

# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – September 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic still claims a lot of lives in Honduras, but at least the vaccination campaign has taken off a bit with some 2 million adults vaccinated. But as the JOH regime received most vaccine doses, two thirds of those used in the country, as donations, Hondurans wonder what they did with the money they allegedly spent on vaccine purchases. Honduras once again ranked among the most deadliest countries for environmental defenders in the world in the newest ranking by Global Witness. But the situation is very grim for all defenders as the murder of trans activist Tatiana García at the end of the month made once again very clear. The elections are only two months out and there are still various unresolved problems and the Nationalist Party continues to make the situation worse. The opposition magistrate at the CNE denounced “enormous interference” by the JOH regime in the work of the electoral bodies. But there was also some good news as the political prisoners Edwin Espinal and Raúl Álvarez were found not guilty. 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

More than 7000 dengue cases have been documented so far this year in Honduras.<sup>1</sup> Medical experts warn not to forget about dengue. "Through his twitter account, Dr. Carlos Umaña, President of the doctors of the Social Security in San Pedro Sula reminded the health authorities that there have been three weeks of sustained increase in cases of severe dengue fever and no definite prevention actions have been taken."<sup>2</sup>

September began with 341'518 detected COVID-19 cases in Honduras and 8974 confirmed deaths.<sup>3</sup> The Funeral Association of Honduras documented more than 18'500 deaths.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the month, there were officially 365'259 COVID-19 cases detected in Honduras and there were 9755 confirmed deaths.<sup>5</sup> The Funeral Home Association documented 22'663 deaths to COVID-19.<sup>6</sup>

## Health Sector

At the beginning of the month, the deputy health minister said that 98% of hospitalized corona patients in Honduras had not been vaccinated.<sup>7</sup> There is some hope that the situation would improve as Honduras continued to receive vaccine doses throughout the month<sup>8 9 10 11 12</sup>, a lot of them donated<sup>13 14 15 16</sup> - two thirds according to El Pulso.<sup>17</sup> According to the health authorities, more than 30% of Hondurans don't intend to get vaccinated.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, they started to vaccinated 15-17 year-old this month.<sup>19</sup> On September 22, the Secretery of Health informed that they had applied 5 million vaccine doses and that almost 2 million Hondurans had been fully vaccinated.<sup>20</sup>

On September 1, contract doctors from the Leonardo Martínez hospital, who work in COVID wards, staged a sit-in to demand payment of two months' salary and other labor rights.<sup>21</sup> The next day, a triage center in Tegucigalpa run out of oxygen.<sup>22</sup> On September 3, another doctor died to

- 1 <https://confidencialhn.com/mas-de-7-mil-casos-de-dengue-se-reportan-hasta-semana-epidemiologica-34/>
- 2 <https://radioprogreso.net/aplicacion-movil/dengue-tambien-enciende-las-alarmas/>
- 3 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-roza-las-9-mil-muertes-por-covid-19/>
- 4 <https://radioprogreso.net/aplicacion-movil/pandemia-ha-cobrado-la-vida-a-mas-de-18-mil-personas-segun-funerarios/>
- 5 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-reporta-842-hospitalizados-por-covid-19-y-otros-50-decesos/>
- 6 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/28/funerarias-reportan-mas-de-22-mil-muertes-por-coronavirus-y-sinager-nueve-mil-700/>
- 7 <https://proceso.hn/el-98-de-las-personas-hospitalizadas-por-covid-no-se-han-vacunado-senala-vice-ministro-guillen/>
- 8 <https://proceso.hn/llegan-81-mil-600-dosis-de-vacuna-astrazeneca-compradas-por-el-ihss/>
- 9 <https://confidencialhn.com/234-mil-dosis-de-vacunas-contrala-covid-19-de-la-casa-farmaceutica-pfizer-llegan-a-honduras-esta-semana/>
- 10 <https://confidencialhn.com/llega-lote-de-105-mil-vacunas-pfizer-de-210-mil-que-se-recibiran-esta-semana/>
- 11 <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-recibe-nuevo-lote-de-210-mil-600-dosis-de-pfizer-contrala-covid-19/>
- 12 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-recibe-mas-de-52-mil-dosis-de-la-vacuna-de-pfizer/>
- 13 <https://hn.usembassy.gov/es/gobierno-de-los-estados-unidos-de-america-realiza-nueva-donacion-de-vacunas-contracovid-19-a-honduras-2/>
- 14 <https://proceso.hn/republica-dominicana-donara-101-mil-vacunas-a-honduras/>
- 15 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-recibe-una-segunda-donacion-de-150000-dosis-de-vacunas-de-mexico/>
- 16 <https://twitter.com/EmbEspHonduras/status/1439354834013069313>
- 17 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/24/un-66-por-ciento-de-vacunas-adquiridas-por-honduras-fueron-regaladas-por-paises-amigos/>
- 18 <https://confidencialhn.com/sesal-lamenta-que-mas-del-30-de-la-poblacion-no-quiera-vacunarse/>
- 19 <https://confidencialhn.com/sesal-inicia-vacunacion-de-adolescentes-entre-15-a-17-anos/>
- 20 <https://confidencialhn.com/datos-de-la-sesal-arrojan-que-mas-de-5-millones-de-dosis-contrala-covid-19-se-han-aplicado-en-honduras/>
- 21 <https://proceso.hn/medicos-por-contrato-del-hospital-leonardo-martinez-amenazan-con-paro-indefinido-ante-falta-de-pago/>
- 22 <https://confidencialhn.com/evidencian-que-triaje-de-infop-de-la-region-norte-se-quedo-sin-oxigeno-para-pacientes-covid/>

COVID-19. He had received two AstraZeneca doses.<sup>23</sup> A second one, Carlos Alberto Lanza Zapata, died on September 10.<sup>24</sup> On September 13, another protest by medical staff took place at the University Hospital.<sup>25</sup> By the end of the month, a third doctor, Carlos Roberto Matute, died to COVID-19.<sup>26</sup>

## Corruption

The Nationalist-controlled Congress, still holding virtual sessions denounced by the opposition, approved a bill by the JOH regime which made the vaccine purchase a state secret for 10 years. They claimed that Pfizer wanted that.<sup>27 28</sup> Pfizer denied this.<sup>29</sup> The decision was widely rejected.<sup>30 31</sup> And even worse, the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) warned that the approved decree would allow the Ministry of Health to declare all its purchases a secret.<sup>32</sup> Thelma Mejía published an important analysis on the weakening by the JOH regime of the IAIP using the vaccine purchase case as an example.<sup>33</sup>

CESPAD later published an article on how the virtual sessions at Congress are used for acts of corruption.<sup>34</sup>

In the evidentiary hearing of the mobile hospital corruption case, the MP presented 71 pieces of evidence.<sup>35</sup> Most of them were accepted and the trial was scheduled for November 30.<sup>36</sup>

The CNA published a new report highlighting abuse of authority by the Minister of Health. They also filed a complaint at the MP.<sup>37</sup> "[T]he document presents corruption networks in the health agency, in the form of appointments and contracts to Flores' sons, daughter-in-law and other close circles."<sup>38</sup>

## Economy

Honduras received \$477.9 million in foreign direct investment in the first semester of 2021.<sup>39</sup>

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23 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1490412-466/muere-doctor-honduras-dos-dosis-vacuna-covid-19>

24 <https://proceso.hn/muere-por-covid-19-medico-en-centro-asistencial-en-la-lima/>

25 <https://confidencialhn.com/empleados-del-hospital-escuela-realizan-protesta-en-exigencia-de-distintas-demandas/>

26 <https://proceso.hn/muere-por-covid-19-reconocido-medico-cholomeno-carlos-matute/>

27 <https://criterio.hn/quienes-quieren-reservar-informacion-sobre-vacunas-y-farmaceuticas-buscan-impunidad/>

28 <https://confidencialhn.com/sesal-muestra-solicitud-de-pfizer-para-mantener-en-reserva-contrato-de-compra-de-vacunas-contrala-covid-19/>

29 <https://criterio.hn/pfizer-aclara-que-no-pidio-la-reserva-total-sobre-vacunas-a-gobierno-de-honduras/>

30 <https://confidencialhn.com/contratos-con-farmaceuticas-protecten-patentes-de-vacunas-no-costos-de-compra-asegura-suyapa-figueroa/>

31 <https://criterio.hn/reserva-de-informacion-en-vacunas-ata-cabos-de-la-impunidad-en-honduras/>

32 <https://proceso.hn/decreto-del-cn-ha-dado-la-llave-a-salud-para-que-todo-lo-que-comprenda-vaya-a-reserva-iaip/>

33 <https://criterio.hn/el-iaip-cada-vez-mas-debilitado/>

34 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/16/analisis-las-sesiones-virtuales-una-nueva-forma-para-continuar-con-la-corupcion-y-la-impunidad-desde-el-congreso-nacional-de-honduras/>

35 <https://proceso.hn/por-caso-de-hospitales-moviles-el-mp-presentara-71-medios-de-prueba-en-juicio/>

36 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/admiten-mayoria-de-prueba-del-mp-y-senalan-para-el-30-de-noviembre-el-juicio-por-el-mega fraude-de-los-hospitales-moviles/>

37 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1437450676599197706>

38 <https://confidencialhn.com/cna-interpondra-denuncia-contrala-titular-de-salud-por-abuso-de-autoridad/>

39 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-atrae-4779-millones-de-inversion-extranjera-en-el-primer-semester/>

"The Honduran Women's Collective (CODEMUH) denounced the violation of the human rights of women workers who work at the maquila Pride Manufacturing S. De R. L., which refuses to reinstate Olivia Aurora Reyes Castillo, even though it has already received two convictions in favor of her reinstatement."<sup>40</sup>

## Poverty

The deputy director of the World Food Program in Honduras, Etienne Labande, expressed concern about the rising poverty levels in Honduras. The number of people living in poverty is estimated to rise to 4.4 million by the end of the year.<sup>41</sup> According to the FAO, all departments of Honduras are to be considered in "food crisis" mode.<sup>42</sup>

CESPAD juxtaposes the rise in poverty in Honduras with the spending on anti-poverty measures. "With a financing system based on the deepening of the foreign debt, social assistance projects have marked certain tendencies such as the decrease in salaries, the concentration of profits and the instrumentalization of these for electoral political purposes. Many of these programs, according to Pino, "are being managed through trusts, with a very non-transparent use of expenditure control and, therefore, it is partly an indirect mechanism for buying votes and partly a source of corruption because a good percentage of these resources have to go to private hands".<sup>43</sup>

Remittances sent to Honduras have increased by 34.4% in the first 8 months of this year compared to the previous year.<sup>44</sup>

## Human Rights and Their Defenders

### Assassinations

Global Witness published its newest yearly report on the assassination of human rights defenders. They documented 17 murdered HRDs in Honduras in 2020, Honduras still belong to the deadliest countries for HRDs.<sup>45</sup>

### Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

September started with a sit-in in front of the Supreme Court of Justice in Tegucigalpa demanding the release of the Guapinol defenders who have been unjustly deprived of their freedom for more than two years.<sup>46</sup> On September 6, "relatives of the water and life defender of the Guapinol and San Pedro sector, Jeremías Martínez, informed the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and

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40 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-maquiladora-por-violentar-ddhh-de-mujeres-en-honduras/>

41 <https://confidencialhn.com/la-inseguridad-alimentaria-casi-se-ha-duplicado-en-honduras-por-pandemia-pma/>

42 <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-humanitarian-response-plan-2021-2022>

43 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/17/asi-ha-evolucionado-la-pobreza-en-honduras-y-el-dinero-para-erradicarla/>

44 <https://proceso.hn/las-remesas-enviadas-a-honduras-crecieron-34-4-en-los-primeros-ocho-meses/>

45 <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/last-line-defence/>

46 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/frente-a-la-csj-familiares-de-defensores-de-guapinol-exigen-libertad-inmediata/>

Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) that the defender's health condition was delicate and that he urgently needed to be transferred to a medical center to receive adequate medical assistance."<sup>47</sup> A week later, the National Women Human Rights Defenders Network sent out an urgent alert denouncing acts of intimidation against Guapinol defender Juana Ramona Zúñiga.<sup>48</sup> The UN Human Rights Council discussed a report on arbitrary detention on September 20.<sup>49</sup> On this occasion, OACNUDH wrote: "One of the central themes of this report is the deprivation of liberty of human rights defenders, indicating that arbitrary detention of defenders is a serious #HR violation that occurs globally and that States must urgently address. OACNUDH reiterates its call to the State of Honduras to implement the Opinion of the Working Group and immediately release the defenders of the #GuapinolCase."<sup>50</sup> The Municipal Committee for the Defense of the Common and Public Goods of Tocoa denounces the lack of investigation of the judge Carlos Irías de León accused of abuse of authority and the violation of the duties of officials. He is responsible for the arbitrary detention of defender Jeremías Martínez Díaz.<sup>51</sup>

On September 10, 9 indigenous Tolupán were be in court criminalized by the company INMARE and the JOH regime.<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> OACNUDH observed the hearing.<sup>54</sup> And they had something to celebrate, the charges were dropped against the Tolupán defenders.<sup>55</sup> <sup>56</sup>

ConexiHon denounced that armed men carried out a violent eviction against the peasant groups "Hombres y Mujeres de Fe" and "Unidos al campo" for the third time in the sector of Cañada de Flores, municipality of Guaimaca, Francisco Morazán.<sup>57</sup> OACNUDH voiced concerns.<sup>58</sup>

"Some eight security guards of the National Autonomous University of Honduras, UNAH, beat the psychology student Kevin Cubas, when he was observing the drawing of lots for the local electoral boards and the technical commission, in the framework of the student elections to be held next October. While assaulting him, helped by seven other guards, one guard said "we must educate these MEU [student organization]".<sup>59</sup>

"Hermin López Martínez, a renowned human rights defender from the department of La Paz, denounced that he is a victim of persecution, surveillance and threats, for which his life is in danger. Hermin, who is a member of the network of Lenca Indigenous Human Rights Defenders of La Paz (Redil-paz) and is currently coordinator of the Independent Lenca Indigenous Movement of La Paz,

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47 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/el-cofadeh-solicita-en-habeas-corpus-verificar-el-estado-de-salud-del-defensor-de-guapinol-jeremias-martinez/>

48 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/09/alerta-defensoras-patruillas-de-la-policia-nacional-hostigan-y-vigilan-a-defensora-en-su-casa-de-habitacion-en-la-comunidad-de-guapinol/>

49 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3259-consejo-de-derechos-humanos-no-ha-recibido-informe-de-honduras-sobre-recomendaciones-en-la-detencion-arbitraria-de-defensores-de-guapinol>

50 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1440159701421887488>

51 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/guapinol-denuncia-por-falta-de-investigaci%C3%B3n-del-juez-tras-orden-a-privaci%C3%B3n-arbitraria>

52 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1434877370054361091>

53 <https://criterio.hn/continua-criminalizacion-contratolupanes-en-honduras/>

54 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1436158340397244427>

55 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3256-despues-de-3-anos-libertad-definitiva-para-nueve-indigenas-tolupanes>

56 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1436455926739898370>

57 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/39-conflictos/1898-hombres-armados-desalojan-violentamente-a-campesinos-en-guaimaca>

58 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1435949113665859584>

59 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3254-vuelven-a-las-andadas-hay-que-educar-a-estos-del-meu-dice-guardia-de-seguridad-mientras-golpeaba-a-estudiante>

Honduras (MILPAH), went to the Committee for the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) to denounce the facts."<sup>60</sup>

OACNUDH lamented a recent judicial decision to not allow the defenders Santos Vijil and Víctor Vásquez to await their trial outside prison (see last month). "OACNUDH has accompanied the process and recalls that 4 UN Special Rapporteurs mentioned that the accusations do not seem to be supported by objective evidence and would represent a criminalization of the right to freedom of association and expression."<sup>61</sup>

On September 16, IM-Defensoras sent out an alert. "Mayan Chortí defender María Santos González was arrested at 7:00 a.m. this morning and taken to the Police Directorate of Investigations (DPI) in Copán Ruinas, along with her son."<sup>62</sup> A few days later, a court in Santa Rosa de Copán dictated alternative measures to prison to 16 human rights defenders from Azacualpa, La Unión, Copán. They have to sign in monthly now at the court as a sign of being subjected to a legal process. "The criminalization process is promoted by the company Minerales de Occidente S.A., MINOSA of Canadian capital, which has harmed the rights of the inhabitants of La Unión, Azacualpa, Copán during the last few years, due to the mining activity it carries out in the vicinity of the communities."<sup>63</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

"Garífuna community leaders of Nueva Armenia in Jutiapa, Atlántida, denounce the deforestation of at least two manzanas of land on the island known as Cayo Menor, and hold the Cayos Cochinos Foundation responsible for this action."<sup>64</sup> Criterio warned that "[s]ome 120 [indigenous Lenca] families who have lived since 1739 in the community of Tierras del Padre, 13 kilometers from the capital of Honduras, are under threat of being dispossessed of their land after Judge 9 of the Criminal Court of Tegucigalpa ordered the eviction of 322 manzanas of land on October 14".<sup>65</sup>

"On Thursday, September 16, 2021, members of the National Police and the Police Investigation Directorate (DPI) arrived at the Garífuna community of Waba To and Barauda in the Garífuna colony Julio Lino de Trujillo, Colón, with the order to evict the young Antonia Portillo, according to a complaint made by OFRANEH through the Garífuna Comunicador."<sup>66</sup>

On September 23, OFRANEH mourned the death of Aurelia Martina Arzú, "[c]ompañera who was at the forefront of the struggles of the Garífuna people and in defense of ancestral territories and life."<sup>67</sup> UN Resident Coordinator Alice H. Shackelford met with representatives of OFRANEH to discuss both the implementation of a IACtHR resolution and the forced disappearance of young

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60 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/defensor-de-derechos-humanos-de-la-paz-denuncia-persecucion-y-amenazas-por-su-labor/>

61 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1437584466814377986>

62 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/09/alerta-defensoras-honduras-detienen-arbitrariamente-por-delito-sobreseido-a-maria-santos-gonzalez-miembra-de-la-coordinacion-de-la-conaminh/>

63 <https://madj.org/2021/09/20/medidas-distintas-a-la-prision-impone-juzgado-a-luchadores-sociales-de-azacualpa-copan-en-honduras/>

64 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-denuncian-deforestacion-de-cayos-cochinos/>

65 <https://criterio.hn/habitantes-de-tierras-del-padre-a-punto-de-ser-desalojados-de-sus-tierras-ancestrales/>

66 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/09/alerta-urgente-honduras-policia-nacional-intenta-desalojar-comunidad-garifuna-de-waba-to/>

67 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1441187684018384896>



Garífuna men last year. She also expressed her condolences about the death of Aurelia Martina Arzú

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## FPIC

OACNUDH together with ERIC and the Platform against Impunity met with indigenous Tolupán to discuss free, prior and informed consent and extractive projects.<sup>69</sup>

## The Case of Berta Cáceres

Almost two and a half months have passed since the guilty verdict for David Castillo in the Berta Cáceres case, but no sentence has been emitted.<sup>70</sup> "The international organization for the protection of human rights "Peace Brigades International" (PBI) requests the UN Human Rights Council to immediately issue the sentence against David Castillo."<sup>71</sup> COPINH met with the Spanish Secretary of State for International Cooperation Pilar Cancela. COPINH denounced that there is still no sentence for David Castillo two months after his conviction in the Berta Cáceres case. Additionally, COPINH emphasized the need to respect the right to prior consultation.<sup>72</sup>

## LGBTQ

The Times chose Honduran LGBTQ+ activist Indyra Mendoza and Claudia Spellmant among the 100 most influential people of 2021. "In countries throughout Latin America, transgender people are left with an impossible choice: stay and risk being killed, or leave everything behind. Vicky Hernández chose to stay, and paid for that decision with her life. Her murder during the 2009 Honduran coup d'état came to symbolize the pervasive structural violence that trans women continue to face to this day. Indyra Mendoza and Claudia Spellmant, as activists and LGBTQ+ women themselves, spent years working to demand justice for Vicky, bravely pushing back against a discriminatory society that has repeatedly put their lives at risk. Our legal team at Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights joined them in this pursuit of justice."<sup>73</sup>

## Assassinations

Trans woman and human rights defender Tatiana García was found murdered in her house in Santa Rosa de Copán on September 26.<sup>74</sup> OACNUDH condemned the murder<sup>75</sup> as did the Spanish embassy together with the EU, Germany and France.<sup>76</sup>

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68 <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1441418199073845253>

69 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1434871508606795778>

70 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1438907616932028422>

71 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/143928922095348993>

72 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1440451410403872773>

73 <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2021/6095955/indyra-mendoza-claudia-spellmant/>

74 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3262-honduras-preocupacion-por-la-falta-de-proteccion-ante-el-aumento-de-violencia-en-contra-de-personas-defensoras-de-los-derechos-lgbt>

75 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-de-la-mujer-trans-y-defensora-de-derechos-humanos-tatiana-garcia/>

76 <https://twitter.com/EmbEspHonduras/status/1443243357350899722>

## Freedom of Expression and Journalists

The Association of Community Media of Honduras (AMCH) denounced surveillance and monitoring by CONATEL.<sup>77</sup> "Journalist Deyni Menjivar denounced threats by a member of private security, while covering a citizens' protest in San Pedro Sula."<sup>78</sup> Journalist Héctor Madrid received threats after reporting on the problems with the ZEDEs.<sup>79</sup> "Journalist Kevin Villatoro, reported to C-Libre that he was the victim of threats by a member of the private security of a housing project in San Pedro Sula, department of Cortés."<sup>80</sup>

Journalist Bryan Hernández was violently arrested by the police when he was reporting on an act of police abuse.<sup>81</sup> The police agents pretended arresting him for wrong parking.<sup>82</sup> Hernández was held for almost 9 hours before being released again.<sup>83</sup> "OACNUDH calls on police authorities to review their protocols for administrative detentions for misdemeanors, which, in the case of communicators, would also violate the exercise of freedom of expression."<sup>84</sup>

## Violence against Women

"The rates of violence against women and girls in Honduras continue to rise, according to the Center for Women's Rights in Honduras (CDM) so far in 2021 there are already 45,969 reports of violence and at least 174 femicides."<sup>85</sup> According to CONADEH, more than 200 women have suffered a violent death until September this year.<sup>86</sup> Given this situation, Radio Progreso called for the declaration of a national emergency.<sup>87</sup> UN Women Coordinator Margarita Bueso said that the Honduran society cannot tolerate any more femicide.<sup>88</sup>

"The University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security (Iudpas), together with the United Nations, presented its latest academic effort related to the media's view of violence against women and girls, and it reflects that although the issue has become part of the media, among its challenges is to advance in the informative recording of the facts to move on to deeper stories, where the cases are not just data, because behind each event, there are human stories to be explored."<sup>89</sup>

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77 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/amenazas/item/3252-amch-denuncia-que-conatel-persigue-vigila-y-hostiga-a-radios-comunitarias-en-honduras>

78 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1388-periodista-amenazada-por-cubrir-protesta-que-denuncia-danos-ambientales-en-proyecto-habitacional>

79 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1386-periodista-recibe-amenazas-por-informar-sobre-zedes-en-zona-norte-hondurena>

80 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1389-segundo-periodista-denuncia-amenazas-por-seguridad-privada-de-proyecto-habitacional>

81 <https://tiempo.hn/periodista-brayan-herandez-detenido-video/>

82 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/por-denunciar-abuso-policia-capturan-a-periodista-en-tegucigalpa/>

83 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3202-honduras-bestial-policas-de-transito-agreden-y-exhiben-periodista-por-estacionar-mal>

84 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1438691462292688897>

85 <https://criterio.hn/violencia-contr-la-mujer-se-ha-agudizado-en-el-2021/>

86 <https://proceso.hn/denuncian-muerte-de-mas-de-200-mujeres-en-honduras-y-piden-frenar-violencia/>

87 <https://radioprogreso.hn/net/nq/que-mas-hace-falta-para-que-se-declare-emergencia-nacional%E2%82%AC%80%A2%E2%82%AC/>

88 <https://tiempo.hn/honduras-no-puede-tolerar-mas-femicidios-onu-mujeres/>

89 <https://proceso.hn/la-violencia-de-genero-desde-la-mirada-de-los-medios/>

## Political Prisoners

On September 13, the trial against political prisoners Edwin Espinal and Raúl Álvarez started. Aquí Abajo published a summary of the first day. "For observers, including myself, the main prosecutor, Juan Carlos Elvir stumbled through the technical arguments as to why the prosecution was charging Edwin and Raul with the above listed crimes. It was also obvious that the prosecution had not reviewed the entire legal file, did not prepare the first two witnesses, and struggled to make basic legal arguments specific to the case."<sup>90</sup> Day 2 took place the next day<sup>91</sup> and was accompanied by a protest rally outside the court room.<sup>92</sup> Then, the trial went on a break for to days before concluding on Friday, September 17. And the conclusion was a great victory, both men were found not guilty.<sup>93</sup> OACNUDH welcomed the decision.<sup>94</sup>

## Extractive Industries

CESPAD reported on the ongoing support of the JOH regime of extractive projects well aware of their numerous human rights violations.<sup>95</sup>

## ZEDEs

CIPRODEH published a report on the ZEDEs.<sup>96</sup>

Last month, the ZEDEs made not just headlines because of the ongoing rejection of them, but also because of some of its promoters. Very prominently, the mayor of Roatán was arrested accused of drug trafficking. This month, the charges were provisionally dropped.<sup>97</sup> To be continued. Apart from the Próspera ZEDE in Roatán, other ZEDEs are planed throughout Honduras. La Prensa reported on the planed in Francisco Morazán, the ZEDE Ciudad Morazán.<sup>98</sup>

Hondurans continued to organize their communities in town hall meetings to reject the ZEDEs. One took place in San Francisco de Opalaca<sup>99</sup>, another one in Tocoa, Colón<sup>100</sup> and later in La Ceiba.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, there were protest marches against the ZEDEs on September 15.<sup>102 103</sup>

ContraCorriente looked at the promise of employment by the ZEDEs. "According to a report by Forbes Central America, the authorities of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security had proposed

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90 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/9/13/day-one-edwin-and-rauls-trial>

91 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/9/15/day-two-edwin-and-rauls-trial>

92 <https://twitter.com/EdwinL.libertad/status/1437801000291684358>

93 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1439005714651942914>

94 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1439315685692293127>

95 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/13/analisis-pese-a-la-infraccion-de-los-derechos-humanos-gobierno-de-honduras-sigue-apoyando-los-proyectos-hidroelectricos-y-mineros-en-el-pais/>

96 <https://ciprodeh.org.hn/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Investigacion-ZEDEs.pdf>

97 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1490263-466/dejan-libre-alcalde-roatan-jerry-hynds-sobreseimiento-provisional-narcotrafico>

98 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/1492388-410/ciudad-moraz%C3%A1n-adquiere-m%C3%A1s-hect%C3%A1reas-y-ampliar%C3%A1-capital-de-inversi%C3%B3n>

99 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1441453265762258944>

100 <https://proceso.hn/municipio-de-tocoa-colon-dice-no-a-la-instalacion-de-zedes/>

101 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/ratifican-a-la-ceiba-atlantida-territorio-libre-de-zede/>

102 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/poblacion-hondurena-se-moviliza-en-defensa-de-la-soberania-en-el-dia-del-bicentenario/>

103 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1493011-466/libre-marcha-oposicion-bulevar-morazan-parque-central-bicentenario-no-zede-independencia>

to create 150,000 jobs annually, in order to achieve 600,000 jobs by the end of Hernandez's second presidential term. However, only 16,900 jobs were generated. Since 2013, when the ZEDE organic law was approved, the population was promised that these zones would bring development and employment for the population, but so far that has not been seen to be the case. (...) Zepeda refers to the ZEDE and assures that the ZEDE issue is "very rough, it is not going to work very well. It is creating islands of prosperity for individual agents, for oligarchs, for economic and political elites". To conclude, Ismael Zepeda explained that "the ZEDE -like most of the things this government has been doing in the last 11 years- are not to reduce unemployment or to reduce poverty and inequality, but quite the opposite, to favor the small group".<sup>104</sup>

Journalist Héctor Madrid received threats after reporting on the problems with the ZEDEs.<sup>105</sup> Former COHEP president Adolfo Facussé criticizes the JOH regime and its promotion of the ZEDEs. ""The Government publishes a minimum of 20 pages of propaganda daily in the written media of the country in favor of the Zedes. At 20 thousand lempiras and in full color, that is 400 thousand per day", he said. He also indicated that this expenditure does not include the investment in television, radio and social media advertisements."<sup>106</sup> The deputy president of the Municipal Association of Honduras (Amhon) called on all mayors to unite against the ZEDEs. According to him, 126 mayors have already joined the struggle.<sup>107</sup> At the end of September, another constitutional challenge was presented against the ZEDEs, this time by the National Coalition of Environmental Networks and Organizations (CONROA).<sup>108</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

CESPAD investigated the role of the US in fighting corruption in Honduras. "The new US administration, led by Democrat Joe Biden, established as a priority in its foreign policy towards the countries of the Northern Triangle, the halting of irregular migration. To achieve this, one of the main components was the fight against corruption and impunity (which generate insecurity and poverty) and the lack of governments committed to attacking these problems at their roots. But how far has progress been made?"<sup>109</sup>

"The Public Prosecutor's Office, through the Specialized Prosecutor's Unit Against Corruption Networks (Uferco), requested information on the companies related to the nationalist congresswoman Gladys Aurora López, as well as her family."<sup>110</sup>

There are more and more voices calling for the elimination of the substitute congresswo/men. "Orellana declared that "it is absolutely necessary that the issue of the substitutes be part of the next

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104 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/09/04/honduras-ejecuta-su-programa-empleaton-en-torno-a-las-zede/>

105 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1386-periodista-recibe-amenazas-por-informar-sobre-zedes-en-zona-norte-hondurena>

106 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/20/exjefe-del-cohep-critica-propaganda-estatal-en-zedes-y-pago-de-activistas/>

107 <https://tiempo.hn/castro-no-pueden-ser-perseguidos-por-oponerse-a-zede/>

108 <https://confidencialhn.com/conroa-interpone-recurso-contras-las-zede-ante-csj-por-motivos-ambientales/>

109 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/01/analisis-falta-de-estrategias-claras-de-la-politica-estadounidense-no-permite-combatir-la-corrupcion-en-honduras-y-el-triangulo-norte/>

110 <https://proceso.hn/uferco-pide-informacion-sobre-negocios-de-diputada-nacionalista-gladys-aurora-lopez/>

government. Their permanent participation in the National Congress must be eliminated, because they are corruptible by the board of directors and are at the disposal of the Legislative head".<sup>111</sup>

## The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

In Honduras a series of laws have been reformed in recent years, with the aim of "preventing the investigation and criminalization of acts of corruption", and that limit the investigative capacity of the Public Ministry, warns a study released Monday in Tegucigalpa. "The regulatory hindrance in the fight against corruption has been evident in recent years," says the document presented by FOSDEH".<sup>112</sup>

## IHSS

The initial hearing continued this month of "the case called "14 contracts", in which it formalized the accusation and proposed evidence against 15 of the 16 involved in a fraud of more than 158 million lempiras in the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS)."<sup>113</sup> The hearing concluded with decision to open trial.<sup>114</sup> Also this month, another of the many IHSS corruption sub-cases, the one against former Vice Minister of Health, Javier Rodolfo Pastor Vásquez and the former Vice Minister of Labor and Social Security, Carlos Montes Rodríguez, went to trial.<sup>115</sup>

At the end of the month, the MP pressed charges against the Nationalist congressman and vice-president of Congress Reynaldo Ekónomo for his alleged role in the IHSS corruption case.<sup>116</sup> On first sight, some good news. But these accusations could spare him an extradition to the US where he has been mentioned in various drug trafficking cases.<sup>117</sup> This suspicion is further strengthened as the judge nominated for his case belongs to the Nationalist party.<sup>118</sup>

## Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo

CESPAD has an update on the case against the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo.<sup>119</sup> She had already been found guilty of corruption (in a 17-months long trial), but then a court decided that the trial had to be repeated. This trial was supposed to start on July 20, but de Lobo presented a medical examination claiming that she was unfit for trial. At the end of the month, the MP had its own examination stating that she is fit for trial.<sup>120</sup>

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111 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/11/surgen-opiniones-a-favor-de-eliminar-al-diputado-suplente-nacionalistas-rechazan-idea/>

112 <https://proceso.hn/leyes-reformadas-limitan-la-investigacion-del-ministerio-publico-de-honduras/>

113 <https://confidencialhn.com/mp-formaliza-acusacion-y-propone-pruebas-por-nuevo-desfalco-al-ihss-la-audiencia-inicial-continuará-el-próximo-lunes/>

114 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/auto-de-formal-procesamiento-para-15-implicados-en-desfalco-de-158-millones-de-lempiras-del-ihss-siete-guardarán-prisión-preventiva/>

115 <https://confidencialhn.com/mp-listo-para-volver-a-probar-coimas-y-lavado-de-ex-vice-ministros-javier-pastor-y-carlos-montes-en-el-ihss/>

116 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/presentan-requerimiento-fiscal-contravicepresidente-del-congreso-nacional/>

117 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2021/09/28/reynaldo-ekonomo-actual-diputado-por-el-partido-nacional-brinda-apoyo-al-cartel-de-los-cachiros-en-sus-actividades-de-narcotráfico/>

118 <https://confidencialhn.com/magistrado-de-afiliación-nacionalista-fue-nombrado-para-el-caso-del-diputado-reynaldo-ekonomo/>

119 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/17/analisis-el-judio-de-la-ex-primer-dama-y-las-elecciones-generales-en-honduras/>

120 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1495927-466/rosa-elena-bonilla-apta-para-retomar-judio-dictamen-forense-corrupcion-caja-chica-dama>

## Corruption on Wheels

CESPAD published an overview of the Corruption on Wheels case.<sup>121</sup>

## State Security Forces

The MP presented charges against a former police agent accused of human trafficking.<sup>122</sup> "The Special Prosecutor's Office for Human Rights (FEDH) obtained a conviction against a former sub-inspector of the National Preventive Police for the crime of harassment and illegal detention."<sup>123</sup> Two police agents working as prison guards were arrested accused of drug trafficking.<sup>124</sup> A member of the National Police was found guilty of bribery and abuse of authority.<sup>125</sup>

## Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations

Defensores en Línea spoke with family members of David Octavio Quiroz, who was killed by the Military Police during the post-electoral repression of 2017. "David Octavio Quiroz's wife regretted that there is not enough punishment for the crime committed against her husband, "so in my name and in the name of my four children who were left without their father, I demand and cry out for justice, that this officer and all those who participated in the attack be punished".<sup>126</sup>

## Repressions

Defensores en Línea reported on a worrisome situation in La Paz. "Police abuses in the town of Marcala, La Paz department, have always occurred, but now they are more excessive; and out of fear the population does not want to report them, according to several people interviewed who prefer to remain anonymous."<sup>127</sup>

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121 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/30/corruccion-sobre-ruedas-el-millonario-robo-de-una-red-de-funcionarios-desde-casa-presidencial/>

122 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/se-solicita-juicio-en-contra-de-expolicia-acusada-por-trata-de-personas-en-comayagua/>

123 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/sentencia-condenatoria-para-subinspector-de-policia-por-dos-delitos/>

124 <https://proceso.hn/capturan-a-policias-penitenciarios-por-trafico-de-drogas-agravado-en-la-paz/>

125 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/condenan-a-policia-por-soborno-y-abuso-de-autoridad/>

126 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/familia-de-david-octavio-exige-sentencia-condenatoria-para-miembro-de-la-pmop-que-lo-asesino/>

127 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/poblacion-teme-denunciar-abusos-policiales-en-marcala/>

## Assassinations

First denounced by COFADEH<sup>128</sup>, later even Proceso Digital reported about it. "An appeals court in Comayagua, decided to change the classification of the crime in the case of the crime of Keyla Martinez. The action could prevent the State of Honduras from being brought into an international lawsuit for the extrajudicial execution of Martinez that occurred in a police station, as typified by the United Nations Minnesota Protocol, to which Honduras is a signatory. The Minnesota Protocol was adopted in 1991 and establishes a common standard of performance in the investigation of a potentially wrongful death or suspected enforced disappearance, as well as a common set of principles and guidelines for states, institutions and individuals involved in the special investigation."<sup>129</sup>

On September 16, Members of the Armed Forces shot at alleged drug traffickers from a helicopter in Juan Francisco Bulnes, Gracias a Dios..<sup>130 131</sup> According to El Libertador, 9 people were injured and two died.<sup>132</sup> The local community was terrorized by the incident.<sup>133</sup> In a press release a day later, the Armed Forces recognized that people were injured, but disputed the deaths. The indigenous Masta organization, meanwhile, confirmed that two people died.<sup>134</sup> At the end of September, inhabitants of La Moskitia held a protest before the MP<sup>135</sup> and met with OACNUDH.<sup>136</sup>

## Penitentiary System

"Honduras' prisons concentrate 20,897 inmates distributed in 25 penitentiaries, a figure that implies 261% overcrowding in a system capable of housing 8,000 inmates."<sup>137</sup>

El Heraldo published an investigation into the disappearance of 13 million Lempiras meant to compensate the family members of 107 inmates who died in the prison fire in San Pedro Sula in 2004. The members of the Armed Forces in control of the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) keep a tight lip about the whereabouts of the money.<sup>138</sup>

La Prensa reported on a confrontation in the so-called maximum security prison El Pozo which led to the death of three inmates and an injured member of the Military Police.<sup>139</sup> OACNUDH denounced this. "During 2021, the Office has recorded at least 8 incidents of violence inside prisons. #OACNUDH urges authorities to thoroughly investigate deaths in custody and the entry and use of firearms in prisons."<sup>140</sup>

<sup>128</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/17/cofadeh-denuncia-que-autoridades-buscan-dejar-impune-la-muerte-de-keyla-martinez/>

<sup>129</sup> <https://proceso.hn/el-estado-contra-las-cuerdas-en-caso-de-keyla-martinez-y-protocolo-de-minnesota/>

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1493315-466/mosquitia-enfrentamiento-militares-narcos-honduras-heridos>

<sup>131</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/ataques-y-violencia-contra-miskitos-son-responsabilidad-del-estado-hondureno/>

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.web.elibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3203-honduras-unos-nueve-civiles-heridos-y-dos-muertos-en-operativo-antidroga-de-ff-aa>

<sup>133</sup> <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1438659978072510470>

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1493490-466/video-saqueo-lancha-mosquitia-narcotraficantes-honduras>

<sup>135</sup> <https://confidencial.hn.com/misquitos-denuncian-ante-el-mp-ataque-armado-por-parte-de-miembros-de-las-ffaa/>

<sup>136</sup> <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3261-victimas-de-ataque-de-las-fuerzas-armadas-llegan-ante-la-oacnudh-en-la-capital>

<sup>137</sup> <https://proceso.hn/carceles-hacinadas-en-216-en-honduras/>

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/investigaciones/1491069-529/desfalco-instituto-nacional-penitenciario-reos-calcinados-san-pedro-sula-honduras>

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1495293-410/enfrentamiento-carcel-el-pozo-honduras-sucesos-muerto-heridos-policia>

<sup>140</sup> <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1442212741586903047>



The National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment (MNP-CONAPREV) filed a constitutional challenge against the decision to have the PNFAS as the only prison for women in Honduras.<sup>141</sup>

## International Community

The virtual Congress, on with the ongoing absence of opposition politicians protesting the opaque virtual sessions, approved another \$185 millions of loans from the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (BID) and the BCIE.<sup>142</sup> The IMF approved another \$215.8 million loan for the JOH regime - Honduras credit line at the IMF rose to \$773 million.<sup>143</sup>

"The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) announced Wednesday that it issued the first social bond for US\$218 million in the Swiss market, on the occasion of the bicentennial of Central America's independence from the Spanish crown."<sup>144</sup> The Inter-American Development Bank (BID) approved \$118.5 million to consolidate the Central American Customs Union.<sup>145</sup>

Japan approved a \$100 million credit to the JOH regime "to help stabilize, recover and strengthen the economy in the face of the crisis generated by COVID-19 and the impacts caused by storms Eta and Iota".<sup>146</sup> The UN supports Honduras with \$10 million to restore 295,000 hectares of protected areas.<sup>147</sup>

## US

US Senator Patrick Leahy commented on recent events in Honduras, e.g. on the trial of Edwin and Raúl (see above), as well as the situation of the Guapinol defenders and the lack of sentencing of David Castillo.<sup>148</sup>

## EU

An EU delegation visited a protest camp in defense of the Jilamito River. The local communities are part of MADJ.<sup>149</sup> The ambassador of the European Union in Honduras, Jaume Segura, was interviewed by Efe.<sup>150</sup>

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141 <https://confidencialhn.com/presentan-recurso-de-inconstitucionalidad-por-designar-a-pnfas-como-unica-carcel-de-mujeres-en-honduras/>

142 <https://proceso.hn/congreso-aprueba-mas-de-4-mil-millones-de-lempiras-en-prestamos-para-atender-victimas-de-huracanes-y-covid-19/>

143 <https://proceso.hn/el-fmi-aprueba-ampliar-en-215-8-millones-de-dolares-su-prestamo-a-honduras/>

144 <https://proceso.hn/el-bcie-coloca-218-millones-de-dolares-en-primer-bono-social-en-suiza/>

145 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1494456-466/banco-interamericano-desarrollo-prestamo-honduras-bid>

146 <https://proceso.hn/japon-aprueba-prestamo-por-100-millones-para-apoyar-economia-de-honduras/>

147 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-restaurara-295000-hectareas-de-areas-protegidas-con-apoyo-de-la-onu/>

148 <https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/statement-on-recent-verdicts-in-honduras>

149 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1442581528698097672>

150 <https://proceso.hn/crisis-climatica-y-recuperacion-economica-retos-de-honduras-dice-la-ue/>



## Drug Trafficking

Honduras remains on the US list of countries identified as “major drug transit or major illicit drug producing countries”.<sup>151</sup> Honduras is among the ten worst offenders when it comes to organized crime out of 193 countries in the Global Organized Crime Index (partially funded by the US State Department).<sup>152 153</sup>

On September 2, hitmen dressed as doctors went to a private hospital and murdered Wilkin Montalván who had been there for COVID-19.<sup>154</sup> Montalván, a brother of a Libre deputy congressman, had been linked to drug trafficking by JOH's brother Tony Hernández.<sup>155</sup>

The Pro Honduras Network reports on the role of drug trafficking money in Honduran soccer.<sup>156</sup>

On September 15, El Heraldo reported that the US justice system had appointed a new defense team for Honduran drug trafficker Geovanny Fuentes Ramirez.<sup>157</sup>

## JOH

4 Hondurans were sentenced this month for the murder of Magdaleno Meza. Honduras Now published a helpful analysis. "Magdaleno Meza was a drug trafficker arrested in possession of drug ledgers that implicated Tony Hernández. The ledgers were used to convict TH in NY courts. Meza was murdered in a Honduran prison by other prisoners. It is suspected that the murder was ordered by Prez JOH. The Honduran judiciary announces that 4 people have now been convicted for Meza's murder. They are likely all prisoners with long prison sentences that work as hitman for a major gang. This is another problem with the prison model. Why wouldn't a gang hitman murder on behalf of the gang you belong to if you're already sentenced to life in prison for another crime? Especially if that gang pays your family a monthly salary to be “on-call” to commit such acts for them? There is little doubt for ppl in #Honduras that JOH & some govt institutions were involved in Meza's murder. JOH's brother even visited Meza leading up to his murder, in a max-security jail run by the military. When will the masterminds of Meza's murder be charged?"<sup>158</sup>

"Cousins Otto René Salgado Morales and Ronald Enrique Salguero Portillo, of Guatemalan origin and confessed drug traffickers, have testified against Honduran President Juan Hernández, implicating him in their illicit activities in a new trial held in the Southern District Court of New York. The new case, which implicates the Honduran president in large-scale cocaine trafficking to the United States, exposes the \$1 million bribe allegedly given by former Sinaloa Cartel leader Joaquin El Chapo Guzman to finance Hernandez's rise to power in exchange for facilitating the

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151 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/09/15/a-memorandum-for-the-secretary-of-state-on-presidential-determination-on-major-drug-transit-or-major-illicit-drug-producing-countries-for-fiscal-year-2022/>

152 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3233-honduras-en-top-10-del-indice-global-del-crimen-organizado>

153 <https://ocindex.net/country/honduras>

154 <https://proceso.hn/trasciende-asesinato-de-hermano-de-diputado-por-olancha-en-hospital-privado/>

155 <https://confidencialhn.com/wilkin-montalvan-asesinado-en-una-clinica-privada-de-la-capital-vinculado-al-narcotrafico/>

156 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2019/12/11/futbol-hondureno-financiado-por-el-narcotrafico-y-la-corrupcion/>

157 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1492923-466/designan-nuevo-abogado-narcotraficante-geovanny-fuentes>

158 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1435350654009155597>

importation of the drug from Nicaragua to Guatemala. This is not the first time that allusion is made to the bribe that Chapo Guzman would have paid, since this fact was known in October 2019 when the US prosecutor, Jason Richman, revealed that Guzman gave a million dollars in bribes to Tony Hernandez, brother of the president of Honduras, so that he would deliver them to the now president of Honduras to finance his political campaign."<sup>159</sup> "César Gastelum Serrano, one of the capos of the Sinaloa cartel bribed Juan Orlando Hernández with two payments of \$500,000 dollars in exchange for protection of cocaine shipments bound for the US, according to Joaquín Pérez, defense attorney for confessed drug trafficker Fredy Nájera Montoya, who is awaiting sentencing next October. These statements appear in the document called Memorandum of Submission filed by Nájera's defense in the Southern District Court of New York."<sup>160</sup>

JOH, meanwhile, used a speech at the CELAC<sup>161</sup> summit this month as an opportunity to present him once again as the victim of false accusations by drug traffickers.<sup>162</sup> He went on for so long that he had to be stopped by an assistant.<sup>163</sup> JOH later tried the same at the UN.<sup>164</sup> A few days later, journalist Andrew Cockburn made an interesting discovery. "Take this to the bank: Federal prosecutors at @SDNYnews have an indictment of Honduras Narco-Presidente Juan Orlando Hernandez drawn up and ready to go. Surprise! @StateDept is refusing to sign off."<sup>165</sup> "According to political analyst Raúl Pineda, the U.S. State Department will not publish "high officials" of Juan Hernández in the "Engel List" in order not to lose one of its last "trenches" in the region, due to the approach of neighboring countries to trade with China. In addition, Pineda said that officials of Joe Biden and congressmen of the stature of Norma Torres, have been called to silence because they do not have a specific political weight and "they are characters that grab short-term issues and when the results are not immediate, they abandon them".<sup>166</sup>

## Varia

### “Independence”

On September 15, Honduras (and the region) commemorate 200 years of "independence". For many, real independence has still not been fulfilled, i.e. it presents a historic debt.<sup>167</sup> There were also protest announced, especially against the ZEDEs, the clearest manifestation of a lack of independence in recent history.<sup>168 169 170</sup> The day was also accompanied by various comments the

<sup>159</sup> <https://criterio.hn/narcos-guatemaltecos-vinculan-a-juan-herandez-en-nuevo-juicio-en-nueva-york/>

<sup>160</sup> <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2021/09/20/juan-orlando-herandez-vinculado-nuevamente-al-cartel-de-sinaloa-por-abogado-de-fredy-najera/>

<sup>161</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/entre-ausencias-y-sorpresas-inicia-cumbre-de-celac-en-mexico/>

<sup>162</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/18/el-presidente-de-honduras-denuncia-falsos-testimonios-de-cortes-de-eeuu/>

<sup>163</sup> <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3208-honduras-presidentes-de-america-latina-cortan-discurso-de-joh>

<sup>164</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/cuestionan-defensa-de-joh-en-la-onu-ante-senalamientos-de-narcotraficantes/>

<sup>165</sup> <https://twitter.com/andrewmcockburn/status/1440348084869861379>

<sup>166</sup> <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3223-honduras-engel-da-respaldo-silencioso-a-joh-raul-pineda>

<sup>167</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/independencia-sigue-siendo-una-deuda-historica-julio-navarro/>

<sup>168</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/anuncian-protestas-en-el-dia-del-bicentenario/>

<sup>169</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/poblacion-hondurena-se-moviliza-en-defensa-de-la-soberania-en-el-dia-del-bicentenario/>

<sup>170</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1493011-466/libre-marcha-oposicion-bulevar-morazan-parque-central-bicentenario-no-zede-independencia>

challenges faced by Honduras. "They are 200 years of a policy of "prevention" led by the political and economic elites, fearful of "the consequences" if the people decide to proclaim something different from their interests. From this fear was born the "identity" of the Central American elites, who for two centuries have distrusted the popular sectors. But at the same time these elites behave servile before the external powers. They are hard with the popular sectors, and soft and servile with the external powers."<sup>171</sup> COPINH wrote: "We the peoples have more than 200 years of oppression, dispossession and violence. We continue to fight against continuism, against this racist, capitalist and patriarchal system, under a dictatorial regime."<sup>172</sup>

## Elections

Radio Progreso presents four challenges facing the coming elections. i) to overcome the specter of continuity that is very present in the whole electoral process; ii) how to confront a political party that is officially defined by US prosecutors as a criminal structure? iii) how to generate enthusiasm in the electorate? iv) how to respect the dignity of voters?<sup>173</sup> Electoral violence could also be added to the list. "A group of National Party activists attacked the Liberal Party mayoral candidate for San Antonio de Flores, south of El Paraíso, Pedro Cáceres, who denounced illegal transfers [of domiciles] for next November's elections."<sup>174</sup> Something similar took place further north. Libre congressional candidate Lesbia Betina Cruz Martínez was also attacked by a group of allegedly Nationalist activists in San Pedro Sula. She had been denouncing illegal transfers of domiciles as well.<sup>175</sup> And on September 5, Libre mayoral candidate in San Luís, Santa Bárbara, Rommel Rivera, received a shot in the foot.<sup>176</sup>

At least 50'000 to 100'000 Hondurans won't be able to vote in the general elections because they are not in the new electoral census.<sup>177</sup> By September 13, over 1.1 million Honduras still had not yet their new ID card.<sup>178</sup> Additionally, JOH's control over the electoral bodies is still very real (see also last month). "The councilors of the National Electoral Council (CNE), Ana Paola Hall and Rixi Moncada, reiterated that next November's electoral process is at risk since the Executive Branch is the one who manages the financial resources of the governing body of the elections."<sup>179</sup> On September 10, the Nationalist representative at the CNE Kelvin Aguirre took over the presidency of the institution. This gave the National Party even more control over the elections. "Cespad considers that the handling of the reforms and the increase of the CNE budget, from the National Congress, was a political calculation on the part of the governing party to fail to comply with the electoral calendar, and thus disrupt the necessary gear for the smooth running of the process, in view of the November 28 elections. Besides, there is a persistent attempt to subordinate the electoral body to

171 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/np/o-patio-trasero-o-una-patria-centroamericana/>

172 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1438249069990891521>

173 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/np/desafios-del-actual-proceso-electoral/>

174 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/turba-ataca-a-candidato-liberal-en-san-antonio-de-flores-el-paraiso/>

175 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/mp-revictimiza-a-candidata-a-diputada-en-sps/>

176 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/santa-barbara-aspirante-a-alcalde-teme-por-su-vida/>

177 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1490958-466/100-mil-personas-sin-enrolar-elecciones-generales-honduras-2021-dni>

178 <https://confidencial.hn.com/1-millon-184-mil-886-dni-faltan-por-entregar-previo-a-elecciones-generales/>

179 <https://criterio.hn/consejeras-del-cne-reiteran-el-riesgo-que-elecciones-sean-controladas-por-el-ejecutivo/>

the Executive Branch as a way or a preconceived plan to affect the elections. The CNE must, now, accelerate the process and, as far as possible, move towards the establishment of elections that, although they generate citizen distrust, are close to the standard of good practices for the strengthening of democracy."<sup>180</sup>

CESPAD published a further analysis of what it means that the National Party, i.e. its magistrate, took over the presidency of the CNE. "Today, Kelvin Aguirre, Ana Paola Hall and Rixi Moncada, as members of the CNE Plenary, are the people who organize the general elections and, unanimously or by simple majority, must disclose the preliminary results. They are also the persons who will make the official Declaration of the elections. The presiding councilor may be the one who will be in charge of the television, radio and virtual media, but the content of the official communication and the official decisions will be decided by the Plenary. The fact that there are so many doubts, suspicions and fears among the Honduran citizenry about who presides the CNE at this time is a sign that the institutionality is still under construction and that this should also be a point of reflection that allows for increased oversight, observation and citizen participation in the 2021 electoral process."<sup>181</sup> Libre's magistrate at the CNE, Rixi Moncada, spoke of the situation as "an enormous interference" by the JOH regime.<sup>182</sup>

Another problem facing the elections is the situation of the TJE. "The Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE) continues to operate without the approval by the National Congress of the Electoral Justice Procedural Law to settle conflicts in electoral matters, while operating with a meager budget."<sup>183</sup> On September 17, TJE magistrate Enrique Reina had to once again call on Congress to have them finally approve the Procedural Law of the Electoral Justice Tribunal.<sup>184</sup> On September 27, congressman Jorge Cáliz warned that there was not enough time anymore to approve the Electoral Process Law needed for work of the TJE. There is still the possibility that a transitory decree will be approved to allow the TJE to operate.<sup>185</sup>

A further challenge is the implementation of the Preliminary Results Transmission (TREP) system. This month, the National Party webt after the company Grupo MSA hired by the CNE.<sup>186</sup> Libre magistrate at the CNE, Rixi Moncada, denounced this as an ongoing boycott by the National Party of the elections.<sup>187</sup> "With more than 60 days to go before the General Elections, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Honduras, Alice Shackelford, expresses her concern about the delay in the administrative processes, such as the consolidation of the system for the Transmission of Preliminary Electoral Results, TREP."<sup>188</sup> CESPAD sent out an alert regarding the "political interference" with the TREP.<sup>189</sup> A few days later, the CNE approved the contracting of the company

<sup>180</sup> <https://criterio.hn/ana-paola-hall-entrega-presidencia-del-cne-y-advierte-no-aceptara-injerencias-del-ejecutivo/>

<sup>181</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/21/analisis-que-significa-que-la-presidencia-del-cne-este-en-manos-del-representante-del-partido-de-gobierno/>

<sup>182</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/nos-compete-velar-por-el-desarrollo-de-elecciones-pero-es-claro-que-desde-la-presidencia-y-cn-hay-un-nivel-de-injerencia-enorme-contr-a-cne-rix-moncada/>

<sup>183</sup> <https://criterio.hn/tje-maniatado-con-raquitico-presupuesto-y-sin-ley-de-justicia-electoral/>

<sup>184</sup> <https://proceso.hn/magistrado-reina-pide-nuevamente-aprobacion-del-ley-del-tje/>

<sup>185</sup> <https://proceso.hn/no-se-aprobara-la-ley-procesal-electoral-por-falta-de-tiempo-y-acuerdos-jorge-calix/>

<sup>186</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/22/nacionalistas-dicen-que-cne-contrato-empresa-que-ofrecera-el-trep-que-tiene-irregularidades/>

<sup>187</sup> <https://criterio.hn/partido-nacional-continua-boicoteando-elecciones-generales-rix-moncada/>

<sup>188</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/preocupada-naciones-unidas-por-retrasos-en-procesos-administrativos-electorales/>

<sup>189</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/24/alerta-electoral-interferencia-de-partidos-politicos-pone-en-riesgo-el-trep-en-elecciones-generales-2021/>

Grupo Magic Software Argentina (MSA) to provide the system for the TREP. The vote was 2:1 with the Nationalist president of the CNE, Kelvin Aguirre, voting against it.<sup>190</sup>

The CNE chose the US company Smartmatic to be responsible for the facial recognition and finger print readers of voters.<sup>191</sup> ContraCorriente took a closer look at the company.<sup>192</sup> The OAS officially announced that they would again observe the Honduran elections.<sup>193</sup> Criterio published an article highlighting the dubious role of the OAS in past Honduran elections.<sup>194</sup> Later, it was announced that also the EU<sup>195</sup> as well as the Council of Electoral Experts of Latin America (CEELA) would observe the elections.<sup>196</sup>

With 2:1 vote, the Libre and Liberal magistrates at the CNE rejected the incorporation of the Nationalist Jesús Mejía as a consultant.<sup>197</sup> El Heraldo published an article on the importance of the Voting Boards (Juntas Receptoras de Votos). "For many people, talking about the Voting Boards, what we used to know as MER, seems like a boring topic, but it turns out that this is where the election results are cooked. There they open and close the ballot boxes, help the voters during the process, count the votes and also transcribe the results in the Closing Act."<sup>198</sup>

CESPAD analyzed the use of the Vida Mejor social program as an electoral tool of the JOH regime. FOSDEH published a report on clientelism in Honduras in view of the general elections.<sup>199</sup> "The Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion (Sedis) is the institution promoting the "Vida Mejor" (Better Life) program, the flagship project of the government of Juan Orlando Hernández. In the last three years, Sedis delivered to beneficiaries of social projects more than seven billion lempiras, added to this since 2017 it used almost two billion in agreements with non-governmental organizations. The projects are questioned for corruption and clientelistic purposes."<sup>200</sup> In a further article, CESPAD looked at illicit campaign financing.<sup>201</sup> "There are three notable sources of undue financing in the National and Liberal parties in Honduras, two of them clearly illicit: corruption and drug trafficking, and a third, "the party quota", with which the National Party has obtained HNL 717 million (about USD 30 million) from January 2016 to July 2021. This contribution of public employees in addition to being a source of political clientelism, becomes a crime when it is done in an unconsultative manner. This trident has always put the party in office at an abysmal advantage compared to the others."<sup>202</sup> Expediente Público also published two articles on the topic.<sup>203 204</sup> It

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190 <https://confidencialhn.com/cne-aprueba-contrato-con-la-empresa-msa-para-que-provea-del-sistema-trep/>

191 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1490946-508/cne-elige-empresa-identifica-votantes-sistema-biometrico-smartmatic>

192 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/09/14/smartmatic-se-encargara-del-sistema-biometrico-en-elecciones-de-honduras/>

193 <https://proceso.hn/la-oea-observara-las-elecciones-de-noviembre-proximo-en-honduras/>

194 <https://criterio.hn/cuestionan-envio-de-mision-electoral-de-la-oea/>

195 <https://criterio.hn/union-europea-anuncia-envio-de-observadores-para-elecciones-generales-en-honduras/>

196 <https://proceso.hn/cne-y-ceela-firman-acuerdo-de-observacion-electoral-para-la-transparencia-de-las-elecciones-generales-2021/>

197 <https://tiempo.hn/rechazan-contratar-a-jesus-mejia-asesor-cne/>

198 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1494385-508/mesas-electorales-juntas-receptoras-elecciones>

199 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/clientelismo-el-lucro-politico-que-convive-con-la-pobreza/>

200 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/09/07/sedis-la-maquinaria-del-clientelismo/>

201 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/06/honduras-hay-probabilidades-de-garantizar-el-control-del-financiamiento-electoral-en-la-campana-electoral-2021/>

202 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/09/16/campanas-politicas-en-honduras-financiadas-por-la-burocracia-estatal/>

203 <https://expedientepublico.org/honduras-huellas-del-narcotrafico-y-crimen-organizado-develadas-en-campanas-electorales/>

204 <https://expedientepublico.org/honduras-penetracion-clara-del-narcotrafico-al-partido-nacional-y-otras-historias-de-narco-apoyo-politico/>

remains to be seen if the support announced by the UNDP and the EU for the Clean Politics Unit will improve the situation.<sup>205</sup> Shortly afterwards, Criterio reported that the promise of clean politics was still unfulfilled. "According to the report published by the Centro de Estudio para la Democracia (Cespad), on the proposals of the Law of Financing, Transparency and Control of Political Parties and Candidates, the political loopholes of the law are established in four areas: the prohibition of illicit financial sources; the prohibition of public funds, electoral publicity and the deficiencies of the law in terms of transparency and access to public information."<sup>206</sup> In an additional report, CESPAD analyzed the electoral reforms and who benefited most from them.<sup>207</sup>

"The sociologist Pablo Carías questioned the role of the Armed Forces during the general elections of November 28, which he assures could lean in favor of the National Party. "The relationship of the high command of the Armed Forces with the current government is undeniable, they defend it in an unusual way. This makes the population to have some distrust in the functions they have to perform in view of the electoral process, it is probable that they tip the balance to the governing party", he expressed."<sup>208</sup> CESPAD published a disturbing list of members of Congress running for reelection who all have been linked to corruption cases or are or have been on trial accused of corruption.<sup>209</sup>

Last but not least, "US Congressman W. Gregory Steube sent a letter to the head of the State Department, Antony Blinken, reminding him that Yani Rosenthal is an ex-convict with ties to drug traffickers and it is not advisable for him to come to power in Honduras. The August 24 letter stresses that combating entrenched corruption in Honduras is a key regional priority, particularly given the role corruption plays in encouraging migration and eroding economic opportunity and respect for human rights."<sup>210</sup> But the problems with the Honduran elections for the US go beyond that as highlighted by John Perry. "[T]he Biden administration must weigh contradicting factors in deciding how to handle Trump's erstwhile ally. On the one hand, Honduras is strategically reliable and important to U.S. business interests; on the other, problems of state-condoned violence, corruption, and impunity are fostering both continued migration and the drug trade."<sup>211</sup> Steube later also tweeted: "Convicted felon and money launderer Yani Benjamin Rosenthal Hidalgo is attempting to become the President of Honduras after being released from U.S. federal prison. I urged the State Department to stand firm against corruption and condemn Rosenthal's efforts to gain power."<sup>212</sup>

## 2017 Electoral Fraud

At the end of the month, the MP inspected buildings of the Mapa Soluciones company in a possible fraud case going back to the 2017 elections and involving the Nationalist former magistrate of the

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205 <https://proceso.hn/con-apoyo-de-pnud-y-ue-unidad-de-politica-limpia-se-fortalece-para-detectar-dinero-ilicito-en-campanas/>

206 <https://criterio.hn/la-promesa-de-una-politica-limpia-sigue-quedando-en-papel/>

207 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/10/los-intentos-del-partido-de-gobierno-para-boicotear-las-elecciones-2021-en-honduras/>

208 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/09/19/expertos-cuestionan-papel-de-las-ffaa-de-cara-al-proceso-electoral/>

209 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/28/senalamientos-de-corupcion-y-enjuiciamientos-definen-a-diputados-que-buscan-reeleccion-en-honduras/>

210 <https://criterio.hn/congresista-de-ee-uu-advierte-al-departamento-de-estado-que-yan-rosenthal-no-debe-llegar-al-poder/>

211 <https://nacla.org/United-States-Struggles-to-Pick-Side-Upcoming-Honduran-Elections>

212 <https://twitter.com/RepGregSteube/status/1437433668767817729>



now defunct Supreme Electoral Court (TSE), David Matamoros Batson.<sup>213 214</sup> While this sounds hopeful, the reason for this new investigation, four years after the fact, could be more sinister. "The investigation for fraud, carried out by the MP, could be a way to carry out a "judicial cleansing" in favor of the former electoral magistrates: David Matamoros Batson (photo), known for the "rural votes", Erick Rodríguez and José Escobar, according to the opinion of the criminal lawyer, Omar Menjivar, who assures that a replica of the impunity of the "Pandora Case" is approaching."<sup>215</sup>

## Electricity

Last month, the dispute between the JOH regime and the private Honduras Energy Company (EEH) reached a new level (see August monitor). On September 1, the Superintendence of Public and Private Partnerships (SAPP) intervened the EEH.<sup>216</sup> In response, EEH director announced that they would demand more than \$800 million from Honduras.<sup>217</sup> According to the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA), "the debt of National Electric Energy Company (ENEE) has increased by 88.5% since the Honduras Energy Company (EEH) began operations under the supposed objective of recovering losses in the services provided by ENEE in distribution and financial flow".<sup>218</sup>

Criterio wondered if the intervention of the EEH is the solution, campaigning by the JOH regime or a new attempt to split up ENEE.<sup>219</sup> The BCIE announced that they would give loans to Honduras anymore meant for the ENEE to pay outstanding debt.<sup>220</sup>

## Migration

"According to official information, the coordinator (...) COIPRODEN, Wilmer Vásquez, stated on Radio Progreso that, as of August 2021, some 5,285 children were returned from the migratory route to the United States. He said that of this number, 3,717 are children who were traveling alone, and of these, 70% are boys and 30% are girls."<sup>221</sup> The Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for Hondurans (and other nations) in the US was prolonged by 15 months.<sup>222</sup>

Radio Progreso reported from the border to Guatemala on the fate of Hondurans deported back home. "Radio Progreso and the Jesuit Network with Migrants were at the border in the early morning hours of September 23 and 24 of this year, and were able to confirm that migrants are being returned without the Honduran government authorities keeping a migratory registry, and

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213 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/fetccop-y-atic-inspeccionan-escaneres-utilizados-en-elecciones-de-2017-por-investigacion-a-contrato-entre-tse-y-empresa-mapa-soluciones/>

214 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/por-tercer-dia-consecutivo-mp-inspecciona-bodegas-de-mapa-soluciones-por-supuesta-sobrevaloracion-de-escaneres-utilizados-en-elecciones-de-2017/>

215 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3236-honduras-accion-legal-contrabato-y-mapa-soluciones-busca-inmunidad-penalista>

216 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/intervienen-eeh/>

217 <https://confidencial.hn.com/tras-anuncio-de-intervencion-eeh-demandaria-al-estado-por-805-millones-de-dolares/>

218 <https://criterio.hn/cna-con-contratacion-de-la-eeh-deuda-de-la-enee-se-incremento-en-un-88-5/>

219 <https://criterio.hn/intervencion-a-la-eeh-solucion-proselitismo-o-un-nuevo-intento-por-despedazar-la-enee/>

220 <https://proceso.hn/bcie-no-puede-seguir-otorgando-recursos-a-la-enee-para-el-pago-de-atrasos-dante-mossi/>

221 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/mas-de-5-mil-ninos-y-ninas-han-sido-retornados-de-la-ruta-migratoria/>

222 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/minisitios/hondurenos-en-el-mundo/1491352-471/tps-honduras-migrantes-estados-unidos-extension-programa>

without providing humanitarian aid because the people come sick and without money to return to their homes."<sup>223</sup>

## Agriculture

"In Honduras, according to FAO data,<sup>2</sup> there are some 484 thousand family farming plots, which generate 56.5% of sectoral production; this contributes 76% of employment in rural areas. These family farms use native seeds as a heritage and fundamental input for their production systems. However, for the promoters of "improved" seeds in Honduras (SAG-Senasa, DICTA, Agronomy Universities, seed sector), the native or creole seed belongs to prehistory, it does not exist. According to this sector, all farmers and indigenous people use "improved seeds" in their systems. Supine ignorance. (...) A concern of peasant and indigenous organizations, social and environmental movements, is the evolution of the regulatory frameworks of seeds in the country, which restrict more and more the rights to free circulation of seeds, an ancestral customary practice of indigenous and peasants in the history of our peoples. (...) In 2012, without consulting the affected groups, peasants, indigenous peoples and consumers, the Law for the Protection of Plant Varieties or Monsanto Law was approved. This Law criminalizes, prosecutes and imposes fines (Article 51) of up to 10 thousand days of minimum wage to those who violate the Law. The Honduran State recognizes intellectual property rights over seeds, privatizes life and prohibits the free circulation of seeds in peasant and indigenous hands. In 2021, the proposal for a new Seed Law was reactivated. This is aimed at only allowing the use of certified seed and prohibiting the planting of native and creole seeds. Fines and imprisonment are proposed for those who violate these legalized principles."<sup>224</sup>

"Rural women have been forgotten by candidates and state institutions, further deepening the unemployment and inequality gap, more than 3.3 million women are engaged in unpaid work in agricultural or household activities, according to a study by Oxfam Honduras, Via Campesina and the Council for the Integral Development of Rural Women."<sup>225 226</sup> Proceso Digital reports on the difficulties faced by coffee growers in Honduras. "Coffee producers in Honduras continue to be burdened by debts, increasing emigration that leaves them without labor, lack of assistance from trade associations and a marketing policy that places them at the bottom of the chain of beneficiaries."<sup>227</sup>

## Transparency

Last month, the highly criticized Invest-H was recognized by the Access to Public Information Institute (IAIP) as 100% transparent. This raised some questions which ContraCorriente investigated. "Although 1,103,158 public documents are published in the portal of the IAIP which,

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<sup>223</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/n/las-masivas-deportaciones-que-se-esconden-entre-la-oscuridad/>

<sup>224</sup> <https://www.biodiversidadla.org/Documentos/Nuevas-leyes-de-semillas-en-Honduras.-Mecanismo-de-despojo-y-violacion-de-derechos-a-campesinos-e-indigenas>

<sup>225</sup> <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3227-mas-de-tres-millones-de-hondurenas-condenadas-al-trabajo-sin-salario>

<sup>226</sup> <https://honduras.oxfam.org/mujeres-rurales-frente-al-COVID-eta-iota>

<sup>227</sup> <https://proceso.hn/caficultores-ahogados-en-deudas-baja-produccion-y-emigracion/>



according to the law, are for consultation by citizens, the legitimacy, veracity and authenticity of them is not certain. According to Lester Ramirez, the fact that there are no guarantees with the information is due to the "interference and political component that this government office has, which in fact is elected by the legislative chamber". He also added that access to these documents, even though they are public, is sometimes restricted, for which reason "the guidelines for the information portals must be improved".<sup>228</sup>

## 2022 Budget

The 2022 budget was approved by the Council of Ministers, it rose to over 300 billion Lempiras.<sup>229</sup> That is over 20 billion Lempiras higher and again it mostly benefits the security and defense sectors.<sup>230</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

The charges against 9 indigenous Tolupán, criminalized by the company INMARE and the JOH regime, were dropped against the Tolupán defenders.<sup>231</sup> Additionally, the two political prisoners Edwin Espinal and Raúl Valladares were found not guilty.<sup>232</sup>

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228 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/09/04/a-pesar-de-corrupcion-invest-h-recibe-reconocimientos-por-transparencia/>

229 <https://confidencialhn.com/consejo-de-ministros-aprueba-proyecto-de-presupuesto-de-la-republica-2022-por-1-308233-6-millones/>

230 <https://confidencialhn.com/tasa-de-seguridad-sirve-para-escortar-funcionarios-no-para-proteger-al-dueno-de-una-pulperia-del-cobro-de-extorsion-senala-abogado/>

231 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3256-despues-de-3-anos-libertad-definitiva-para-nueve-indigenas-tolupanes>

232 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1439005714651942914>

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

Past Activities:

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Upcoming Activities:

- The Honduras Forum Switzerland organizes a delegation for a Swiss member of Congress to Honduras for the coming November.

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