not start on schedule.¹⁵⁵ Then it was postponed to August 16.¹⁵⁶

Pandora

CESPAD published an article on the Pandora corruption case focusing on the person of Jacobo José Regalado Weizemblut, former Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock.¹⁵⁷ The trial against three of the accused started on July 27.¹⁵⁸ UFERCO's coordinator Luis Santos expresses optimism.¹⁵⁹

Patuca III

CESPAD published an overview of the Patuca III corruption case and its role in the Honduran energy system.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/08/hermes-dos-testigos-revelan-como-se-saquearon-fondos-desde-casa-presidencial-con-los-que-se-beneficio-a-periodistas/>

¹⁵³ <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/21/en-segundo-juicio-tribunal-ratificara-los-cargos-del-primer-juicio-o-absolvera-a-ex-primera-dama-de-honduras/>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1479239-410/hoy-arranca-nuevo-juicio-de-mi-rosa-por-el-desvio-de-12-millones-honduras-juicio-anulado>

¹⁵⁵ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/hoy-inicia-repeticion-del-juicio-contra-ex-primera-dama/>

¹⁵⁶ <https://confidencial.hn.com/reprograman-para-agosto-la-repeticion-del-juicio-oral-y-publico-del-caso-caja-chica-de-la-dama/>

¹⁵⁷ <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/25/las-firmas-que-tienen-en-jaque-a-jacobo-regalado-herandez-en-el-caso-pandora/>

¹⁵⁸ <https://criterio.hn/primer-dia-del-juicio-del-caso-pandora-inicia-con-fernando-suarez-como-testigo/>

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.radioamerica.hn/uferco-medios-de-prueba-sentencia-condenatoria-caso-pandora/>

¹⁶⁰ <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/14/caso-patuca-iii-colusion-y-corrupcion/>

State Security Forces

Assassinations

A former police agent was found guilty of murder.¹⁶¹

Penitentiary System

On July 24, an a prison riot, two inmates and a police agent were hurt.¹⁶² A few days later, two inmates were killed in a riot at the so-called maximum security prison El Pozo.¹⁶³ OACNUDH expressed concerns.¹⁶⁴

Militarization

CESPAD looks at the last 12 years of militarizing public security in Honduras. "With a view to the new 2021 electoral process, the question remains as to whether the opposition political parties will be capable of making counter-proposals to the iron fist and punitive populism or whether they will ignore these issues out of political calculation or whether we will see innovative public policy proposals with a comprehensive approach, framed within the rule of law, human rights and strengthening democratic development."¹⁶⁵

International Community

"The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) will finance with US\$36 million a project that will guarantee drinking water to more than 76,000 people in Honduras, the regional organization announced Thursday in Tegucigalpa. The loan will support the project to expand the drinking water supply system in the city of Gracias, department of Lempira, in the western part of the Central American country, according to a BCIE press release."¹⁶⁶ "The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) financed the purchase of 22 new ambulances to support Honduras in the fight against the covid-19 pandemic, the regional bank informed on Wednesday. The resources for the purchase of the ambulances come from the reorientation of 14.9 million dollars of a credit that BCIE granted to Honduras for the Road Infrastructure Program (PIV) redirected to address the health emergency caused by the coronavirus, the agency said in a statement."¹⁶⁷ "The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) announced Tuesday that it will provide \$600,000 to support the implementation and evaluation of a technological platform in rural areas of Honduras, so that three million young people in vulnerable situations can graduate from high school."¹⁶⁸ The

161 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/178-julio2021/8057-declaran-culpable-a-ex-policia-por-el-homicidio-de-ciudadano-en-intibuca>

162 <https://proceso.hn/tres-heridos-en-nuevo-enfrentamiento-en-carcel-de-el-porvenir/>

163 <https://confidencialhn.com/nueva-reyerta-deja-dos-muertos-en-el-pozo-ilama-santa-barbara/>

164 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1421149923341389826>

165 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/02/analisis-los-12-anos-de-militarizacion-de-la-seguridad-publica-seguiran-marcando-la-agenda-de-las-politicas-publicas/>

166 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1476620-410/-bcie-financiar-proyecto-agua-honduras->

167 <https://www.elpais.hn/2021/07/14/el-bcie-financia-compra-de-22-ambulancias-para-enfrentar-pandemia-en-honduras/>

168 <https://proceso.hn/el-bid-y-japon-impulsan-plataforma-tecnologica-en-zonas-rurales-de-honduras/>

BCIE also approved a 400 million Lempiras loan for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.¹⁶⁹

US

CESPAD takes a close look at US policies towards Central America under the Biden administration. "The United States has proposed a new investment plan amounting to US\$ 4 billion dollars over four years for the nations of the Northern Triangle of Central America, in order to try to improve the living conditions of its citizens and in this way, according to its vision, seek to stop migration to the United States, something that is very unlikely to have positive results in the short term, which is what this Plan is betting on."¹⁷⁰

The US and Honduras signed a cargo security agreement.¹⁷¹

EU

"With resources from Italian cooperation, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) has celebrated the official launch of a financial contribution of 23,950,000 lempiras to support the growth and development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises led by women."¹⁷²

Drug Trafficking

The sentencing of convicted Honduran drug trafficker Fredy Nájera in the US has been postponed to September 3.¹⁷³ The trial in the US for drug trafficking against former Honduran police official and JOH cousin Mauricio Hernández Pineda was rescheduled to September 20.¹⁷⁴

Miguel Carlos Córdón López, requested for extradition by the US, was captured in Honduras mid-July.¹⁷⁵

"Honduras' customs are a haven for organized crime thanks to the weak inspection system that exists at the maritime, air and land levels. Puerto Cortes is the only one of the country's 15 operational customs offices, through which goods are imported and exported, where non-intrusive x-ray inspection is carried out. Experts on the subject informed EL HERALDO that many containers leave Honduras pregnant with drugs or arrive loaded with components to manufacture narcotics, but due to weak customs surveillance, nobody notices or is not informed."¹⁷⁶

169 <https://proceso.hn/bcie-aprueba-mil-400-millones-de-lempiras-para-creditos-a-mipymes/>

170 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/06/analisis-nueva-politica-biden-en-el-triangulo-norte-podra-desafiar-el-poder-de-las-elites-corruptas/>

171 <https://twitter.com/CBPIntlAffairAC/status/1418293490384089098>

172 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3065-honduras-bcie-e-italia-canalizan-24-millones-para-emprendedoras>

173 <https://proceso.hn/ahora-sera-el-3-de-septiembre-la-sentencia-para-diputado-fredy-najera-en-eeuu/>

174 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1479795-466/expolicia-mauricio-herandez-negocia-fiscales-estados-unidos>

175 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1479142-466/capturan-narco-honduras-extradicion-copan-miguel-cordon>

176 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1479225-466/aduanas-honduras-desfasados-controles-seguridad>

Varia

JOH

Javier Suazo analyzes JOH's "hybrid warfare" to destroy Honduras' institutions from the inside. "It is a kind of hybrid war that destroys the institutions from within, for the benefit of the constituted power itself; a group of politicians and businessmen linked to the circle of President Hernandez. It is argued that it is part of the Modernization of the State, since the institutions had been operating - until before the coup d'état- in an inefficient way and lacking in technification and qualified human resources, a discourse sold to the population as a justification for the institutional assault. The hybrid war has been carried out, not to make public institutions more efficient, but to have greater control over decisions and budget resources. The questioning of the government for the poor management of the pandemic, to the extent that the Medical Association and businessmen are asking for the dismissal of the Minister of Health, shows that the argument of inefficiency is not valid, since JOH and his team turned out to be more inefficient in the management of "public affairs" than his predecessors, since he chose his ministers and collaborators."¹⁷⁷

"At least 320 obligated institutions did not comply with their responsibility to provide public information, for which some 400 pecuniary sanctions were established, said Julio Vladimir Mendoza, Commissioner of the Institute of Access to Public Information, IAIP."¹⁷⁸ Criterio later also reported that fiscal transparency in Honduras does not comply with basic IMF standards.¹⁷⁹ Honduras fares badly in a ranking by the World Bank on the independence of auditing bodies.¹⁸⁰

ContraCorriente reported on how the JOH regime only pays attention to the people living in the Chamelecón neighborhood in San Pedro Sula, "one of the hardest hit by violence, poverty and environmental vulnerability", in an electoral year and even then, not everyone benefits.¹⁸¹ No wonder, 80% of Hondurans stated that the country is "heading in the wrong direction" according to a recent poll.¹⁸²

Elections

Last month, Congress approved 600 million Lempiras for the CNE for the general elections. But according to the CNE, the approved budget would not suffice and they asked for another 800 million "to guarantee the transparency of the coming elections". Nationalist vice-president of Congress, Enrique Medina Yllescas, rejected the request.¹⁸³ Even Proceso Digital covered this. "Less than four months remain before the general elections in which Hondurans must elect the country's president, deputies and mayors. Time is running short and the specter of a process without

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/213190>

¹⁷⁸ <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3206-320-instituciones-del-estado-incumplieron-la-ley-de-transparencia-y-acceso-a-la-informacion-publica>

¹⁷⁹ <https://criterio.hn/transparencia-fiscal-de-honduras-no-cumple-con-principios-basicos-del-fmi/>

¹⁸⁰ <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-en-la-cuarta-categoria-del-indice-de-independencia-de-entidades-fiscalizadoras-superiores/>

¹⁸¹ <https://contracorriente.red/2021/07/08/bolsas-solidarias-listados-y-votos-asi-se-mueven-las-estructuras-clientelistas-en-chamelecon/>

¹⁸² <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1412106041442045954>

¹⁸³ <https://proceso.hn/no-hay-condiciones-para-aprobar-presupuesto-solicitado-por-el-cne-segun-diputado-yllescas/>

the required transparency is once again a constant threat to the country's weak democracy. The National Electoral Council (CNE) does not have a system for the Transmission of Preliminary Electoral Results (TREP). The National Congress has not yet approved the budget that would allow the contracting."¹⁸⁴ Over the next day, the CNE urged Congress to approve the additional budget.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁶ UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras Alice H. Shackelford called the approval of the additional budget “fundamental”.¹⁸⁷ Opposition politicians blamed the National Party denouncing that they want to comit another fraud.^{188 189}

By June 13, even two CNE magistrates warned that the elections are in danger due to the unwillingness of the Nationalist-controlled Congress to approve the necessary budget.¹⁹⁰ The next day, CNE magistrate Rixi Moncada reiterated it.^{191 192} "The sociologist and political analyst, Julio Navarro, stated that the National Party is betting on not holding the general elections in November, having lost control of the electoral bodies, as it is afraid of leaving power."¹⁹³ Former president Pepe Lobo even warned: "Juan Orlando is capable of turning the National Congress into a new constituent assembly in order to remain in power, this process is totally illegal, but we already know that everything they do violates the Constitution, so it would not hurt to think about it, any opportunity he has to stay, he will do it".¹⁹⁴ "Sociologist and political analyst Julio Navarro assured that the National Party will plot to stay in power, even predicting that it will use state security forces in case it loses the elections."¹⁹⁵ And if it won't be JOH again, the Nationalist presidential candidate Nasry Asfura was behaving very presidential this month as well. He had a journalist asking critical questions removed during an event in Washington.¹⁹⁶

On July 16, Libre filed a complaint against the 61 Nationalist deputies for opposing the approval of the increase in the budget.¹⁹⁷ The same day, the UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, Alice H. Shackelford, again (see above) called for transparent elections, i.e. that Congress approve the budget.¹⁹⁸ Maybe this did it, but the next day, the Nationalist vice-president of Congress Antonio Rivera Callejas suddenly said that it would be approved the coming week.¹⁹⁹

The saga of the additional budget took a new turn on July 20. The Nationalists in Congress presented an additional budget, but not as much as requested by the CNE and additionally, they

¹⁸⁴ <https://proceso.hn/opacidad-se-acorta-plazo-para-contratar-trep/>

¹⁸⁵ <https://criterio.hn/cne-urge-al-congreso-nacional-la-aprobacion-de-los-fondos-para-las-elecciones/>

¹⁸⁶ <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/oficialismo-se-opone-a-la-transmision-digital-de-resultados-electorales/>

¹⁸⁷ <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1412598356803833857>

¹⁸⁸ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/12/opositores-acusan-al-partido-nacional-de-querer-fragar-un-nuevo-fraude-en-generales/>

¹⁸⁹ <https://criterio.hn/reticencia-a-aprobar-presupuesto-del-cne-solo-manda-un-mensaje-de-fraude-edmundo-orellana/>

¹⁹⁰ <https://proceso.hn/dos-magistradas-dicen-que-elecciones-estan-en-riesgo-su-colega-aguirre-dice-que-no-es-cierto/>

¹⁹¹ <https://confidencial.hn.com/proceso-electoral-se-encuentra-en-riesgo-alerta-concejal-del-cne-rix-moncada/>

¹⁹² <https://criterio.hn/es-muy-preocupante-el-comunicado-del-cne-dice-expresidente-del-tse/>

¹⁹³ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/13/sociologo-asevera-que-oficialismo-no-quiere-elecciones-por-no-controlar-el-cne/>

¹⁹⁴ <https://criterio.hn/juan-orlando-podria-convertir-al-congreso-nacional-en-una-constituyente-para-seguir-en-el-poder-pepe-lobo/>

¹⁹⁵ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/16/auguran-que-oficialismo-utilizara-militares-y-policias-en-caso-de-perder-elecciones/>

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3059-honduras-nacionalistas-en-washington-echan-a-periodista-de-evento-de-asfura>

¹⁹⁷ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/16/partido-libre-presenta-denuncia-penal-contra-congresistas-del-partido-nacional/>

¹⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1416159857019924483>

¹⁹⁹ <https://proceso.hn/cn-aprobara-la-proxima-semana-la-ampliacion-presupuestaria-del-cne-anuncia-tono-rivera/>

reduced the power of the non-Nationalist magistrates.^{200 201} "A group of deputies of the National Congress, all related to the National Party, modified a ruling sent by the CNE and proposed that only their representative in that institution can give results on election day, also threatening with imprisonment the other councilors who dare to give preliminary results. Meanwhile, the budget increase needed for the elections has not been approved."²⁰² "The Honduran opposition has denounced that the ruling National Party's bench, has issued a ruling on the budget of the National Electoral Council (CNE), where it intends to impose that its representative Kelvin Aguirre be the only counselor able to disclose data of the contest. In the 2017 elections, the issuance of data was in charge of the Nationalist David Matamoros Batson, who surprised the world of electoral statistics, affirming that the rural votes gave the triumph to Juan Hernández, who besides being illegally reelected, "came back" from an irreversible tendency."²⁰³

Additionally, they seemed to want to undermine the Identify Yourself project responsible for rolling out the new identity card.^{204 205} On July 23, the Liberal and Libre magistrates at the CNE spoke out against the attempt by the National Party to silence them.²⁰⁶ CNE magistrate Rixi Moncada also warned that the electoral time schedule is in red due to the lack of the necessary budget.²⁰⁷ "They don't want to say it, the transmission of results from each Voting Reception Board is dead", said lawyer Moncada, in her Twitter account. The representative of the Libre Party in the CNE asserted that the political parties that discuss the allocation of the budget, never approved it and the term granted by law expired."²⁰⁸ The CNE also warned that some 400'000 Hondurans could be left without the right to vote due to inconsistencies in the census data.^{209 210}

On July 24, lawyer, former Liberal congresswoman and congressional candidate Carolina Echeverría Haylock was shot dead in Tegucigalpa. Her husband, former army coronel and lawyer Andrés Urtecho, was gravely hurt. He was the legal representative of the former head of police, Jorge Barralaga, who was found guilty for money laundering.²¹¹ According to the vice-president of the Honduran Bar Association, Tony García, at least 165 lawyers have been murdered in Honduras during the last ten years.²¹²

200 <https://proceso.hn/nueva-disputa-entre-libre-y-partido-nacional-impide-aprobacion-de-decretos-a-favor-del-cne-y-mp/>

201 <https://criterio.hn/nacionalistas-en-el-congreso-pretenden-aprobar-reformas-en-el-cne-que-son-inconstitucionales/>

202 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/07/24/congreso-nacional-pone-en-peligro-desarrollo-de-elecciones-en-honduras/>

203 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3066-honduras-partido-nacional-conspira-con-voto-rural-2-0-y-bozal-en-el-cne>

204 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-discute-en-primer-debate-contrato-de-prestamo-para-continuar-la-ejecucion-del-proyecto-identificate/>

205 <https://criterio.hn/entrega-de-identidades-otro-entuerto-de-cara-a-las-elecciones-generales-en-honduras/>

206 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/07/23/hall-y-moncada-advierten-que-no-guardaran-silencio-y-no-permitiran-ley-bozal/>

207 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1481149-508/cronograma-electoral-sin-presupuesto-rixi-moncada>

208 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1482038-410/rixi-moncada-sobre-presupuesto-cne-nunca-lo-aprobaron-se-vencio-plazo>

209 <https://proceso.hn/unas-400-mil-personas-podrian-quedarse-sin-votar-en-las-elecciones-segun-cne/>

210 <https://criterio.hn/400-mil-inconsistencias-domiciliarias-registra-el-censo-electoral/>

211 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1480681-466/matan-exdiputada-carolina-echeverria-haylock-honduras>

212 <https://confidencialhn.com/un-total-de-165-abogados-han-sido-asesinados-en-honduras/>

Criterio spoke with several political analysts on possible electoral fraud this year.²¹³ CESPAD started its -pre-electoral monitoring publishing the first issue covering July.^{214 215}

Migration

CESPAD published a two-part series on the role of the US in pushing Hondurans to flee their country.^{216 217} At the end of the month, the Biden administration an outline of its full strategy on immigration.²¹⁸ "Today, the United States is launching a plan to address the root causes of irregular migration from Central America and to manage migration humanely throughout North and Central America. As President Biden announced shortly after taking office, the United States is committed to a multi-year, \$4 billion, comprehensive, regional strategy to improve people's lives throughout the region. We are partnering with civil society, the private sector, labor unions, governments in the region, and international partners to carry out an effective strategy that achieves results. To address the root causes of irregular migration we are focusing our efforts on five areas: (1) Address economic insecurity and inequality, (2) Combat corruption, strengthen democratic governance, and advance the rule of law, (3) Promote respect for human rights, labor rights, and a free press, (4) Counter and prevent violence, extortion, and other crimes perpetrated by criminal gangs, trafficking networks, and other organized criminal organizations, (5) Combat sexual, gender-based, and domestic violence."²¹⁹

"The number of undocumented Honduran migrants deported in the first half of 2021 increased by 18.7% compared to the same period in 2020, according to a report released Saturday by the Honduran Consular and Migration Observatory."²²⁰

Insecurity

Proceso Digital reports on a recent report by the business lobby COHEP on insecurity in Honduras and its effects on inequality. Crime and violence cost Honduras 13% of its GDP and there are seven times more private security guards than police agents.²²¹ The homicide rate has increased by 16.2% in the first semester of 2021 compared to last year.²²² 44 members of the transport sector have so far been murdered this year.²²³

213 <https://criterio.hn/un-fraude-en-las-elecciones-generales-puede-traer-graves-consecuencias-para-el-pais-edmundo-orellana/>

214 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/29/institucionalidad-electoral-elecciones-hondurenas-en-riesgo/>

215 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/29/contexto-electoral-violencia-politica-y-protestas-sociales/>

216 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/13/analisis-la-responsabilidad-de-estados-unidos-en-la-creacion-de-un-fenomeno-migratorio-que-hoy-no-puede-contener/>

217 <http://cespad.org.hn/2021/07/22/analisis-asi-contribuyo-estados-unidos-a-la-creacion-de-las-caravanas-de-migrantes/>

218 <https://thehill.com/latino/565005-biden-releases-21-point-immigration-plan-amid-bipartisan-criticism>

219 <https://www.state.gov/contributing-to-the-united-states-comprehensive-approach-to-migration/>

220 <https://proceso.hn/aumentan-un-187-los-hondurenos-deportados-en-el-primer-semester-de-2021/>

221 <https://proceso.hn/crimen-e-inseguridad-impulsan-una-honduras-desigual-destaca-informe-del-cohep/>

222 <https://proceso.hn/los-homicidios-subieron-un-16-2-en-primer-semester-de-2021-en-honduras/>

223 <https://confidencialhn.com/al-menos-44-transportistas-han-sido-asesinados-en-honduras-durante-el-2021-segun-el-observatorio-de-la-violencia/>

And Light at the End of a Month

OFRANEH will be awarded the Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award. “We are honored and pleased to accept this prestigious award and thereby honor the memory and outstanding work of human rights defenders Orlando Letelier and Ronni Karpen Moffitt,” said Miriam Miranda, General Coordinator of OFRANEH. “OFRANEH and the Garífuna people are facing systematic persecution, criminalization, judicialization and extermination. In the last two years alone, more than forty Garífuna have been murdered and a large number of others have fled their communities due to threats, criminalization and persecution. Among the recent blows to our organization is the forced disappearance of the president of the Triunfo de la Cruz community board, an active member of OFRANEH, along with three other young people from the same community on July 18, 2020. This recognition of our work by IPS will help advance our cause in defense of the collective and human rights of our people, as well as to contribute to the work of the Garífuna Research and Search Committee for the Disappeared of Triunfo de la Cruz (SUNLA), which will carry out investigations and serve as a mechanism of truth and justice for their families. We applaud IPS’s long legacy of awarding courageous defenders of life in the United States and throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and we are proud to stand in the company of our fellow honorees.”²²⁴

224 <https://ips-dc.org/ips-announces-45th-annual-letelier-moffitt-human-rights-awards/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

Past Activities:

-

Upcoming Activities:

-

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