

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – October 2021

One month remains before the general elections. It has been a violent pre-electoral period with 24 candidates and close relatives murdered, more than in 2017. And there is an urgent need to avoid a repeat of 2017 with 36 people killed in the streets, according to the UN at least 16 of those murders could be directly linked to state security forces. No one has been brought to justice for these assassinations and in the only case going to trial, against a member of the Military Police, the charges were dropped at the beginning of the month - a very worrisome sign. The Nationalists and their allies in Congress, meanwhile, increased the penalty for social protest to up to 6 years in prison while at the same time further shielding themselves from corruption investigation. The elections bear special significance for the fight against corruption, as the new Congress will elect both a new Attorney General and new Supreme Court judges. Apart from the elections, the Guapinol case made headlines this month, sadly not for the right reasons. Against national and international protest including at the levels of the UN and embassies, the 8 water defenders have to remain in preventive detention. This month we also witnessed the first murder of a media worker this year in Honduras, another worrisome sign in the run-up to the elections. 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

October began with 367'275 detected COVID-19 cases in Honduras and 9855 confirmed deaths.¹ The Funeral Home Association, meanwhile, documented over 20'000 deaths.² By mid-month, the Ministry of Health started to report that the occupancy rate due to COVID-19 patients had dropped significantly and the mortality rate also went down³ - a real trend or just convenient news in light of the coming elections?

The month ended with 375'381 detected COVID-19 cases and 10'420 confirmed deaths.⁴

State Reaction

After 18 months, the JOH regime lifted the nightly curfew.⁵

Health Sector

Honduras continued to receive vaccine donations throughout the month.^{6 7 8 9} From the US alone, they received 3.9 million doses.¹⁰ At the same time, the Secretary of Health had to admit at the beginning of the month that thousands of doses had to be applied in the next days or they would have to be discarded.¹¹ On October 8, Radio Progreso reported on the vaccination campaign in Honduras and how it trailed its neighbor in the region.¹² On October 19, the president of the IHSS doctors in the north of Honduras, Carlos Umaña, warned that the immunization rate was stuck at around 35%.¹³ At the same time, Honduras announced to start with a third, so-called booster shot.¹⁴

On October 3, another doctor, Esteban Uclés, died to COVID-19.¹⁵ "Doctors employed in the Health Secretariat's Telemedicine program assigned to the National Emergency System 911 have denounced in a communiqué that they are owed four months' salary."¹⁶ The Medical College of Honduras (CMH) announced to join them in a protest.¹⁷ By the end of the month, more strike

1 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-llega-a-un-total-de-367-mil-275-casos-y-9-mil-855-decesos-por-covid-19/>

2 <https://tiempo.hn/funerarias-hay-unos-20-mil-muertos-debido-al-covid-19-en-honduras/>

3 <https://confidencialhn.com/segun-cifras-de-la-sesal-la-mortalidad-por-covid-19-en-honduras-ha-bajado-en-un-50/>

4 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-llega-a-375-mil-381-contagiados-y-10-mil-420-decesos-por-covid-19/>

5 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1496482-466/suspenden-toque-queda-honduras-feriado-morazanico-semana-sinager-covid-19>

6 <https://hn.usembassy.gov/es/gobierno-de-los-estados-unidos-de-america-realiza-nueva-donacion-a-honduras-de-81900-dosis-de-vacunas-pfizer-contra-covid-19/>

7 <https://confidencialhn.com/estados-unidos-dona-a-honduras-250-mil-dosis-de-vacunas-contra-la-covid-19-de-moderna/>

8 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1446220007382425607>

9 <https://proceso.hn/haiti-dona-250000-vacunas-a-punto-de-caducar-a-honduras/>

10 <https://hn.usembassy.gov/es/gobierno-de-los-estados-unidos-de-america-realiza-nueva-donacion-a-honduras-de-250040-dosis-de-vacunas-moderna-contra-covid-19/>

11 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3246-honduras-increible-en-seis-dias-miles-de-vacunas-covid-seran-inutiles>

12 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/honduras-en-deuda-con-vacunacion-contra-la-covid-19/>

13 <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-tres-millones-de-hondurenos-no-han-acudido-a-vacunarse-contra-la-covid-lamenta-doctor-umana/>

14 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-inicia-a-aplicar-refuerzo-de-vacuna-con-amplia-mayoria-con-una-sola-dosis/>

15 <https://confidencialhn.com/otro-galeno-pierde-la-batalla-contra-la-covid-19/>

16 <https://criterio.hn/medicos-del-911-denuncian-que-les-adeudan-cuatro-meses-de-salario/>

17 <https://confidencialhn.com/colegio-medico-respalda-protesta-que-realizan-galenos-del-911-en-demanda-del-pago-de-salarios/>

actions were announced with health workers denouncing the violation of labor laws.¹⁸ Another ongoing demand is the call for permanent employment.¹⁹

Corruption

At the beginning of the month, it came to light that even the audit into the purchase of the mobile hospitals failed.²⁰ A few days later, Invest-H announced a second one.²¹

The IACHR granted special protective measures to doctor Ligia del Carmen Ramos Zúniga, who received death threats for denouncing acts of corruption in the health sector during the pandemic.²²

Human Rights

"The human rights situation in Honduras is deteriorating further every day, human rights organizations denounced today in a public hearing via virtual channel of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), which is holding its 181st period of sessions. The Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the State of Honduras participated in the hearing to present the "Situation of human rights in the context of the pandemic in Honduras".^{23 24}

Economy

Honduras' external debt has grown to almost \$11 billion.²⁵ Honduras' commercial deficit in the first eight month of 2021 is 74.8% bigger than in 2020, almost \$4.8 billion in total.²⁶

Education

"More than 40 teachers of the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) announced this Monday a virtual work stoppage, due to the lack of payment of six months of salary."²⁷

Poverty

In a year, food insecurity in Honduras almost doubled from 1.8 million in 2020 to 3.3 million now.²⁸

18 <https://proceso.hn/aneeah-anuncia-que-mantiene-las-protestas-para-el-martes-por-violaciones-a-derechos-laborales/>

19 <https://confidencialhn.com/empleados-de-salud-del-hospital-mario-catarino-rivas-exige-plazas-y-pago-de-salarios-atrasados/>

20 <https://proceso.hn/fracasa-auditoria-forense-de-hospitales-moviles/>

21 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/08/investh-contratara-firma-auditora-para-determinar-irregularidades-en-hospitales-moviles/>

22 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cidh-otorga-medidas-cautelares-a-dra-ligia-ramos-y-exige-investigacion-del-caso/>

23 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cada-dia-la-situacion-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-honduras-es-precaria/>

24 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/victimas-de-violaciones-a-ddhh-comparecen-ante-la-cidh/>

25 <https://proceso.hn/la-deuda-externa-de-honduras-suma-10817-millones-de-dolares-en-ocho-meses/>

26 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-registro-deficit-comercial-de-4-767-millones-de-dolares-en-8-meses/>

27 <https://confidencialhn.com/docentes-de-la-unah-realizan-paro-por-falta-de-pago/>

28 <https://proceso.hn/inseguridad-alimentaria-en-honduras-casi-se-ha-duplicado-segun-la-onu/>

Human Rights and Their Defenders

Human rights organizations denounced the possible integration of the State of Honduras at the UN Human Rights Council.^{29 30} But to no avail, on October 14, Honduras was elected to the UN Human Rights Council.³¹ And as feared, JOH presented this, without irony, as a recognition of their human rights record...³² It is very fitting that the same day, Honduras was condemned at the Inter-American Human Rights Court (IACtHR) for violating the rights of Miskito divers.³³

Assassinations

"The young peasant Óscar Javier Pérez, was murdered last Sunday, October 10, 2021, at about eight o'clock at night in his home in the community of Quebradas de la Arena, municipality of Tocoa, department of Colón, Honduras. Perez was a member of the Empresa Asociativa Campesina "El Chile" from its founding in 2009 until 2016, when he was an eyewitness to the murder of Jose Angel Flores, president of MUCA and Silmer Dionisio George, who also served as leader of the movement, both were beneficiaries of precautionary measures of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR."³⁴

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

Congress used both the Morazán Holidays and a game by the national soccer team to push through various problematic bills. Only 71 members were present as Libre and small parties boycotted the session. "This afternoon the National Congress approved reforms to the national legislation on the criminal definitions of usurpation and forced displacement currently used to criminalize and prosecute social protest actions and demands for rights of human rights organizations, articulated in peasant organizations, indigenous and Black peoples, and social movements. The changes in the Penal Law take place two months before the General Elections, in which there is the possibility of multiple occasions of social protest."³⁵ "The new Penal Code included the crime of usurpation aimed at criminalizing the defense of land and contemplated a sentence of two to four years, but with the reform of October 7, 2007, the sentence was increased from four to six years."³⁶

Well aware that this could happen, OACNUDH had tweeted shortly before the session took place: "The Office respectfully calls for these projects to be previously submitted to a public debate with the participation of all the sectors concerned and to reflect on their possible consequences in the current electoral context of the country."³⁷ The next day, OACNUDH expressed concern and asked

29 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1446561604850618399>

30 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/honduras-el-estado-no-es-apto-para-el-consejo-de-derechos-humanos>

31 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-electa-para-el-consejo-de-derechos-humanos-de-la-onu/>

32 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1448742326373867529>

33 <https://proceso.hn/corteidh-condena-a-honduras-por-violar-derechos-humanos-de-buzos-miskitos/>

34 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3267-en-el-bajo-aguan-asesinan-a-testigo-protégido-de-crímenes-contralideres-campesinos-de-muca>

35 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/10/alerta-urgente-honduras-congreso-nacional-aprueba-reformas-al-código-penal-que-atentan-contrala-protesta-social-y-el-legítimo-ejercicio-y-defensa-de-derechos-humanos/>

36 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3264-congreso-nacional-agrava-penas-por-los-delitos-de-usurpacion-y-desplazamiento-forzado-con-reformas-al-nuevo-código-penal>

37 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1446165364707143972>

Congress to reconsider the decisions made.³⁸ Human rights organizations and social movements published a joint press release denouncing what happened, especially the further criminalization of social protest.³⁹ CESPAD published a short analysis on how these changes would affect territorial struggles in Honduras. "Undoubtedly, the political elite in power has known how to read tactically and situationally the important political moment of organization and territorial struggle that exists in the country against the ZEDE, concretized through the realization of open town meetings to declare the municipalities free of these projects; mobilizations, sit-ins and blockades of strategic routes. It is therefore not surprising that the current reforms seek to criminalize the various social protest actions that threaten the interests of the economic and political actors behind this project."⁴⁰

On October 11, criminalized Lenca defenders Víctor Vásquez and José Santos Vigil had the Court of Appeals lift the pre-trial detention they had suffered for nine months.⁴¹ But the next day, the Sentencing Court of the city of Comayagua refuses to release the two environmentalists.⁴² After widespread protest, they were released a day later.⁴³

In another second case of criminalization, "OACNUDH accompanied the defenders of the Lenca Indigenous Council of Reitoca at the hearing where alternative measures to pre-trial detention were ordered. The Office notes with concern that this is the second criminal proceeding initiated against Reitoca leaders".⁴⁴

Human rights defender and coordinator of ARCAH, Christopher Castillo, was attacked by an unknown man in Tegucigalpa on his way home on October 16. It was the third attack in recent time and he has also received death threats and is being criminalized.⁴⁵

Indigenous Peoples

"In the morning hours of Friday, October 15, a strong contingent of the National Police and riot police were present in the Lenca Indigenous Community of Tierras del Padre, using the power of firearms they kept the entire community in fear and terror with the supposed order to measure their territory as part of a judicial process against several defenders of the community by the businessman Mario Facusse."⁴⁶ A week later, COPINH denounced that the president of the community council of Río Blanco was disappeared. He was found the next morning with grave head injuries and was hospitalized.⁴⁷

38 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHHN/status/1446537018012536841>

39 <https://copinh.org/2021/10/reformas-aprobadas-al-codigo-penal-por-el-congreso-nacional-en-la-sesion-ordinaria-del-jueves-7-de-octubre-del-2021/>

40 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/17/la-relacion-entre-las-reformas-del-codigo-penal-y-las-luchas-territoriales-en-honduras/>

41 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1447771557024124932>

42 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/uncategorized/tribunal-de-sentencia-de-comayagua-niega-libertad-de-ambientalistas-victor-vasquez-y-jose-santos-vigil/>

43 <https://criterio.hn/libres-los-defensores-de-la-tierra-jose-santos-vijil-y-victor-vasquez/>

44 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHHN/status/1454208471281307648>

45 https://twitter.com/Arcah_hn/status/144942849899776385

46 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/10/alerta-urgente-honduras-fuerte-contingente-policia-genera-caos-y-mantiene-en-zozobra-a-defensoras-y-sus-familias/>

47 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1452697523324391433>

Honduras was condemned at the Inter-American Human Rights Court (IACtHR) for violating the rights of Miskito divers.⁴⁸ The sentencing was welcomed by human rights organizations and OACNUDH.⁴⁹ CEJIL highlighted that the "Court held that States must adopt measures to ensure that corporations, including transnational corporations, are held accountable for human rights violations committed in their territory".⁵⁰

The Case of Berta Cáceres

"The Expert Observation Mission in the Berta Cáceres Case calls on the Sentencing Court to issue the sentence in accordance with the conviction handed down 3 months ago today against Roberto David Castillo Mejía for the murder of Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores, defender of the rights of the Lenca People and the environment on March 2, 2016."⁵¹ On October 12, COPINH held a protest rally outside the Supreme Court denouncing the lack of a sentence.^{52 53}

CESPAD published a report on how one formal complaint filed by Berta Cáceres led to the investigation of the Gualcarque Fraud case.⁵⁴

LGBTQ

"Unknown persons entered the house of human rights, indigenous and sexual diversity defender, Fausto Vázquez, setting fire to his room. The attack occurred between the night of September 30 and October 1, in the community of Azacualpa, municipality of Santa Elena, said the representative of the women of the Independent Indigenous Lenca Movement of La Paz-Honduras (MILPAH), Felícita López."⁵⁵ Two weeks later, "OACNUDH condemns the attack suffered by Vicky Rodríguez, a trans woman from La Libertad, Comayagua, who was beaten last October 7 in her home by unknown persons. This is the second physical attack against her after another aggression suffered in 2017."⁵⁶

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

On October 21, Riccy Moreno, a journalist and former Congressional candidate for Libre, suffered an assassination attempt in San Pedro Sula.^{57 58}

El Libertador denounced that Massimo Mazzone, the man behind the ZEDE Ciudad Morazán, verbally attacked its journalists.⁵⁹ After critical reporting on the work of the mayoralty of La Paz,

48 <https://proceso.hn/corteidh-condena-a-honduras-por-violar-derechos-humanos-de-buzos-miskitos/>

49 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1449118145390813192>

50 <https://cejil.org/comunicado-de-prensa/honduras-sentencia-de-la-corte-idh-en-caso-buzos-miskitos-reconoce-responsabilidad-de-empresas-en-la-proteccion-de-derechos-humanos/>

51 <https://www.observacionbertacaceres.org/post/experts-urgent-need-for-sentence-in-berta-c%C3%A1ceres-case-to-guarantee-justice-for-victims>

52 <https://copinh.org/2021/10/falta-de-sentencia-contradavid-castillo-e-incertidumbre-juridica-en-el-caso-de-berta-caceres/>

53 <https://avispa.org/tras-demora-judicial-copinh-exige-sentencia-en-caso-berta-caceres/>

54 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/09/30/una-de-las-48-denuncias-de-berta-caceres-ayudo-a-construir-el-caso-de-corrupcion-fraude-sobre-el-gualcarque/>

55 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/incendian-habitacion-de-defensor-indigena-lgtbi/>

56 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1447632353245990913>

57 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1451344474433458179>

58 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3277-atentado-contraperiodista-y-ex-diputada-por-el-partido-libre>

59 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3291-azerbaian-saluda-honduras-y-presenta-semillas-para-el-futuro-en-expo-2020-de-dubai>

journalist Gilberto “Chichí” Gálvez denounced that the municipal authorities are after him with a defamation campaign.⁶⁰

Assassinations

"Wilmer Joel Fúnez Ochoa (31), operator of the HRN radio station in the Cantagallos sector of the Central District, was found dead last Wednesday in a vacant lot on the side of the road, with several gunshots in his body, making him the first media worker to be murdered so far in 2021."⁶¹

Violence against Women

The number of murdered women in Honduras rose to 240 according to UNAH's Violence Observatory.⁶² "Impunity in cases of femicide sends a message to other men that they can continue to commit violent acts against women, said the coordinator of the Observatory of Violence of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (OV-UNAH), Migdalia Ayestas."⁶³

According to Plan International, Honduras has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Latin America.⁶⁴

Extractive Industries

"Mining concessions extend over 185 municipalities and electric power generation concessions over 81 municipalities. Another 25 municipalities on the Caribbean coast could be affected by the extraction of hydrocarbons, according to a study entitled "Territories at risk III Mining, hydrocarbons and power generation in Honduras", carried out by the National Autonomous University of Honduras, the Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development in Honduras, FOSDEH, the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development, COSUDE and OXFAM."^{65 66}

Mining

Guapinol⁶⁷

In the case of the criminalized Guapinol defenders, hope rose again this month when a bail hearing was scheduled for October 26.⁶⁸ The hearing was accompanied by different embassies and OACNUDH, all speaking out in favor of the defenders.^{69 70} OACNUDH representative Isabel

60 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1400-periodista-de-la-paz-denuncia-campana-de-difamacion-en-su-contr>

61 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1389-asesinan-a-operador-de-radio-en-el-distrito-central-primera-victima-del-2021>

62 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/07/feminicidios-en-honduras-2021/>

63 <https://proceso.hn/impunidad-es-mensaje-para-que-continuen-feminicidios-dice-migdonia-ayestas/>

64 <https://confidencialhn.com/segun-plan-internacional-honduras-se-ubica-en-primer-lugar-en-latinoamerica-con-la-mayor-tasa-de-embarazos-de-ninas-y-adolescentes/>

65 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3263-honduras-es-una-mina-de-oro-para-megaproyectos-pero-un-reservorio-de-pobreza-y-desplazamientos-para-comunidades>

66 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/territorios-en-riesgo-iii-mineria-hidrocarburos-y-generacion-de-energia-electrica-en-honduras/>

67 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/26/los-pinares-le-apuesta-al-desmoronamiento-y-los-guapinoles-a-la-esperanza/>

68 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1451351966559342599>

69 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1453002278869381132>

70 https://twitter.com/EmbaFrancia_Teg/status/1453039436606869510

Albaladejo even said: "I want to express my deepest support to the Guapinol community and defenders. We hope that the judicial authorities will finally confirm the immediate release of the defenders."⁷¹ Even though the hearing concluded the same day, the result was not announced the following day which led to repeated calls for the liberation of the defenders⁷² with OACNUDH even visiting them in prison.⁷³

On October 28, everyone daring to expect some good news was once again disappointed. "In a ruling without any legal basis, the Trujillo Court has ordered the arbitrary detention of eight Honduran water defenders. The ruling, which comes a day late after a pre-trial detention review hearing, shows once again not only the lack of judicial independence but also the deep complicity between the highest levels of the Honduran judiciary and economic interests linked to the ruling elite and the executive branch. Without any legal basis, the Court (...) resolved to maintain the preventive detention while the defendants await their trial, which is scheduled to begin on December 1, 2021, just a few days after the country's general elections. According to local news sources, the judges in Trujillo waited to issue the ruling on the preventive detention until they received a phone call from the president of the Supreme Court, Rolando Argueta. After today's notification, we are absolutely convinced that there are no conditions for this trial to develop independently or in compliance with due process guarantees."⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ Criterio highlighted the problematic role of Argueta in this case.⁷⁶

In a press release, OACNUDH "expressed its most serious concerns" about the ruling. "'The Office I represent has repeatedly called for a review of the preventive detention of defenders and for compliance with due process guarantees based on Honduras' international obligations in this area. We regret that, once again, and without accrediting the elements that justify maintaining preventive detention, the defenders continue to be subjected to this measure," said Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, OACNUDH Representative in Honduras."⁷⁷ The European Union as well as the Spanish, French and German embassies also showed their concerns.⁷⁸

Azacualpa

Defenders from the Azacualpa faced trial this month, criminalized by the MP in collusion with the mining company MINOSA.⁷⁹ "The Court of Santa Rosa de Copán, rejected all the evidence presented by the defense of the Azacualpa leaders, leaving the defenders in a state of defenselessness."⁸⁰ Nevertheless, and as a great surprise, the seven defenders were declared

71 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1453153020330586114>

72 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1453426042048323584>

73 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1453539233843589121>

74 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/collusion-between-rolando-argueta-lenir-perez-keeps-guapinol-defenders-in-illegal-detention>

75 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3281-tribunal-de-sentencia-cerro-las-rejas-para-la-libertad-de-los-defensores-de-guapinol/>

76 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-complicidad-de-presidente-del-poder-judicial-en-detencion-illegal-de-los-defensores-de-guapinol/>

77 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-lamenta-resolucion-del-tribunal-de-sentencia-de-trujillo-que-ordena-mantener-en-detencion-preventiva-a-los-defensores-de-guapinol/>

78 <https://twitter.com/UEenHonduras/status/1454150425565880325>

79 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1451202746934251527>

80 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1451267274900447240>

innocence. The trial brought to light that the MP had hidden and even fabricated proof to criminalize them and in defense of the mining company MINOSA.⁸¹

On October 27, an alert made the round that the mining company MINOSA in collusion with the Municipal Corporation of La Unión, Copán, was once again preparing to carry out illegal exhumations in the Azacualpa cemetery.^{82 83} The local community announced to resist the destruction of their cemetery.⁸⁴ The inhabitants then were faced with threats by employees of the mining company as well as the police.⁸⁵

Hydroelectricity

The BCIE will support the modernization of the hydroelectric plant El Cajón.⁸⁶ It will get a fifth turbine.⁸⁷

ZEDEs

At the beginning of the month, the National Movement Against Zede and for National Sovereignty held a protest sit-in in front of the facilities of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE).⁸⁸ Rest of World published a detailed article on the Próspera ZEDE in English.⁸⁹ On October 6, the ZEDE Ciudad Morazán announced to expropriate more land which the former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana called illegal.^{90 91} Both ZEDEs, Próspera and Morazán, were presented at an international conference in Switzerland on October 16.⁹² In the days running up to the conference, Honduran human rights organizations denounced this.⁹³ El Libertador denounced that Massimo Mazzone, the man behind the ZEDE Ciudad Morazán, verbally attacked its journalists.⁹⁴ His ZEDE also faced resistance from the opposition councilors in Choloma who feared that the municipality would lose 200 million in tax income.⁹⁵ Additionally, maquila workers announced a protest.⁹⁶ In a reaction, a town hall meeting on the ZEDE was announced for November 7.⁹⁷ CESPAD reported on the third ZEDE active in Honduras, ZEDE Orquídea in the south of

81 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1451621031106519048>

82 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1453571287079600130>

83 <https://criterio.hn/minosa-vuelve-a-impulsar-exhumaciones-en-cementerio-de-azacualpa/>

84 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1453872676536258566>

85 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1454194187340075013>

86 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-anuncia-apoyo-para-la-modernizacion-de-la-central-hidroelectrica-el-cajon/>

87 <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-preve-instalacion-de-una-quinta-turbina-en-represa-el-cajon/>

88 <https://criterio.hn/en-honor-al-natalicio-de-francisco-morazan-protestan-contra-las-zede/>

89 <https://restofworld.org/2021/honduran-islanders-push-back-libertarian-startup/>

90 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1445788428579258368>

91 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3256-honduras-duenos-de-zede-morazan-incurren-en-grave-delito-exfiscal-orellana>

92 <https://criterio.hn/promueven-zede-prospera-morazan-y-guanaja-hills-en-evento-organizado-por-free-private-cities-en-suiza/>

93 https://twitter.com/Arcah_hn/status/1446174662149513221

94 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3291-azerbaiyan-saluda-honduras-y-presenta-semillas-para-el-futuro-en-expo-2020-de-dubai>

95 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3295-honduras-hasta-200-millones-perdida-choloma-por-zede-morazan>

96 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3300-honduras-obreros-de-choloma-convocan-a-protestas-para-cerrar-zede-morazan>

97 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/choloma-convocado-a-cabildo-abierto-contra-las-zede-el-domingo-07-de-noviembre/>

Honduras.⁹⁸ On October 26, the ZEDE Próspera announced in a press release that they started construction of a residential tower.⁹⁹

People of Honduras continue to gather in town hall meetings to reject ZEDEs. This month, such gatherings took place in Yamaranguila, Intibucá¹⁰⁰ and Colomoncagua also in Intibucá.¹⁰¹ In total, over 30 communities have rejected ZEDEs this way.¹⁰² But the resistance against the ZEDEs goes beyond the communities. There were also clear words from the president of the Honduran Bar Association (CAH), Fredis Cerrato: "What is being done and what these gentlemen have done in Congress with the President of the Republic and the collusion with the Court, they are traitors to the country, it is an act of evil against the Honduran people, and we must all unite against the actions of these sell-outs of the homeland."¹⁰³ And at the end of the month, the higher-education sector also spoke up. "The Higher Education Council (CES), rejected on Wednesday the intention to create universities within the framework of the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDEs) and warned that they lack legality and therefore it makes no sense to enroll in them."¹⁰⁴ And on October 29, the Supreme Court admitted a constitutional challenge against the ZEDEs brought forward by the national university UNAH.¹⁰⁵

On October 18, it was made public that the JOH regime requested over \$200 million from BCIE to construct a bridge between Zacate Grande to Tiger Island.¹⁰⁶ Honduras Now denounced that this area had long been known as a likely location for a ZEDE and that it is a key area for long-standing land conflicts.¹⁰⁷ On October 26, the BCIE approved the \$207.8 million credit.¹⁰⁸ The next day, JOH signed an agreement with Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega to clear a dispute between the two countries in the region. JOH presented it as a win for national sovereignty. But the real reason may be the complete opposite, selling off national sovereignty by establishing another ZEDE.¹⁰⁹

CESPAD looked at the different positions on the ZEDEs as part of the electoral campaign. "The first, who promote the repeal of the ZEDE Law and are openly against it, because it violates national sovereignty and territorial autonomy, to the benefit of large national and international capital. The second group is openly in favor, arguing that the ZEDE are an engine for the generation of employment and economic development, although empirical evidence shows otherwise. And the third, who argue that the ZEDE can be beneficial if they are developed within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic and if the State has a direct intervention on these projects; this sector advocates for a reconversion of the ZEDE."¹¹⁰ "The presidential aspirant of the National Party,

98 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/14/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-zede-orquidea-y-la-lucha-socioterritorial-en-el-sur-de-honduras/>

99 <https://tiempo.hn/zede-prospera-inicia-construccion-en-roatan/>

100 <https://copinh.org/2021/10/yamaranguila-intibuca-dice-no-a-las-zedes/>

101 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1454166417704632323>

102 <https://tiempo.hn/municipios-hondurenos-le-dan-un-no-a-las-zedes/>

103 <https://proceso.hn/zedes-son-un-acto-de-maldad-en-contra-del-pueblo-sostiene-presidente-del-cah/>

104 <https://proceso.hn/consejo-de-educacion-superior-rechaza-creacion-de-universidades-en-las-zedes/>

105 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1500163-466/sala-constitucional-admite-recurso-contra-zede>

106 <https://www.latribuna.hn/2021/10/18/a-espana-y-corea-del-sur-invitaran-para-cofinanciar-puente-amapala/>

107 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1450262347826798592>

108 <https://proceso.hn/bcie-aprueba-207-millones-para-proyecto-logistico-integral-de-desarrollo-en-la-zona-del-golfo-de-fonseca/>

109 <https://tiempo.hn/graco-perez-zede-en-golfo-de-fonseca-la-disfrazan-con-soberania/>

110 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/20/campanas-politicas-en-honduras-sin-propuestas-alternativas-a-las-zede/>

Nasry Asfura, maintains a changing position regarding the installation of the Employment and Economic Development Zones (Zedes) in the country and such indecision could place him in a compromising situation with respect to the government of President Juan Orlando Hernández. In less than a month he issued two statements, one in favor and the other against, regarding the special regions; both have been made to a society in the middle of an electoral campaign."¹¹¹

Corruption and Its Enemies

ContraCorriente was part of the investigation into the Pandora Papers published this month. They included at least two important cases relating to Honduras. "An analysis of thousands of documents from the Pandora Papers has revealed that the former politician and cattle rancher owned three shell companies in Panama, and that his wife, Rosa Elena Bonilla, managed an offshore company while she was first lady. Lobo's son and a former right-hand man both sought to create companies in tax havens. Adding to their woes, the former president and his wife were both named on the Engel List, and Bonilla is currently facing a corruption trial."¹¹² "Current mayor of Tegucigalpa and popular presidential candidate Nasry Asfura, and former mayor and current vice-president of Honduras, Ricardo Álvarez, managed offshore companies in Panama while in office. The revelation is particularly important considering they have both been investigated for alleged embezzlement. So far neither of them has offered explanations for the offshores."¹¹³

The US presented plans to launch an Anti-Corruption Task Force (see also last month). "Criterio.hn spoke with socio-political analysts Víctor Meza and Joaquín Mejía about the viability of activating the Anti-Corruption Task Force without the active participation of the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. Both believe that this action could strengthen the fight because the United States would apply more direct and effective pressure through the Magnitsky Act and other legal mechanisms. However, Joaquin Mejia notes that, given the dismantling of special anti-corruption and impunity prosecution units in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which had the backing and trust of the United States, the Anti-Corruption Task Force will resort to working with civil society, which could be a danger. "What civil society is this unit [Anti-Corruption Task Force] going to relate to?" questioned Mejia. "Because depending on that also that fight against corruption is going to be selective" or will it investigate all people linked to corruption equally."¹¹⁴ On October 15, the US Department of Justice announced a tip line to help assist its Anticorruption Task Force fight corruption in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹¹⁵

El Pulso reports that the US Senate Committee on Appropriations will hold back \$861 million of aid from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras because the countries did not show progress in fighting corruption.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/30/contradiccion-postura-nasry-asfura-zedes/>

¹¹² <https://contracorriente.red/en/2021/10/03/pepe-lobos-secret-offshore-companies/>

¹¹³ <https://contracorriente.red/en/2021/10/03/a-tale-of-two-mayors-of-tegucigalpa-and-their-offshores-in-panama/>

¹¹⁴ <https://criterio.hn/operacion-anticorrupcion-sin-gobiernos-de-ca-fortalecer-la-lucha-contra-la-corrupcion-siempre-que-accionar-sea-imparcial/>

¹¹⁵ <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-anticorruption-task-force-launches-new-measures-combat-corruption-central>

¹¹⁶ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/23/la-corrupcion-privada-al-triangulo-norte-de-800-millones-de-dolares-en-asistencia-de-ee-uu/>

On October 11, the CNA presented a new line of investigation for corruption in the Ministry of Health called "Criminal network of officials involved in hiring and granting salary increases to their family and trusted circle".¹¹⁷ The Ministry of Health rejected the accusations and went on the attack against the CNA.¹¹⁸ In another case, the CNA questioned the obscure manner how more funding was approved for the Palmerola airport.¹¹⁹

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

Congress used both the Morazán Holidays and a game by the national soccer team to push through various problematic bills. Only 71 members were present as Libre and small parties boycotted the session.¹²⁰ "Just five days after the Pandora Papers were revealed in Honduras, in a session questioned by opposition deputies, the National Congress approved reforms to the Money Laundering Law. One of them defines as Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) civil society organizations that carry out oversight, investigation, evaluation or analysis of public administration and others take away the power of the Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate corruption. They also reformed articles of the Penal Code that could criminalize social protest. They also approved extensions for tax benefits in the Bay Islands and benefits for politicians who have not submitted their campaign finance reports."¹²¹ UFERCO's Luis Santos tweeted: "Every day I am convinced that in Honduras we live in a state of barbarism... with the reforms approved today, bank secrecy is imposed to investigate crimes of corruption, they want the prosecutors to limit ourselves to investigate abuses of authority..."¹²² ¹²³ Congress also prolonged its session, i.e. it won't stop on December 30, but will continue until January 20. More time for corrupt deals if they were to lose the elections?¹²⁴ ASJ announced to present a constitutional challenge.¹²⁵

On October 10, Luis Santos denounced that the reforms would endanger important corruption and drug trafficking cases.¹²⁶ ¹²⁷ Santos also denounced that the suspension of bank secrecy for the crimes of extortion and money laundering, limits the prosecuting entity since it will be a judge who will decide whether or not to provide this information.¹²⁸ "All these reforms of Thursday do not surprise me, because it is the product of a shielding in a systematic way that has been taking place since 2017, and that are directed against investigations in corruption cases". "At the same time, he warned that the next step of the Legislative before the end of this year, is to carry out reforms to the

117 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1497676-466/cna-presenta-red-contrataciones-familia-ministra-salu>

118 <https://proceso.hn/sesal-rechaza-denuncia-de-presunta-corrupcion-dice-que-el-cna-actua-con-sesgo-politico/>

119 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/17/aprueban-fondos-para-poner-en-operacion-aeropuerto-de-palmerola-cna-cuestiona-medida/>

120 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-nacional-exonera-candidatos-que-no-presentaron-informe-de-gastos-de-campana/>

121 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/10/07/congreso-nacional-de-honduras-se-blinda-de-impunidad-tras-revelaciones-de-pandora-papers/>

122 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1446288563071504384

123 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1446287096092798977

124 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-amplia-hasta-el-20-de-enero-sesiones-del-pleno/>

125 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1497316-466/asj-recurso-inconstitucionalidad-reformas-ley-lavado-activos-honduras>

126 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/144737984545372979

127 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/144738556652208262

128 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/11/asj-y-uferco-adviertan-que-reforma-por-lavado-de-dinero-quita-facultades-a-la-fiscalia/>

Law of Deprivation of Domain so that assets are not seized for corruption crimes and so that all funds "that have been pocketed by the corrupt cannot be recovered".¹²⁹

Reuters published an important article Santos. "A prosecutor made gains against graft in Honduras. As probes got ever closer to President Juan Orlando Hernández, though, the government fought back. Reuters looks at the corruption and impunity leading record numbers of Hondurans to migrate north."¹³⁰ CESPAD published an interview him. "From that fiscal unit, he has been in charge of the most emblematic and high impact corruption cases involving high-ranking and former public officials, private individuals and dozens of deputies of the National Congress of Honduras. His work and that of his team of prosecutors has been hindered by the legal shield that Congress approved in favor of corruption. (...) Santos says that he feels frustration not so much because the deputies of the National Congress of Honduras approve laws to shield themselves, but because the media of the country, far from taking up their role of social control and denunciation, remain silent. But, despite the fact that they have been decimated as a prosecutor's office, he assures that he keeps the hope of revival and "sooner rather than later" this unit will be strengthened to accompany the efforts that international cooperation is consolidating to create an Anti-Corruption Task Force in the Northern Triangle."¹³¹

At the end of the month, a two-day event on corruption in Central America took place in Washington DC. US Representative Norma Torres participated and said that the US cannot work together with the current presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras because they are not committed in fighting corruption.¹³² The former head of the MACCIH, Juan Jiménez Mayo, stated that the Honduran Supreme Court is one of the main accomplices in sustaining corruption in Honduras.¹³³ Another reason why the current elections are so important - the new Congress will elect the new Supreme Court judges. In the same forum, UFERCO's Luis Santos explained the evolution of corruption in Honduras taking the Pandora case as an example. "I have 23 years of experience in the Public Prosecutor's Office and it never ceases to amaze me how several State Secretariats have colluded to steal money and devote it to luxuries and political campaigns". The Pandora Case has not moved forward since it has been blocked by an amparo since 2018.^{134 135}

The National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) had hosted several talks at the event. This was not to the liking of everyone and its director Gabriela Castellanos was shortly afterwards under attack. A group of lawyers led by a former JOH official and known for defending corrupt politicians¹³⁶ filed a complaint against Castellanos for embezzlement of public funds and nepotism.^{137 138} FOSDEH sent

129 <https://confidencialhn.com/luis-javier-santos-advierte-que-el-siguiente-paso-del-legislativo-es-reformar-la-ley-de-privacion-de-dominio/>

130 <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/honduras-corruption-prosecutor/>

131 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/30/luis-santos-la-ley-de-privacion-de-dominio-el-siguiente-blindaje-de-los-corruptos-en-honduras/>

132 <https://confidencialhn.com/no-se-puede-trabajar-con-los-gobiernos-del-triangulo-norte-porque-no-están-comprometidos-en-la-lucha-contra-la-corrupcion-senala-norma-torres/>

133 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1453564910550519810>

134 <https://confidencialhn.com/luis-javier-santos-caso-pandora-muestra-como-ha-evolucionado-la-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

135 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1453727633313722387>

136 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/10/31/los-clientes-de-doris-imelda-madrid-la-denunciante-de-gabriela-castellanos/>

137 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3315-tras-exponer-sobre-corrupcion-en-honduras-acusan-directora-del-cna-por-nepotismo>

138 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1500022-466/denuncian-gabriela-castellanos-malversacion-caudales-publicos-nepotismo-cna>

out a press release in solidarity with Castellanos¹³⁹ followed by one by the Anti-Corruption Coalition.¹⁴⁰

Asfura

There is an update in the corruption case against Nationalist presidential candidate and mayor of Tegucigalpa, Nasry Asfura. "The Court of Appeals in corruption matters referred to the Superior Court of Accounts (TSC), the investigative file against the mayor of the Central District, Nasry Asfura, and the municipal councilor, Nilvia Castillo. (...) He pointed out that the Superior Court of Accounts must evaluate the file, give its resolution of the audit to know if the State prosecuting entity can file a criminal action."¹⁴¹ And of course, this won't be done before the elections as an open trial would impede him from running.

Open Chest

"For the Lenca communities in several areas of the department of La Paz, there was no surprise when they learned that the Prosecutor's Unit Against Corruption Networks (UFERCO), requested information on the companies, businesses and assets of Gladis Aurora López, former president of the Central Executive Committee of the National Party and current vice president of the National Congress of Honduras, her husband Arnold Gustavo Castro and her daughter Ana Lucía Castro López. Far from making them happy, the action promoted by the Prosecutor's Office only generates more distrust, since they feel that it is a smoke screen, one more show, which will not prosper in the courts of justice because the Castro-Lopez armor is of high level. "There are no results; in Honduras there is no application of justice", agree the paceños, gently applied to the inhabitants of the department of origin of this Honduran politician. They do not forget that although Gladis Aurora López, her husband and daughter were accused in the "Arca Abierta" case, everything remained in impunity because they were acquitted, "not even the assets that they say were part of what they squandered were seized. They continue to enjoy everything," says a Lenca leader from an area of the department of La Paz, who defends the human rights of the indigenous communities of her people and who requested anonymity for fear of reprisals."¹⁴²

Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo

The re-trial of the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo will take place in February 2022.¹⁴³

139 <https://fosdeh.com/pronunciamientos/comunicado-ante-ataque-en-contra-del-consejo-nacional-anticorrupcion/>

140 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1454944806845755394>

141 <https://proceso.hn/csj-remite-al-tsc-expediente-de-solicitud-de-antejuicio-de-nasry-asfura/>

142 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/05/por-que-la-uferco-pide-informacion-de-los-negocios-y-empresas-a-la-diputada-de-gladis-aurora-lopez/>

143 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1498018-466/programan-febrero-2022-juicio-rosa-elena-bonilla-caja-chica-dama>

IHSS

The MP requested pre-trial detention for congressman Reynaldo Geovanny Ekonomo Fúnes accused of fraud in one of the IHSS corruption cases.¹⁴⁴ But unlike cases involving human rights defenders, the court showed leniency and allowed him to await trial outside prison.¹⁴⁵

In another IHSS sub-case, "[t]he National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF) was notified of the holding of an abbreviated procedure hearing on Wednesday, October 27 against the businesswoman and lawyer Jenny Carolina Andrade Lemus, who will willingly accept having committed money laundering in the notorious case of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS)."¹⁴⁶

State Security Forces

On October 9, seven members of the National Police were arrested with 18kg of cocaine.¹⁴⁷ ¹⁴⁸ They were sent to pre-trial detention¹⁴⁹ which later was confirmed by a judge.¹⁵⁰

"The Special Prosecutor's Office for Human Rights (FEDH) obtained a conviction against preventive police officer Daniel Esaú Torres Mendoza for the crime of harassment to the detriment of the public administration and a citizen"¹⁵¹ On October 23, the MP informed about the capture of an active police officer linked to crimes against human rights.¹⁵²

Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations

With new general elections at the horizon already accompanied by a high level of pre-electoral violence, it is especially disturbing that those responsible for the murder of protesters in the aftermath of the 2017 elections have not been brought to justice. COFADEH had documented 37 murders linked to the post-electoral repression and in only one case, the accusation were brought to a trial.¹⁵³ This case, the murder of David Octavio Quiroz by a member of the Military Police on December 15, 2017, went to trial on September 30. And in what can only be considered a worrisome sign for next month's general election, the charges were dropped against the accused.¹⁵⁴

144 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-pedira-detencion-judicial-contra-parlamentario-implicado-en-nuevo-caso-de-corrupcion-en-el-ihss/>

145 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/diputado-reynaldo-ekonomo-se-defendera-en-libertad-CA2763343>

146 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/empresaria-se-declarara-culpable-de-participar-en-el-saqueo-del-ihss/>

147 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/fiscales-antidrogas-preparan-requerimiento-fiscal-contra-siete-policias-por-trafico-de-cocaina/>

148 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1497402-466/siete-policias-gualaco-narcotrafico-olancha-honduras-drogas>

149 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-acusa-y-logra-la-detencion-judicial-de-siete-policias-arrestados-con-18-kilos-de-cocaina/>

150 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/prision-preventiva-a-siete-policias-arrestados-con-18-kilos-de-cocaina/>

151 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/sentencia-condenatoria-para-policia-preventivo/>

152 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/atic-captura-subinspector-de-policia-por-tratos-cruels-e-inhumanos/>

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

154 https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/honduras-justicia_absuelven-a-police%C3%ADa-militar-de-una-muerte-en-crisis-postelectoral-en-honduras/46993760

Assassinations

On October 26, trial started against one of the police agents accused of the murder of nursing student Keyla Martínez.¹⁵⁵

Penitentiary System

Honduras' prison remain a very deadly place. On October 3, two inmates were murdered at the so-called maximum-security prison La Tolva.¹⁵⁶ In a bit more than two years, at least 95 inmates were murdered in Honduras.¹⁵⁷

Militarization

PBI published an article on the remilitarization of Honduras.¹⁵⁸

El Libertador reports on the role of the Armed Forces in the elections. "In 30 days, Hondurans will vote to choose a new Government for the period 2022-2026 and (...) the Armed Forces have already placed themselves "at the order" of the National Electoral Council (CNE) when last Tuesday, in a strange event where the president of the body [CNE], Kelvin Aguirre, bowed to the illegal and illegitimate ruler - according to the Constitution - Juan Hernandez. The ceremony took place in the exclusive Campo Parada Marte park, west of the capital Tegucigalpa; with the presence of several military squads and the high command, Hernández assured that his questioned government was going to "guarantee" a peaceful democratic process. (...) Analyst Raúl Peña has been emphatic that this division of the CNE and the lack of confidence of the population in the Armed Forces and its high command mean that the process should be closely watched by the citizenry. Peña criticized that "orlandism" has hijacked the highest command of the Army and even "the new command that will take office in December is already politicized".¹⁵⁹

International Community

"The United Nations resident coordinator in Honduras, Alice Shackelford, told Efe on Sunday that it is necessary to strengthen hope in the Central American country and look at the structural causes of the problems that burden it. "This year we are going to sign a new cooperation framework for the period 2022-2026, very focused around strengthening hope in the country, in its institutions, looking at the structural causes of poverty, inequality, migration and also focusing on the person, not leaving anyone behind, the focus on the most excluded groups in the country," Shackelford stressed."¹⁶⁰

"The Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved financing for the Central American Dry Corridor program in the amount of US\$174.3 million, informed the Central American Bank for Economic

155 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/hoy-es-la-audiencia-preliminar-contr-femida-de-keyla-martinez/>

156 <https://proceso.hn/reportan-dos-reclusos-muertos-en-carcel-de-la-tolva-en-moroceli/>

157 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1496601-466/muertos-carcel-tolva-honduras-homicidios-pandilla-18>

158 <https://pbi-honduras.org/news/2021-09/other-side-militarisation-human-rights-violations>

159 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3310-honduras-militares-politizados-y-division-en-cne-motivan-accion-de-ciudadania-en-urnas>

160 <https://proceso.hn/hay-que-fortalecer-la-esperanza-en-honduras-dice-representante-de-la-onu/>

Integration (BCIE)."¹⁶¹ The Inter-American Development Bank announced to align all its projects with the goals of the Paris Agreement by 2023.¹⁶²

The JOH regime and Japan signed a \$100 million loan meant to finance the recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶³

A Honduran delegation traveled to Washington DC to meet with the IMF to discuss the fifth revision of its program.¹⁶⁴

US

Several high-ranking members of the Armed Forces attended the change of command ceremony of the U.S. Southern Command.¹⁶⁵ One of them, the former head of the Armed Forces, René Ponce Fonseca, later claimed that because he had been invited to attend the change of command ceremony of the U.S. Southern Command the accusations made against him for drug trafficking¹⁶⁶ must be false.¹⁶⁷

Drug Trafficking

The Nationalist mayor of Talanga, Roosevelt Eduardo Avilés López, as well as his wife, Nancy Santos Ríos, and son were arrested this month accused of drug trafficking and money laundering. An analysis of their finances found 164 million Lempiras without a clear origin.¹⁶⁸ Nancy Santos Ríos was running as a substitute Congressional candidate for Pedro Chávez, brother of National Party mayor candidate for Tegucigalpa and Congressman, David Chávez.¹⁶⁹ ¹⁷⁰ "In the opinion of the director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Luis León, the political institutes must purge their ranks, especially the National Party, because there are already many candidates implicated in cases of corruption, drug trafficking, organized crime and other crimes."¹⁷¹ The mayor and his family were sent to pre-trial detention¹⁷² which was later confirmed by a judge.¹⁷³

The sentencing in the US of convicted drug trafficker Geovanny Fuentes Ramírez was postponed for the fourth time. It is now scheduled for January 11, 2021.¹⁷⁴ Vice portrayed Digna Valle, "The Brutal Drug Trafficking Matriarch Who Brought Down Her Own Clan".¹⁷⁵

¹⁶¹ <https://proceso.hn/fondo-verde-para-el-clima-aprueba-174-3-millones-para-financiar-programa-del-corredor-seco/>

¹⁶² <https://proceso.hn/el-bid-alinea-todos-sus-proyectos-desde-2023-con-el-acuerdo-de-paris/>

¹⁶³ <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1498786-466/honduras-firma-prestamo-jica-pandemia-covid-19-emergencia>

¹⁶⁴ <https://proceso.hn/delegacion-hondurena-en-washington-para-cerrar-quinta-revision-de-programa-con-fmi/>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.elpais.hn/2021/10/29/oficiales-hondurenos-estuvieron-en-cambio-del-jefe-del-comando-sur/>

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/presidente-hondureno-planeaba-meter-drogas-en-narices-de-los-gringos-dice-testigo>

¹⁶⁷ <https://proceso.hn/invitacion-a-traspaso-de-mando-del-comando-sur-descarta-acusaciones-en-mi-contrario-rene-orlando-ponce/>

¹⁶⁸ <https://confidencial.hn.com/ministerio-publico-ejecuta-capturas-contralcalde-de-talanga-y-su-circulo-familiar/>

¹⁶⁹ <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/145030152227736577>

¹⁷⁰ <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/18/capturan-a-alcaldede-talanga-y-su-esposa-que-aspira-a-diputacion-por-nexos-con-el-narco/>

¹⁷¹ <https://confidencial.hn.com/exhortan-a-partidos-politicos-depurar-sus-filas-por-muchos-candidatos-implicados-en-corupcion-y-narcotrafico/>

¹⁷² <https://criterio.hn/decretan-detencion-judicial-para-alcaldede-talanga-y-su-circulo-familiar/>

¹⁷³ <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1499316-466/prision-preventiva-alcaldede-talanga-familia-roosevelt-avilez>

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3268-honduras-capo-geovanny-fuentes-abre-nuevo-recital-en-new-york>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkbj9v/drug-trafficking-matriarch-el-espiritu-honduras-digna-valle>

A Honduran judge allowed the extradition of Óscar Fernando Santos Tobar, wanted for drug trafficking by the US.¹⁷⁶ Also this month, Dixon Rivers, wanted by the US for drug trafficking, was arrested.¹⁷⁷ On October 21, Martín Adolfo Díaz Contreras and Carlos Miguel Córdón López were extradited to the US.¹⁷⁸ A week later, Fredy Mármol was also extradited.¹⁷⁹ Former police commissioner Leandro Osorio criticized that only low-profile drug traffickers are being extradited.¹⁸⁰

Varia

JOH

There has been an increase of homicides by 17% in the first half of 2021 compared to 2020.^{181 182}

According to an investigation by Criterio, JOH spent over 1 million Lempiras on social media ads.¹⁸³ "The Center for the Study of Democracy (CESPAD), presents the third citizen monitoring report on public spending in the context of the 2021 general elections. This citizen monitoring, for the month of September, addresses the central government's revenue budget, its relationship with the public debt, international loans, and the political management exercised by the governing party."¹⁸⁴ Additionally, just weeks before the election, the JOH regime froze petrol prices¹⁸⁵ and took up loans worth \$285 million which can be used for political purposes.¹⁸⁶

Even though the law clearly prohibits the government from political campaigning with public funds, including the inauguration of public works, the JOH regime regularly violates this. On October 15, he opened the new Palmerola airport where he included people running for office. By law, he should be sanctioned by the CNE. "For the analyst and researcher of the Center of Studies for Democracy (Cespad), Asis Castellanos, the National Party, being in power, has privileged access to State resources without the governing institutions of the electoral processes being able to effectively apply the provisions. "This will not be solved until we have independent, autonomous bodies and there is independence of the powers of the State in which there really is political will to apply the sanctions that exist regarding the use and misappropriation of public resources during the electoral period", he said."¹⁸⁷

176 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1496437-466/oscar-tobar-extraditible-honduras-estados-unidos-teto-narcotrafico>

177 <https://proceso.hn/capturan-al-extraditible-dixon-rivers-socio-de-fredy-marmol/>

178 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/dos-hondurenos-mas-son-extraditados-por-narcotrafico/>

179 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/atic-entrega-al-fbi-al-extraditible-fredy-marmol/>

180 <https://confidencial.hn.com/los-hondurenos-esperamos-ver-extradiciones-de-personajes-de-alto-perfil-no-de-desconocidos-leandro-osorio/>

181 <https://twitter.com/PNUDHonduras/status/1453771223922614289>

182 <https://www.hn.undp.org/content/honduras/es/home/presscenter/articles/2021/analisis-multidimensional-de-la-seguridad-ciudadana-en-honduras-0.html>

183 <https://criterio.hn/joh-gasto-mas-de-un-millon-en-publicidad-en-redes-sociales-para-fortalecer-su-imagen/>

184 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/05/gasto-publico-el-peso-de-los-prestamos-internacionales-en-la-campana-electoral-del-2021/>

185 <https://confidencial.hn.com/gobierno-congela-precios-de-los-carburantes/>

186 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/observadores-critican-proselitismo-del-oficialismo-en-honduras-con-fondos-publicos/>

187 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-de-herandez-viola-ley-electoral-para-beneficiar-candidatos-del-partido-nacional/>

Elections

1704 people are running for the 128 congressional seats in Honduras.¹⁸⁸ In total, over 4000 candidates run on all levels, but only some 200 have registered a bank account as mandated law.¹⁸⁹ Criterio looked at the plans for Honduras presented by the presidential candidates. "The candidates for the presidency of the Republic, in their eagerness to gain followers, have presented documents that they call "government plans", but in reality what they are, are offers, proposals, and unsupported promises. There are fifteen presidential candidates, thirteen representing political parties and two under independent movements. Of these, twelve have presented their supposed government plans, while three have not even made the minimum effort to emulate their contenders."¹⁹⁰ With the Nationalist contender Nasry Asfura, one can at least look at the promises he made as the mayor of Tegucigalpa and how he failed them, such as the Trans450 project.¹⁹¹ Asfura was also mentioned in the Pandora Papers (see above). He claimed he had done nothing wrong.¹⁹²

Nevertheless, the situation of Asfura did not look too bad until mid-October confronted by a divided opposition. But his fate immediately changed as on October 13 the opposition joined forces. Salvador Nasralla ceded his presidential run to Libre's Xiomara Castro. He is now listed as the first vice-presidential candidate of the alliance.¹⁹³ ¹⁹⁴ As Nasralla already was part of an alliance with PINU, the latter also joined this new opposition alliance. Even though part of the Liberal Party demanded to join the alliance, their presidential candidate Yani Rosenthal said that he would not join the alliance.¹⁹⁵ As the calls continued,¹⁹⁶ Rosenthal changed his story saying that he had not been invited to join.¹⁹⁷ In the following days, more and more prominent Liberal political figures announced to vote for the opposition alliance.¹⁹⁸ ¹⁹⁹ Questioned about Rosenthal, Salvador Nasralla said that he would not join the alliance as he had already a deal with JOH to divide up between them Congress to guarantee both that neither Rosenthal nor JOH would be prosecuted.²⁰⁰ The National Party reacted to the united opposition with a campaign of hate and fear trying to stir-up anti-communist feelings.²⁰¹ ²⁰² Additionally, the JOH regime and its National Party used vaccine rallies as electoral events.²⁰³

188 <https://confidencialhn.com/15-candidatos-buscan-ser-presidente-de-honduras-y-1-704-ciudadanos-quieren-llegar-al-cn/>

189 <https://proceso.hn/unos-200-candidatos-han-abierto-su-cuenta-bancaria-senala-comisionado-de-la-upl/>

190 <https://criterio.hn/presidenciales-quedan-en-deuda-con-sus-cacareados-planes-de-gobierno/>

191 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/01/a-pocos-meses-de-dejar-alcaldia-capitalina-asfura-no-podra-cumplir-con-el-trans450/>

192 <https://confidencialhn.com/nasry-asfura-justifica-los-senalamientos-en-los-papales-de-pandora/>

193 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-xiomara-castro-encabeza-alianza-de-hecho-con-salvador-nasralla/>

194 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/10/14/una-alianza-tardia-cambia-el-panorama-electoral-en-honduras/>

195 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1497959-508/yani-rosenthal-no-se-integra-a-la-alianza-de-salvador-nasralla-y>

196 <https://confidencialhn.com/liberales-insisten-a-yani-rosenthal-sumarse-a-la-alianza-de-xiomara-castro-y-salvador-nasralla/>

197 <https://confidencialhn.com/aun-no-he-recibido-invitation-para-conformar-la-alianza-opositora-asegura-yani-rosenthal/>

198 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1498839-508/luis-zelaya-vota-alianza-elecciones-generales-xiomara-castro>

199 <https://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3289-honduras-mas-liberales-piden-a-yani-firmar-unidad-con-xiomara-y-salvador>

200 <https://confidencialhn.com/yani-rosenthal-tiene-acuerdos-con-joh-para-autoprotgerse-asegura-nasralla/>

201 <https://criterio.hn/consideran-que-campana-anticomunista-del-partido-nacional-es-para-desviar-verdaderos-problemas/>

202 <https://criterio.hn/oficialismo-de-honduras-recurre-a-campana-anticomunismo-ante-ascenso-de-libre/>

203 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/25/vacunaton-y-empleaton-estrategias-para-ganar-votos-a-favor-del-partido-de-gobierno/>

The alliance was initially formed at the national level, but it also spread to some important mayoral races such as in San Pedro Sula²⁰⁴ and Tegucigalpa.²⁰⁵ In Tegucigalpa, their candidate will face off against David Chavez. ContraCorriente published a portrait of him. "David Chavez, president and maximum defender of the National Party, could win the mayoral race in the Central District in the next elections. His strength is based on clientelism, violence against opposition candidates and the accompaniment of corrupt and possibly criminal politicians."²⁰⁶ At the end of the month, the momentum changed again at the level of the two main cities. "The municipal alliance of San Pedro Sula -formed by three candidates who managed to reach an agreement to try to defeat Armando Calidonio- has encouraging forecasts, however, it is in danger after it has been announced that the ruling of the National Electoral Council (CNE) would prevent its registration. Meanwhile, in Tegucigalpa, the main opposition leaders at municipal level have not been able to reach an agreement and hopes for a robust alliance to stop David Chavez, who is positioned as favorite, are diluted."²⁰⁷

Leo Schwartz reported on the use of disinformation in the current electoral cycle in Honduras, especially targeting the opposition. "After the publication of this month's Pandora Papers, a massive leak of documents revealing global corruption, the Honduran investigative outlet Contracorriente found that two leading politicians from the country's ruling National Party were owners of offshore companies in tax havens. Then, the next day, a website purporting to be a news site called Universal Noticias published a story suggesting that a major opposition figure, Manuel Zelaya, also appeared in the Pandora Papers. But unlike the claim from Contracorriente, this second claim was untrue — Agence France-Presse described it as disinformation. (...) The Wish Win firm has worked extensively with Honduras' National Party, especially over the past year, ahead of November's elections. The company's chairman appeared on a flyer posted on Facebook earlier this year by a Mexican political strategist named Sergio José Gutiérrez. The flyer promoted a training camp for political candidates, run by the party, as well as several posts on Twitter alongside well-known National Party figures."²⁰⁸

The month started with some 850'000 Hondurans still without a new ID card.²⁰⁹ Among them are 200'000 young Hondurans who would be able to vote for the first time this election.²¹⁰ The old one was scheduled to become invalid mid-October. Only 15'000 of the Hondurans living abroad will be able to vote. More than 2 million Hondurans live abroad but most don't have access to the new ID card.²¹¹ The validity of the current ID was prolonged to November 15, not long enough to participate in the election.²¹² But the problems lie not there, as voting with old and new IDs could

204 <https://criterio.hn/roberto-contreras-sera-el-candidato-de-libre-a-alcaldia-de-san-pedro-sula/>

205 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/en-tegucigalpa-tambien-buscaran-la-alcaldia-mediante-una-alianza/>

206 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/10/27/violencia-clientelismo-y-corrupcion-un-perfil-de-david-chavez-madison/>

207 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/10/31/alianzas-municipales-buscan-derrotar-a-los-caudillos-nacionalistas/>

208 <https://restofworld.org/2021/political-pr-firm-disinformation-honduras-elections/>

209 <https://proceso.hn/rmp-ha-entregado-42-millones-de-dni-y-tiene-850-mil-por-entregar/>

210 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3257-cuantos-hondurenos-que-cumplen-18-anos-en-2021-quedaron-fuera-de-elecciones>

211 <https://proceso.hn/solo-15-mil-hondurenos-podran-votar-en-el-exterior-en-proximas-elecciones/>

212 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1498217-466/tarjeta-identidad-vigencia-congreso-nacional-extension-15-noviembre-2021>

lead to more fraud.²¹³ The problem was the unwillingness of the JOH regime to give the RNP sufficient resources to distribute the new IDs in time. CESPAD published an analysis of the situation.²¹⁴ On October 8, the electoral census was finally published, after its publication having been postponed several times.²¹⁵ And at the end of October, months too late after efforts by the National Party to undermine it, the Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE) had a provisional regulation approved needed for it to work.²¹⁶

CESPAD published its third and fourth report on the electoral institutionality covering September until October 22²¹⁷ ²¹⁸ as well as a final electoral context analysis.²¹⁹ They also published an important piece of analysis on the so-called "political debt" a finance mechanism for political parties in Honduras. "In the last four election periods (2005 to 2017) the Honduran people have paid more than 500 million lempiras in political debt to the political parties. This is a very high cost in the midst of such a weak democracy, since these are millions and millions of lempiras that are managed at the discretion and with little or no accountability on the part of the leaders of the political parties."²²⁰

CNA revealed a series of irregularities contained in the companies that were hired by the National Electoral Council (CNE), for the transmission and certification of electoral data.²²¹ ²²² The CNE announced to investigate this.²²³ Another source of concern are the credentials of the members of the voting board. The CNE will hand out blank credentials which has led in the past to the selling off of credentials by minor parties to mostly the National Party.²²⁴ Additionally, there is a growing fear of last-minute changes to the electoral law. "The previous Electoral Law, in force until May 2021, had in its articles regulations that blocked any modification of the rules of the game for 18 months prior to the general elections. On the other hand, the new Electoral Law can be modified "at any time, even a week before the elections", said Irías. The concern increases after the virtual session of the National Congress held on October 7 approved a series of decrees, one of them is the extension of the period of sessions from November 1 to January 20, 2022, when the four years of this government will end. Legally, the session should end on October 31. "That means that we will have a Congress with the conditions to issue any regulation that may modify this Electoral Law during all this time", referred Irías."²²⁵

213 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3277-honduras-congreso-revive-fraude-con-doble-tarjeta-de-identidad>

214 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/19/como-avanza-la-depuracion-del-censo-electoral-y-la-entrega-del-nuevo-documento-de-identificacion-en-honduras/>

215 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/publicado-censo-nacional-electoral-definitivo/>

216 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/29/reglamento-provisional-apelaciones-elecciones-generales/>

217 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/05/institucionalidad-electoral-a-menos-de-60-dias-crecen-las-tensiones-en-el-cne-en-torno-a-la-modernizacion-del-proceso-de-votacion/>

218 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/29/entre-disensos-en-el-cne-en-temas-relevantes-proceso-electoral-avanza-y-entra-en-la-recta-final/>

219 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/31/la-narcoactividad-y-violencia-politica-la-tendencia-en-la-cuenta-regresiva-de-las-elecciones-generales/>

220 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/23/la-deuda-politica-el-botin-de-los-partidos-politicos-que-nadie-audita-en-honduras/>

221 <https://www.cna.hn/2021/10/12/el-consejo-nacional-anticorruptcion-revela-irregularidades-en-cuatro-empresas-contratadas-por-el-cne-encargadas-para-la-verificacion-y-transmision-de-datos/>

222 <https://criterio.hn/cna-senala-irregularidades-en-empresas-contratadas-por-el-cne-para-transmision-de-datos/>

223 <https://confidencial.hn.com/kelvin-aguirre-asegura-que-se-hara-un-analisis-de-la-denuncia-del-cna-sobre-contratacion-de-empresas-encargadas-del-trep/>

224 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/14/credenciales-en-blanco-cne-fraude/>

225 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/observadores-critican-proselitismo-del-oficialismo-en-honduras-con-fondos-publicos/>

Electoral violence continues to be a problem in Honduras. In El Negrito, Yoro, an unknown assailant shot at presumed Nationalist activist painting the local headquarter. One young man died.²²⁶ Defensores en Línea reported on an attack on Libre activist Óscar Enríquez in Lepaera, Lempira. Unidentified persons stoned the vehicle in which he was being transported.²²⁷ On October 8, Libre mayoral candidate in Santa Ana de Yusguare, Choluteca Nery Fernando Reyes Pineda, was murdered.²²⁸ In a press release, OACNUDH expressed concern about acts of political violence in Honduras. "OACNUDH has recorded at least 45 serious incidents of political violence in Honduras since the call for primary elections in October 2020, of which 23 constitute violent deaths of candidates, their families, activists and voters, which represents an increase in violent deaths with respect to the pre-electoral stage of 2017".²²⁹ Only days later, on October 21, Riccy Moreno, a journalist and former Congressional candidate for Libre, suffered an assassination attempt in San Pedro Sula.²³⁰ The same day, Choloma councilor candidate Napoleón Muñoz, running for the Patriotic Alliance, was murdered.²³¹ At the end of the month, a rally by Libre was shot at and at least one young man was hurt.²³²

Electoral violence also takes the form of verbal attacks. The Catholic Church in Honduras through the Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez used Sunday's mass to comment on the elections and to go after those supporting LGBTQ+ and women's rights.²³³ CESPAD published a report on electoral violence.²³⁴ The Nationalist president of the CNE, Kevin Aguirre, called on the political parties to sign an agreement on peaceful elections.²³⁵

The elections will be observed among others²³⁶ by a EU and a OAS mission (see last month). On October 17, first people, nine analysts, of the European Electoral Observation Mission (MOE) arrived in Honduras.²³⁷ They were joined by 30 long-term observers by the end of the month.²³⁸ The mission is headed by EU Parliamentarian Željana Zovko.²³⁹ The OAS pre-electoral mission arrived on October 26 and stayed for four days.²⁴⁰ Opposition candidate Xiomara Castro met with the head of the OAS electoral mission, the former president of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera. "With peace and democratic spirit we must overcome the hate campaigns, the incitement to violence, the constant attacks on the National Electoral Council that seek to weaken it, the intention to use two identity cards to distort the new census and the discrediting of the results transmission process; we will overcome all these threats and we will guarantee the triumph of the people of

226 <https://tiempo.hn/tiroteo-a-nacionalistas-sede-en-yoro/>

227 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/por-denunciar-desperdicio-de-alimentos-apedrean-a-defensor-en-lempira/>

228 <https://proceso.hn/asesinan-a-candidato-de-libre-en-la-alcaldia-de-santa-ana-de-yusguare/>

229 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-expresa-preocupacion-por-los-actos-de-violencia-politica-en-el-contexto-electoral-e-insta-a-honduras-a-tomar-medidas-para-garantizar-elecciones-pacificas/>

230 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1451344474433458179>

231 <https://proceso.hn/asesinan-a-candidato-a-regidor-de-la-alianza-patriotica-en-choloma-cortes/>

232 <https://confidencialhn.com/tiroteo-en-contra-de-simpatizantes-de-libre-deja-a-joven-herido-de-bala/>

233 <https://tiempo.hn/homilia-cardenal-imposicion-lgbt/>

234 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/10/05/contexto-electoral-la-violencia-amenaza-el-proceso-electoral/>

235 <https://proceso.hn/cne-exhorta-a-politicos-a-firmar-un-acuerdo-de-paz/>

236 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/rusia-enviara-mision-electoral-a-honduras-dice-dirigente-de-libre-NJ3038971>

237 <https://confidencialhn.com/analistas-de-la-mision-de-observacion-electoral-de-la-union-europea-llegan-a-honduras-para-observar-comicios/>

238 <https://confidencialhn.com/llegan-a-honduras-los-30-observadores-de-largo-plazo-de-la-moe-ue/>

239 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1498509-508/moe-analistas-honduras-elecciones-2021-moe-diputada-croata>

240 <https://proceso.hn/mision-de-la-oea-anuncia-visita-previa-a-las-elecciones-en-honduras/>

Honduras."²⁴¹ ²⁴² In a second meeting with MOE, she expressed concern about electoral violence. "We are concerned about the atmosphere of violence during this month and on election day, we want Honduras to have peaceful and transparent elections".²⁴³

According to Latinobarómetro, the satisfaction with democracy of the Honduran people is at its lowest in recent history with only 15% stating to be satisfied. And only 2.9% of Hondurans believe Honduras to be a full democracy. Accordingly, 51.4% said that they would not vote if the elections were the coming Sunday. But there is some hope that the rejection of the JOH regime (77.8% compared to 56.4% in 2018) will motivate Hondurans to vote against the National Party.²⁴⁴

One month before the elections, no more polls are allowed to be published.²⁴⁵ One of the last one before the deadline by CESPAD had the opposition in a clear lead.²⁴⁶ ²⁴⁷ And unlike earlier elections, even the corporate media outlets reported on this.²⁴⁸

Climate Crisis

Nina Lakhani has an important piece in the Guardian on the effects of the climate crisis on Honduras, especially its economically poorest inhabitants. "Honduras is one of the most unequal, corrupt and violent countries in Latin America, where a handful of politically powerful clans control the economy while more than two-thirds of the population live in poverty. Its geography and socio-economic deficiencies make Honduras one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to extreme weather events like droughts, heatwaves, storms and floods which are increasing in intensity due to global heating."²⁴⁹

Migration

The World Bank estimates that there will be up to 2.1 million climate refugees from Central American and Mexico by the year 2050.²⁵⁰

"At the end of September, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid reported 90,314 applicants for refugee status, of which 31,884 were Hondurans; surpassing Haiti, which followed with 26,007 requests, informed via Twitter the head of said organization Andres Ramirez."²⁵¹ "U.S. authorities detained more than 1.7 million migrants along the Mexico border during the 2021 fiscal year that ended in September, and arrests by the Border Patrol soared to the highest levels ever recorded, according to unpublished U.S. Customs and Border Protection data obtained by The Washington

241 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/28/reunion-xiomara-castro-mision-de-la-oea/>

242 <https://proceso.hn/la-democracia-esta-amenazada-en-honduras-dice-xiomara-castro-de-zelaya-a-la-oea/>

243 <https://proceso.hn/preocupa-que-exista-un-ambiente-de-violencia-el-dia-de-las-elecciones-dice-xiomara-castro-a-ue/>

244 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/honduras-el-pais-centroamericano-mas-insatisfecho-con-la-democracia/>

245 <https://confidencialhn.com/hoy-vence-plazo-para-publicar-encuestas-electorales-cne/>

246 <https://elpulso.hn/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CESPAD.pdf>

247 <https://news.trust.org/item/20211027223105-hvqkb/>

248 <https://proceso.hn/alianza-libre-nasralla-deja-efectos-favorables-para-la-oposicion-politica-en-honduras/>

249 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/28/honduras-climate-crisis-floods-hurricanes-poor-community>

250 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/eta-iota-desplazaron-937-mil-personas-honduras-EI3093897>

251 <https://confidencialhn.com/detienen-a-mas-de-100-migrantes-en-el-sur-de-mexico-en-su-mayoria-hondurenos/>

Post."²⁵² "The United States, through the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), is providing more than \$20 million in additional assistance to help meet urgent humanitarian needs for the nearly 700,000 asylum seekers, refugees, and vulnerable migrants in Central America and Mexico. This additional funding brings the total U.S. humanitarian assistance for Central America and Mexico to more than \$331 million for Fiscal Year 2021."²⁵³

7612 minors had been returned to Honduras by the beginning of the month. The number is expected to rise to at least 10'000 which would be more than double than in 2020.²⁵⁴ On October 6, Mexico detained 103 migrants on their way to the north, 69 were Hondurans among them 28 minors.²⁵⁵ Criterio reported from the Corinto border with Guatemala this month. "[I]t found that thousands of Honduran migrants are being abandoned in the early hours of the morning, leaving them vulnerable and in degrading conditions. This new humanitarian migration crisis arose in mid-September with the "express chain deportations" with around 250 to 450 Honduran migrants being deported daily, in the early morning hours, from the United States under Title 42, the U.S. public health law that prohibits the entry of persons without proper immigration documentation."²⁵⁶ ²⁵⁷ ContraCorriente also reported from the border. "Early Thursday morning, October 14, 11 buses arrived carrying deported migrants who traveled by plane from the United States to Mexico and then by bus to the Guatemala-Honduras border. They arrived and no one from the government was there to register them. According to non-governmental organizations that receive deportees at the border, between 250 and 450 deportees from the United States have been arriving every night since mid-September."²⁵⁸

Mid-October, "[t]he Biden administration said (...) it plans to reinstate the Trump-era border policy known as Remain in Mexico, which forced at least 70,000 asylum seekers to stay in Mexico, many for extended periods and in deprived and dangerous conditions, while they waited for their cases to be considered US courts. Joe Biden suspended the policy formally known as the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) in his first days in office, but a federal judge ordered his administration to put it back into place. In a court filing late on Friday, the US justice department said the program's reinstatement depended on approval from the Mexican government, which is asking for the asylum cases to be settled in six months and for the US to ensure the people affected have timely and accurate information as well as better access to legal counsel. The program is expected to be back in effect in mid-November."²⁵⁹ At the end of the month, "[t]he Biden administration is trying for a second time to end the controversial Trump-era "Remain in Mexico" policy after it was thwarted earlier this year by a federal judge. The policy forced non-Mexican migrants to stay in Mexico until their immigration court date in the US. It was suspended at the beginning of President Joe Biden's term and formally terminated months later. But in August, a federal judge in Texas said that the

252 https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/border-arrests-record-levels-2021/2021/10/19/289dce64-3115-11ec-a880-a9d8c009a0b1_story.html

253 <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-announces-new-humanitarian-aid-in-central-america-and-mexico/>

254 <https://proceso.hn/un-total-de-siete-mil-612-menores-han-retornado-a-honduras-la-mayoria-viajaban-solos/>

255 <https://confidencial.hn.com/detienen-a-mas-de-100-migrantes-en-el-sur-de-mexico-en-su-mayoria-hondurenos/>

256 <https://criterio.hn/el-legado-de-joh-reflexiones-sobre-la-pandemia-61/>

257 <https://criterio.hn/cronica-de-la-nueva-crisis-migratoria-en-la-frontera-de-corinto-honduras/>

258 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/10/15/en-la-madrugada-e-ignorados-por-el-estado-llegan-a-corinto-miles-de-hondurenos-deportados/>

259 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/15/biden-reinstate-remain-in-mexico-trump>

Biden administration had violated federal law in how it went about unwinding the program and required it be restored. Friday, the Department of Homeland Security will release a new memo justifying its desire to end the policy, formally known as the Migrant Protection Protocols, DHS officials say."²⁶⁰

OFRANEH's Miriam Miranda writes about the role of the US pushing (indigenous) Hondurans to leave their country. "Our livelihoods are threatened by the expansion of the global tourist industry, African palm plantations, so-called "Special Economic Development and Employment Zones" (also called Model Cities), and drug cartels that run cocaine through our territories, destined for U.S. markets. We're also under threat from gated retirement communities with U.S. and Canadian financing, as well as mining and hydroelectric projects, including projects with development bank financing."²⁶¹

Guajana Island

A devastating fire on the Guanaja island at the beginning of the month affected up to 4000 people, destroyed dozens of homes, and at least three people were hurt.²⁶² The fires went on for 9 hours and two thirds of the local population was affected.²⁶³ They declared a state of emergency.²⁶⁴ The BCIE donated \$500'000 as emergency help.²⁶⁵

And Light at the End of a Month

"The Honduran María Felícita López, of the Lenca ethnic group, won the sixth edition of the Carlos Escaleras National Award on Wednesday, in honor of the environmentalist of the same name, who was assassinated 24 years ago."^{266 267}

260 <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/29/politics/biden-border-remain-in-mexico/index.html>

261 <https://inthesetimes.com/article/garifuna-honduras-indigenous-peoples-day-human-rights-corruption>

262 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1496604-466/reporte-copeco-danos-isla-guanaja-incendio-bahia-caribe-hondureno-afectados>

263 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1496637-466/guanaja-dia-despues-tragedia-afectados-escombros-incendio>

264 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/10/04/guanaja-se-declara-en-estado-de-emergencia-por-perdidas-del-incendio/>

265 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-dona-500-mil-dolares-para-las-personas-afectadas-por-el-incendio-en-guanaja/>

266 <https://proceso.hn/indigena-lenca-hondurena-gana-premio-nacional-carlos-escaleras/>

267 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/premio-carlos-escaleras-ratifica-mi-compromiso-con-la-defensa-del-territorio-maria-felicita-lopez/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

Past Activities:

-

Upcoming Activities:

-

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