

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – November 2021

It seems there was only one topic this month, the general elections. In the weeks running up to November 28, fear grew ever stronger of a repeat of 2017. A record number of candidates and their family members had been murdered. The JOH regime started an unprecedented vote-buying campaign handing out 7000 Lempiras to over 100'000 families. Days before the election, the new ID needed to vote had still not been distributed to everyone. And it was unclear if the new electoral bodies were up to the task as the National Party tried to undermine them all along the way. On election day, reports of voting centers opening late, long lines, more vote-buying and intimidation of voters further compounded the fear of another electoral fraud. The National Party also seemed to believe in its own capacity to steal elections and announced their victory already by mid-day. But then everything changed as the first results were published. Hondurans went to the polls in higher numbers than feared (participation is estimated at around 69%) and the opposition candidate Xiomara Castro led with 53.55% over Nasry Asfura's 33.87% with 46.5% of votes counted. In the remaining days of November, her victory was recognized by all other parties and even JOH himself. While the fight about the new configuration of Congress will be fought in December, it seems not too optimistic to say: Welcome to a new 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 2021 General Elections

Pre-Electoral Context

Last month, opposition parties joined forces for the presidential election as well as some elections further down the line (see last Monitor). CESPAD published an analysis highlighting the three strategic challenges faced by the opposition alliance: i) Construction of a focused program for political and social democratization; ii) Delimit a political program of the political opposition; iii) Articulate strategic actions with the social and territorial opposition.¹ Two weeks before the election, the alliance grow stronger as independent presidential candidate and journalist Milton Benítez joined them.² Already when the alliance was first announced, various important Liberal leaders joined them. On November 16, even more Liberal Party leaders left their presidential candidate to join the opposition alliance.³ ⁴ A week before the elections, another party, the Independent Movement for Dignity and Hope (Mide) joined the opposition alliance at the presidential level.⁵

The united opposition caused some concern in the National Party as their front runner Nasry Asfura now faces a strong candidate in Xiomara Castro supported by Salvador Nasralla as a vice-presidential candidate. In what can be seen as a direct reaction to the strengthen opposition, the JOH regime approved over 1.3 billion, yes billion, Lempiras for their Bono Vida Mejor social program which is well-known as a vote-buying machine.⁶ ⁷ Additionally, it further increases Honduras already high debt-level.⁸ Criterio later reported that part of the money came from the BCIE.⁹ The Citizen Board of Honduras demanded through a letter sent to the executive president of the BCIE, Dante Mossi, to refrain from disbursing the money.¹⁰ Radio Progreso put together a helpful overview of all the problems with JOH's Vida Mejor social program.¹¹ CESPAD published an important overview of recent loans by international financial institutions and their possible links to the elections.¹²

They also published a report on the misuse of public funds for electoral purposes.¹³ According to estimates by FOSDEH, the Nationalists in power have spent some \$10 billion in the last ten years on the Vida Mejor social program, widely known for its partisan use.¹⁴ On the subject of poverty and democracy, Radio Progreso wrote: "Democracy must be understood as a system of government and organization of the State and society that assumes that no person is excluded and can participate on an equal footing in decision-making. (...) As the United Nations Development Program points

1 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/04/analisis-los-tres-desafios-estrategicos-de-la-coalicion-de-las-fuerzas-de-oposicion-de-honduras/>

2 <https://confidencialhn.com/xiomara-castro-y-milton-benitez-firman-en-marmol-su-compromiso-por-una-honduras-humana-y-libre/>

3 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1502659-508/alianza-liberal-opositora-integracion-xiomara-castro-libre>

4 <https://confidencialhn.com/motivadas-por-vientos-de-cambio-fuerzas-liberales-se-adhieren-a-libre/>

5 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1503590-508/movimiento-independiente-dignidad-esperanza-mide-suma-xiomara-castro-santos-orellana-elecciones>

6 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/01/alerta-electoral-1350-millones-de-lempiras-aprueba-gobierno-de-honduras-dinero-para-el-financiamiento-de-campanas-politicas-y-la-compra-de-conciencias-en-las-elecciones-generales/>

7 <https://criterio.hn/subsidios-una-estrategia-enganosa-en-campana-electoral/>

8 <https://confidencialhn.com/bono-bicentenario-de-1350-millones-de-lempiras-serviria-para-comprar-conciencias-sin-importar-la-deuda-senala-ex-titular-del-bch/>

9 <https://criterio.hn/en-antesala-a-las-elecciones-gobierno-entrega-bono-climatico-con-prestamo-del-bcie/>

10 <https://criterio.hn/exigen-al-bcie-suspender-fondos-que-podrian-estar-siendo-utilizados-en-campana-politica-del-partido-nacional/>

11 <https://radioprogreso.hn/noticias-nacionales/joh-presumio-vida-mejor-en-la-omu-pero-el-programa-apunta-al-clientelismo-y-no-ha-reducido-la-pobreza/>

12 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/14/no-se-descarta-financiamiento-de-campanas-politicas-con-prestamos-internacionales-por-eso-urge-veeduria/>

13 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/03/honduras-el-uso-irregular-de-los-recursos-estatales-en-periodo-electoral/>

14 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/gasto-publico-en-elecciones-ante-el-persistente-blindaje-a-favor-de-la-corrupcion/>

out, poverty and exclusion make illusory the democratic principle that people are full citizens who act in the public sphere as equals. (...) In the words of the Inter-American Commission, "extreme poverty can seriously affect democratic institutions, since it constitutes a denaturalization of democracy and makes citizen participation illusory [...]. In this sense, the recent data on poverty, which reached 74% and which the National Institute of Statistics subsequently erased from its web page so as not to harm the National Party, is one more sign of the weakness of the electoral process that is approaching."¹⁵ On November 4, El Libertador reported: "According to an anonymous complaint, the leadership of the Fire Brigade, formed by José Manuel Zelaya, Marco Antonio Ártica and Marco Valeriano, have committed acts of corruption and nepotism, being accused of helping the ruling National Party with the distribution of the "bolsa solidaria"."¹⁶ And of course, the state security forces also need to have their loyalty paid. On November 9, the Ministry of Security announced a 900 Lempiras pay rise for members of National Police Force.¹⁷ Criterio put together a short history of illegal party financing by the National Party through corruption and drug trafficking.¹⁸

Additionally, the JOH regime with the help of its magistrate at the National Electoral Council (CNE) also tries to impede the participation of opposition politicians. Roberto Contreras, the mayoral candidate for the opposition alliance in San Pedro Sula, held a protest on November 1 denouncing that the CNE was negating his inscription.¹⁹ Libre magistrate at the CNE, Rixi Moncada, also criticized this.²⁰ The CNE officially closed the door for Contreras candidacy on November 3.²¹ But the decision was not made properly, the Liberal and Nationalist magistrate at the CNE kept Libre magistrate Moncada out of the loop and instead invited a substitute to participate in this important meeting.²² Now giving up, the alliance nominated Contreras brother. "Roberto Contreras stated that his legal advisors came to the conclusion that placing his brother as a candidate is the best way to achieve the mayoralty of San Pedro Sula."²³ In order to better understand the collusion between the Liberal and National Party at the CNE, it helps to know some things about Liberal magistrate Ana Paola Hall. "Between 2016 and June 2018, Ana Paola Hall was an official in the Mission of Support Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (Maccih), much of that period she worked within the Anti-Corruption Reform and Advisory Unit, where she shared space with the international investigators who integrated that mission. Sources involved in the work of the Maccih confirmed to Contracorriente that there were suspicions about Hall's work, one of them (who we cannot identify in order to protect them) assured that thanks to her links within the mission, Hall had the capacity to direct which cases were selected, and if in the beginning small cases were selected, it was partly her responsibility. (...) "She was very insistent on continuing with the small cases, and as she was supposedly the expert on the situation in Honduras we trusted her point of view, but when we began to realize that there were other cases that really had substance we asked ourselves why this behavior was happening. We began to do searches and we realized that she

15 <https://radioprogressohn.net/np/la-pobreza-y-la-calidad-del-proceso-electoral/>
16 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3336-honduras-denuncian-a-jefes-bomberos-por-ayudar-con-bolsa-solidaria-y-corrupcion>
17 <https://confidencialhn.com/funcionarios-policiales-recibiran-aumento-salarial-y-bonos-complementarios-a-partir-de-este-mes/>
18 <https://criterio.hn/campanas-politicas-en-honduras-en-las-garras-del-financiamiento-estatal-y-criminal/>
19 <https://proceso.hn/roberto-contreras-protesta-en-el-cne-exigiendo-inscripcion-de-su-candidatura-por-la-alcaldia-de-sps/>
20 <https://confidencialhn.com/negativa-a-inscripcion-de-roberto-contreras-es-acto-injusto-y-de-violencia-politica-electoral-asegura-rix-moncada/>
21 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/cne-decide-no-inscribir-candidatura-de-roberto-contreras/>
22 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/03/reunion-legal-cne-zarpazo-a-roberto-contreras/>
23 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/roberto-contreras-designa-a-su-hermano-como-candidato-a-alcalde-de-san-pedro-sula/>

has a certain family relationship with Roberto Michelletti Bain, the coup leader in 2009, and finally it was established that her links with the government were extremely strong", the anonymous source assures Contracorriente".²⁴

The next day, another opposition candidate became a target. The MP arrested the former captain of the Armed Forces Santos Rodríguez Orellana together with his wife and his mother-in-law on drug trafficking charges.²⁵ He was an outspoken critique of JOH and had raised concern about corruption in the Armed Forces and their link to drug trafficking. He himself was discharged from the Armed Forces in 2014 after their unit had seized a helicopter linked to JOH's convicted drug trafficking brother Tony Hernández.²⁵ In 2014, he was one of the first to link Tony to drug trafficking.²⁶ He is running as an independent presidential candidate. He had no chance of winning, but it seemed like another act of intimidation.²⁷ The National Party also continued to use very direct, i.e. personal, mechanisms to influence the elections. "Criticism and rejection provoked the leaked audio of the head of the Ministry of Education, Arnaldo Bueso, who invited teachers and citizens to vote for the candidates of the National Party in the next elections. In the speech made by the high official in Intibucá, he urged each member of his audience to get at least 20 more people to vote in favor of the ruling party".²⁸

By the beginning of the month, there were still some 600'000 undelivered ID cards according to the representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Richard Barathe.²⁹ By mid-November, the RNP itself spoke of 500'000 undelivered IDs.³⁰ Libre magistrate at the CNE, Rixi Moncada, demanded an extra effort to hand out the missing identity cards needed for the elections.³¹ "Marlon Omar Carías Martínez, congressional candidate for the Patriotic Alliance party, denounced this Saturday that the National Party (PN), mapped the whole country to deliver the new identities in the places where his co-religionists are and to take advantage in the general elections."³² On a more hopeful note: one million less Honduras were called to vote this year than four years ago. This means two things: first, that the census was cleaned up to some extent, second, there was maybe even more fraud in 2017 as previously thought.³³ On November 16, the old identity card became invalid. At that time, the RNP said that 300'000 new IDs still had to be distributed.³⁴ But a week later, just six days before the election, the RNP stated that 95% of the new ID cards requested had been distributed. But this would mean that there were still a bit less than 500'000 ID cards not distributed, i.e. the RNP disproving its own statement. A day before the elections, at least 161'000 new identity cards had not been distributed.³⁵

24 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/09/los-intereses-politicos-y-empresariales-de-ana-paola-hall/>
25 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/excapitan-antinarcotico-y-candidato-presidencial-hondureno-santos-rodriguez-detenido-por-presunto-lavado-de-dinero>
26 <https://twitter.com/jeffgemst/status/1456277469854531595>
27 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3337-honduras-designada-del-capitan-santos-cataloga-arresto-como-sabotaje-politico>
28 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/19/tachan-de-verguenza-y-extorsion-que-secretario-de-educacion-pida-votos-para-el-oficialismo/>
29 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/05/faltan-por-entregar-unas-600-mil-nuevas-identidades-a-pocos-dias-de-las-elecciones-generales/>
30 <https://confidencialhn.com/medio-millon-de-dni-estan-pendientes-de-reclamar-senala-oscar-rivera-del-rnp/>
31 <https://confidencialhn.com/dni-deben-ser-entregados-en-extensas-jornadas-indica-rix-moncada/>
32 <https://confidencialhn.com/denuncian-que-el-partido-nacional-mapeo-todo-el-pais-para-entregar-dni-en-los-lugares-donde-estran-sus-correligionarios/>
33 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/elecciones2021/honduras-a-las-umas-con-un-millon-menos-de-votantes-que-en-2017-KC3466837>
34 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/16/entra-en-vigencia-el-documento-nacional-de-identificacion-quedan-300-mil-por-entregar/>
35 <https://proceso.hn/alrededor-de-161-mil-nuevas-identidades-pendientes-de-entregar/>

Additionally, out of the more than 1 million Honduran adults living in the US, only 12'867 have the new ID and can vote.^{36 37} The diaspora denounced this and even wrote an open letter to the UN.³⁸ On the importance of the diaspora voice, Jeff Ernst published an article. "Four years after a disputed election was decided by a margin of roughly 50,000 votes, Honduras is set to elect a new president on November 28 in what most independent observers expect to be a close race between the two primary contenders. (...) Over the past four years, emigration from Honduras has far surpassed any previous presidential term in the country's history. A migration model compiled by the Strauss Center at the University of Texas at Austin estimates that around 450,000 Hondurans permanently left for Mexico or the United States during that period. Tens of thousands more emigrated to other parts of the world, including Spain. Studies on diaspora voting and the political preferences of emigrants suggest that such a mass exodus could produce an electoral disadvantage for the Honduran opposition. "From the migrants' perspective, typically there is an anti-official tendency, anti-incumbent tendency from the period of migration, so if people are leaving the country, they will often times blame the incumbent party, at least implicitly, for the conditions under which they left," said Michael Paarlberg, an associate professor at VCU who studies diaspora politics. Although Hondurans have enjoyed the legal right to vote abroad since 2001, access is more limited than at any time since. Honduran emigrants – 99 percent of whom will not be able to vote – are estimated to favor the opposition by as much as a two to one margin."³⁹

At the end of the month, Congress decided to prolong the validity of the old ID to December 31, but only for administrative tasks and not for the election.⁴⁰ "The Libre deputy, Jari Dixon, declared to Expediente Público that the extension of the validity of the identity card has two risks, one of them is "that it generates in the population disinterest in going to claim their new identity card and, therefore, they stop voting". Dixon said that there are more than 230'000 people who have not claimed the new ID card. The second risk, "more serious, is that in this week remaining (for the elections) the Nationalists and Liberals meet again in the National Congress and tell us that we are going to vote with the two identity cards", he affirmed. If this happens, "it means that we would be working for the electoral process of November 28 with two electoral censuses, an electoral census totally contaminated with more than 400'000 people deceased or no longer living in the country", which is the 2017 census, and the 2021 census that was purged. The difference between the census that served as the basis for the 2017 and 2021 elections is almost 700 thousand voters. "That could open a big door to the next electoral fraud," he said."⁴¹

As reported before, the JOH regime tried all along the way to undermine the electoral process, e.g. by holding back the budget for the CNE until the last minute or by not letting the Electoral Procedural Law go through Congress. CESPAD has a new analysis on what the second means for the electoral process. "To date, no person has been sanctioned or, in the extreme, has been imprisoned, despite the fact that the last three electoral processes in Honduras were overshadowed by allegations of fraud, adulteration of original closing minutes, theft of documents, vote buying,

36 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1503567-466/nueva-tarjeta-identidad-honduras-registro-entrega>

37 <https://proceso.hn/por-desorden-en-rnp-muchos-hondurenos-no-tendran-derecho-al-voto-acusa-miembro-de-asj/>

38 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/comunicado-publico-a-onu-por-la-comunidad-hondurena-viviendo-en-el-exterior-del-pais/>

39 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/honduras-election-excludes-diaspora-votes-could-determine-outcome>

40 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1503079-466/identidad-ampliacion-tarjeta-31-diciembre-2021-honduras-dni-sesion-congreso>

41 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/en-honduras-renuevan-validez-de-vieja-tarjeta-de-identidad-pero-no-se-podra-votar-con-ella/>

intimidation of citizens and manipulation of results, murders, among other crimes that have never been elucidated in a competent body and based on the respective law or regulation. Therefore, experts predict that without an Electoral Procedural Law in the 2021 election process, history will simply repeat itself."⁴²

"Hundreds of fake Twitter accounts targeted opposition candidates and urged citizens not to vote in an upcoming Honduran presidential election, according to research published Wednesday. The 317 accounts appear to be part of an effort to influence the Nov. 28 Honduran presidential election by denigrating two of opposition candidates running against the incumbent National Party of Honduras' candidate, Nasry Asfura, according to Nisos, the threat intelligence firm that published its findings Wednesday. The network of profiles in some cases used authentic photos from Peruvian Facebook accounts in an attempt to aid legitimacy, some cases apparently using computer-generated images as avatars. (...) "This takes a lot of organization to obtain these accounts, to create all of the content that these accounts were sharing, to make the phrases, to make the memes, this takes a lot of preparation," Hicks said of the company's findings. "Even though from our view this may not look like the most sophisticated thing, somebody, somewhere, some group took the time to plan this and to coordinate this. The actors are very determined to make this type of influence."⁴³ A week later, Time also reported on this. "They're part of an ongoing online influence campaign to boost the ruling party of President Juan Orlando Hernández, amplifying Hernández's profile and sowing distrust and confusion among voters. Twitter and Facebook have taken down several inauthentic networks in recent years tied to people close to Hernández, who was reelected in 2017 despite fraud allegations."⁴⁴ "A monitoring conducted during the last two months by the Observatory of Disinformation, Honduras Verifica, reveals that about 180 Facebook profiles have been dedicated to distribute about 400 daily messages of disinformation, hate messages and discrimination, during the last two months, i.e. from September 25 to November 22, 2021."⁴⁵

Electoral violence continued to be a problem in the run up to the elections. Part of it is directed at candidates, but there seems also to be a plan in place to intimidate possible voters. "Pastors of different faiths issued a statement this November 3, 2021, in which they denounced a campaign of intimidation by President Juan Orlando Hernandez, prior to the general elections, with the aim of sowing fear so that the people do not exercise their suffrage."⁴⁶ Criterio wrote about the potential of a new post-electoral crisis in Honduras.⁴⁷ On November 4, Fonac announced to create an early warning system for political violence linked to the general elections - a mechanism that will be sponsored by UNDP.⁴⁸ The next day, "[t]he National Electoral Council (CNE) announced that the presidential candidates will sign a peace agreement for the general elections to take place peacefully, but one of the proprietary councilors, Rixi Moncada, considered that it could remain only on paper".⁴⁹ She was tragically proven right in the coming days. On November 11, Óscar

42 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/08/sin-la-ley-procesal-electoral-la-seguridad-juridica-de-las-elecciones-generales-sera-incierta/>

43 <https://www.cyberscoop.com/honduras-twitter-influence-operations-election/>

44 <https://time.com/6116979/honduras-political-disinformation-facebook-twitter/>

45 <https://confidencialhn.com/unas-180-cuentas-de-facebook-difunden-al-dia-400-mensajes-de-desinformacion-y-odio-segun-estudio/>

46 <https://pasosdeanilmalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3286-pastores-denuncian-campana-de-intimidacion-de-joh-para-que-el-pueblo-no-salga-a-ejercer-el-sufragio>

47 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-a-las-puertas-de-nueva-crisis-postelectoral-que-en-materia-economica-seria-demoledora/>

48 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/04/crean-sistema-sobre-alertas-de-violencia-politica-a-pocos-dias-de-las-elecciones-generales/>

49 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/05/acuerdo-de-paz-candidatos-cne/>

Moya, a Liberal councilor in Santiago de Puringla, La Paz, was shot and killed.⁵⁰ Two days later, Francisco Gaitán, the mayor of Cantarranas, Francisco Morazán, was shot dead in the midst of a political rally. He was running for reelection for the Liberal Party.⁵¹ Another mayoral candidate, David Castro from Cedros, Francisco Morazán, said to have suspended his campaign due to death threats.⁵² The same day, local Libre leader in Santa Bárbara and councilor candidate Elvir Casaña. Unknown assailants came to his house and murdered him.⁵³ In San Jerónimo, Copán, a Liberal rally ended in a shootout which left at least one person dead.⁵⁴ OACNUDH⁵⁵, the UN⁵⁶ and the OAS⁵⁷ all denounced the violence and called for peaceful elections. By that time, OACNUDH had documented at least 28 murders of candidates and close relatives.⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ Another day later, Darío Juárez, deputy mayoral candidate for the Liberal Party in Concordia, Olancho, was murdered.⁶⁰ The Electoral Observation Mission of the EU condemned the violence and called again for peaceful elections.⁶¹

On November 9, both the US and the UN called among other things for peaceful elections.⁶² ⁶³ Maybe both the UN and the US should have talked to the National Party about violence. In a rally on November 7, National activist held up a banner depicting Libre candidate Xiomara Castro stabbing a pregnant woman calling her a murderer.⁶⁴ Women's rights organizations denounced this.⁶⁵ Libre later presented a legal challenge against the National Party.⁶⁶ On November 15, feminist organizations protested yesterday outside the CNE demanding that they make a stop to campaign promoting hate against women.⁶⁷

In a response to the electoral violence, Congress announced a decree prohibiting the carrying of arms 10 days before and after the elections.⁶⁸ The same day, on November 15, the UNDP together with the EU activated the Early Warning System (SAT). "The SAT for electoral and gender conflict creates a system of anticipation and early warning that warns of this type of events, which will allow Honduran authorities to adopt measures to give "an effective response", said Esquiva in declarations to Efe."⁶⁹ On November 16, Brian A. Nichols, Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, tweeted: "The U.S. condemns the violence against political candidates over the weekend. We urge Honduran candidates and political parties to commit to a pact of non-violence during peaceful elections. The Honduran people deserve a safe and secure electoral process."⁷⁰ But just a day later, there was an attack against the mayoral candidate in Campamento, Olancho, Héctor René Estrada. He was hurt when the car he drove in was shot at.⁷¹ In El Progreso, the car of mayoral

50 <https://confidencialhn.com/asesinan-a-regidor-liberal-en-santiago-de-puringla-la-paz/>
51 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1502253-466/matan-alcald-cantarranas-francisco-gaitan-honduras-elecciones-2021>
52 <https://proceso.hn/alcald-de-cedros-david-castro-cancela-campana-politica-por-amenazas-de-muerte/>
53 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/en-su-casa-asesinan-a-dirigente-de-libre-santabarbarens/>
54 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/fiesta-politica-en-copan-deja-un-joven-muerto-y-dos-heridos/>
55 <https://confidencialhn.com/oacnudh-ve-con-preocupacion-muertes-violentas-previo-a-proceso-electoral-en-honduras/>
56 <https://confidencialhn.com/onu-expresa-preocupacion-por-violencia-electoral-en-honduras/>
57 <https://proceso.hn/oea-condena-actos-de-violencia-politica-y-aboga-por-un-acuerdo-de-paz-en-honduras/>
58 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1460032890234880000>
59 <https://oacnudh.hn/infografico-sobre-casos-de-violencia-politica/>
60 <https://confidencialhn.com/asesinan-a-aspirante-a-vicealcalde-por-el-municipio-de-concordia-olancho/>
61 <https://confidencialhn.com/mision-de-la-ue-hace-un-llamamiento-en-contra-de-la-violencia-electoral/>
62 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1458157251940716550>
63 <https://honduras.un.org/es/157653-naciones-unidas-llama-candidatas-y-candidatos-politicos-debatir-de-forma-pacifica-y>
64 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3290-con-campana-antiaborto-partido-nacional-promueve-el-odio-contra-las-mujeres-de-honduras>
65 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/10/la-campana-de-odio-hacia-las-mujeres-detras-de-la-campana-politica-del-partido-de-gobierno/>
66 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/12/denuncian-al-partido-nacional-ante-la-fiscalia-de-la-mujer-por-violencia-de-genero/>
67 <https://confidencialhn.com/organizaciones-feministas-protestan-frente-al-cne-y-piden-eliminar-propaganda-politica-que-incita-a-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres/>
68 <https://confidencialhn.com/cn-preve-decreto-para-la-prohibicion-de-armas-en-honduras-en-marco-de-las-elecciones-generales/>
69 <https://confidencialhn.com/activan-en-honduras-un-sistema-de-alerta-temprana-por-conflictos-electorales/>
70 <https://twitter.com/WHAAssSecty/status/1460607765806821382>
71 <https://confidencialhn.com/aspirante-a-la-alcaldia-por-campamento-sufre-atentado-en-olancho/>

candidate for the party of Salvador Nasralla, Juan Carlos Carbajal, was shot at. The car was parked outside the PSH headquarter where several candidates held a meeting.⁷²

On November 23, the UN sent out another statement on the issue. "UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Tuesday expressed her deep concern about political violence in Honduras, which has already claimed 29 lives, and called on the authorities to ensure an environment conducive to holding peaceful, transparent and genuine elections. (...) Since primary elections were called in September 2020, the UN Human Rights Office in Honduras has recorded 63 cases of political violence, including 29 killings, 14 attacks, 12 instances of aggressive behaviour, as well as seven people directly threatened and one kidnapped. (...) Some political figures have also widely used hate speech as a political tool, including against people defending women's sexual and reproductive rights, leading in some cases to discrimination and violence. "Hate speech has no place in a democracy," the High Commissioner stressed. The UN Human Rights Chief called for prompt, thorough, impartial and effective investigations into all acts of political violence, with a view to holding those responsible accountable. Bachelet also raised her concerns regarding shrinking civic space in the country, with members of civil society and human rights defenders regularly harassed, persecuted and attacked. So far this year, the Office in Honduras has recorded 240 attacks against human rights defenders and journalists. (...) The UN Human Rights Chief stressed the importance of all those involved in the electoral process adopting measures to avoid a repeat of the events in 2017, when serious human rights violations were committed in the context of post-election protests."⁷³ A day later, Liberal mayor candidate Dario Urbina in Yocón, Olancho, was shot dead.⁷⁴ Further north, in Esparta, Atlántida, Libre mayor candidate Javier Villalba suffered an assassination attempt.⁷⁵

Another problem with the elections is just the general lack of transparency. "In spite of the fact that the 2021 electoral process is one of the most audited in the political history of the country and that there has been a lot of pressure for the candidates to render accounts, 463 elected candidates, most of them mayoral candidates and some congression candidates, attend the general elections without providing reports indicating the origin of the money that finances their political campaigns, violating a law that establishes that they can even be suspended from the electoral contest. These 463 aspirants to positions of popular election participated in the primary elections, last March 14, without having presented their income and expenditure reports before the Financing, Transparency and Fiscalization Unit (UFTF), better known as Clean Politics Unit (UPL), as referred to in the report called "Accountability: Primary Elections 2021, preliminary report"." This report also finds that the National Party, publicly, spent \$9.5 million on its electoral campaign, the Liberal Party \$3 million and Libre less than \$900'000.⁷⁶ The commissioner of the Clean Politics Unit (UPL), Javier Franco, warned that politicians who don't disclose their finances would face a penalty of at least 50 minimum salaries.⁷⁷ On November 12, "[s]everal civil society organizations demand the Institute of Access to Public Information (IAIP) to rule on the petition they filed to declare null the resolution

72 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/atentan-contra-candidatos-del-psh-en-el-progreso-yoro-IN3780903>

73 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27845&LangID=E>

74 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/en-emboscada-asesinan-a-dirigente-liberal-en-yocon-olancho/>

75 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1503885-466-matan-lider-partido-liberal-atentan-contra-candidato-de-libre-olancho-atlantida>

76 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/10/por-que-decenas-de-candidatos-no-deberian-participar-en-las-elecciones-generales-2021/>

77 <https://confidencialhn.com/una-multa-de-50-salarios-minimos-se-impondra-a-politicos-que-no-presenten-informe-financiero-de-campanas-politicas/>

that classifies as reserved the information on the data of those who contribute, privately, to the electoral campaigns of candidates for elected office, at any elective level”.⁷⁸ According to the Revenue Administration Service (SAR), 595 candidates have a high tax arrears of more than 203 million Lempiras.⁷⁹ And out of all the candidates, less than 10% pay any taxes.⁸⁰

On November 10, the Convergence against Continuity held a press conference to comment on the upcoming elections. "We note that these elections are being held in the context of a narco-dictatorship, whose builders came to control the State through violent and unconstitutional means and are not willing to hand over power through democratic political means, because they do not believe in democracy nor the rule of law. This mafia is the enemy of Honduras, and its members are determined to continue with the hijacking of the State through the control of electoral results, the militarization of society, repression and stricter laws. In this sense, we ratify our repudiation of the mafia led by Juan Orlando Hernandez and at the same time we note that his days are numbered because the people cannot stand another day of this nightmare of a government. There are clear indications that the criminal group in power perceives its imminent defeat and therefore orchestrates a great electoral fraud based on the manipulation of the voting process and vote counting. For such mechanism to work, they need the voter to give in to the purchase of his conscience for a few coins, to stay passively at home and allow them to apply their fraudulent strategy. For this reason we make a vehement call to the noble Honduran people to ignore the attempts to corrupt their conscience or to put fear in them to go to vote; we urge them to mobilize massively to the polls and to defend their vote from these anti-democratic machinations. (...) To the authorities and the basic scale of the military and police we make a patriotic appeal to them not to lend themselves to violate once again the sovereign will of the people. (...) To the Government of the United States and the Secretary General of the OAS we strongly demand that they do not support once again the drug-trafficking mafia that has hijacked the State of Honduras, as they did in 2017, endorsing the scandalous electoral fraud that the regime is preparing, to the shame of the world and its own taxpayers."^{81 82} The same day, the Network for Democratic Equity in Honduras (REDH) presented a preliminary report of the electoral process in which they point out six important findings that could be a determining factor to avoid a new political crisis and for the voting to be carried out with transparency.⁸³

On November 15, US Senators and members of Congress wrote a joint letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken pushing the U.S. State Department to do more to ensure a free and fair elections in Honduras. "With only two weeks remaining before the general elections take place, there is increased potential for violence, fraud, or restrictions on the ability of Honduran citizens to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, all of which are protected under the Honduran constitution," the members wrote in a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. "We believe it is essential that the United States be viewed as a neutral, credible, and impartial observer

78 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/12/organizaciones-exigen-al-iaip-resolver-recurso-de-nulidad-que-clasifica-de-reservada-la-informacion-sobre-el-financiamiento-de-las-campanas-politicas/>

79 <https://confidencialhn.com/a-mas-de-1-203-millones-asciende-mora-tributaria-de-candidatos-de-distintos-partidos-politicos/>

80 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3370-honduras-insolito-el-93-por-ciento-de-candidatos-a-eleccion-no-paga-impuestos>

81 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/ante-la-ebullicion-politica-hondurena-posicionamiento-de-convergencia-contr-el-continuisimo/>

82 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/berta-oliva-la-convergencia-contr-el-continuisimo-esta-lista-para-accionar-y-avanzar/>

83 <https://criterio.hn/organizaciones-de-sociedad-civil-proceso-electoral-tiene-mucha-incertidumbre/>

and support an outcome in Honduras that is genuinely democratic and inclusive.”⁸⁴ A day later, CESPAD published an overview of the context in which the elections take place, the risk the elections face and the opportunities that arise with it.⁸⁵ ⁸⁶ On that day, the CNE had a test run of the Preliminary Electoral Results Transmission System (TREP).⁸⁷ Afterwards, Libre magistrate Rixi Moncada said that “[t]he process in its basic steps is assured”. Alluding to 2017, she also said that “the Empresa Nacional de Energía Eléctrica (ENEE) guarantees the efficient and uninterrupted supply of energy service on election day, and that no maintenance of transmission lines is scheduled for that date”.⁸⁸

In the past, there was an active market for the credentials of the members of the polling stations, i.e. the National Party bought them from all the minor parties to control the count of the votes. This time, the CNE announced that the political parties should give them the complete name of their representatives so not to give out blank credentials. But by November 17, only Libre and the National Party had done so.⁸⁹ According to Libre magistrate Rixi Moncada, they hope to counteract this by making the vote count public prohibiting to close down the polling stations.⁹⁰ Doubts abound if this would help. Expediente Público published a long article on the problem. “An army of more than 182 thousand people will be in charge next November 28 of operating the Voting Boards (JRV), the electoral bodies responsible for the scrutiny and transmission of results of the general elections. Formerly known as Electoral Receiving Tables (MER), the JRVs are the gateway to the exercise of suffrage but also to fraud, a constant concern in the electoral process taking place in Honduras. Hence, the new Electoral Law, approved last May, included a series of provisions, among them the implementation of an Electoral Results Transmission System (TREP) and the use of fingerprint readers. The new legislation also included reforms related to the integration of the JRVs, considered as the main weakness within the electoral system. One of them mandates political parties, fourteen in this electoral process, to deliver to the CNE a list with the names of their representatives in the JRVs, with the purpose of putting an end to the delivery of blank credentials that allowed the trafficking of these accreditations. The mandate is that “credentials were not going to be handed out, but that the list was going to appear in the electoral suitcase and there at the moment of integrating the table the identification (of the representatives of the political parties) was going to be with the identity cards”, explained to Expediente Público the former president of the extinct Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and one of the drafters of the new Electoral Law, Augusto Aguilar. For Aguilar “there is some irregularity” in the fact that credentials will now be handed out, despite the fact that article 251 of the Electoral Law, related to the accreditation of the JRV members, states that they must present themselves at the voting center with their National Identification Document (DNI).”⁹¹

CESPAD also covered the challenges faced by the members of the JRV. “The National Electoral Council (CNE), will test in the general elections of next November 28, what it calls state-of-the-art

84 <https://www.merkley.senate.gov/news/press-releases/members-of-congress-lead-push-to-ensure-free-and-fair-elections-in-honduras-2021>

85 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/16/elecciones-hondurenas-en-la-recta-final-su-contexto-riesgos-y-oportunidades/>

86 ENG: <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/21/electoral-observatory-honduran-elections-in-the-final-stretch-context-risks-and-opportunities/>

87 <https://confidencialhn.com/cne-realizara-este-dia-un-simulacro-de-elecciones-para-probar-el-trep/>

88 <https://confidencialhn.com/proceso-electoral-en-sus-pasos-basicos-se-encuentra-listo-asegura-integrante-del-cne-rixi-romana-moncada-godoy/>

89 <https://confidencialhn.com/solo-libre-y-pn-han-presentado-lista-de-los-miembros-de-las-juntas-receptoras-de-votos-revela-kelvin-aguirre/>

90 <https://tiempo.hn/escrutinio-sera-publico-prohibido-cerrar-centros/>

91 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/honduras-en-contra-de-la-nueva-ley-electoral-reactivan-las-credenciales-a-los-partidos-para-las-mesas-de-voto/>

technology, acquired to reinforce the Preliminary Electoral Results Transmission System (TREP). The process generates fears because the members of the Voting Boards (JRV), key pieces in the process, are integrated by people with very little technical instruction, and they are the ones who will have the obligation to guarantee the transparency of this stage of the process. What will happen on election day if the TREP equipment fails, or those responsible for transmitting the data have not been sufficiently trained?"⁹² On November 22, the Advisory Council of the CNE recommended to print the credentials of the members of the Voting Boards without names.⁹³ This raised further alarm about a possible electoral fraud.⁹⁴ ⁹⁵ The next day, it was confirmed that the printing of the credentials had already started without names on them.⁹⁶

A week before the elections, Nationalist presidential candidate Nasry Asfura made international headlines, but not the ones he would have liked. "Documents accessed by the international news agency AFP have shown the link of the presidential candidate of the ruling National Party, Nasry Asfura, in the notorious "Diamante" corruption case against Mayor Johnny Araya of San José, Costa Rica, a report confirmed by the Costa Rican newspaper La Nación."⁹⁷ Yani Rosenthal, the presidential candidate of (part of) the Liberal Party, also made corruption-related headlines. "Attorney Juan Carlos Sánchez Cantillano, as legal representative of Cementos del Norte, S.A., filed a complaint against the presidential candidate, Yani Rosenthal. The legal representative of the cement company explained that the accusation is that Rosenthal transferred funds from Cementos del Norte to other companies in 2015, while he was president of the Board of Directors of the cement company."⁹⁸

ContraCorriente covered the role of organized religion in the elections. "In Honduras, both the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church have been part of public decision-making in the country. This definitely marks the positions of candidates for elected office on issues such as sex education, the teaching of the Bible in schools, and sexual and reproductive rights."⁹⁹ In the case of Nasry Asfura, it went even further. "The Network of Pastors and Evangelical Leaders of Honduras (REPLIEH), the Lucas Foundation for Health and the Latin American Theological Fellowship of Honduras (FTL-Honduras), representing an independent evangelical sector, point out that the Evangelical Confraternity has acted with abuse of authority by signing an agreement with the presidential candidate of the National Party, Nasry Asfura. In a public letter sent to the Evangelical Confraternity they point out that the agreement covers issues such as abortion, family and geopolitical issues that have become topics of manipulation by the party campaign agendas before the elections of November 28."¹⁰⁰

A week before the elections, the CNE announced to accredit some 7000 national and 400 international electoral observers.¹⁰¹ Radio Progreso highlights the importance of "a consistent

92 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/21/en-el-ojo-del-huracan-los-miembros-de-las-juntas-receptoras-de-votos/>

93 <https://confidencialhn.com/rixi-moncada-reitera-que-se-debe-respetar-el-principio-de-las-credenciales-normativas/>

94 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/22/consejo-consultivo-sugiere-al-consejo-electoral-que-las-credenciales-deben-ir-en-blanco/>

95 <https://confidencialhn.com/jorge-aldana-las-credenciales-sin-nombre-es-lo-peor-que-le-puede-pasar-al-proceso-electoral-del-28-de-noviembre/>

96 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/elecciones2021/credenciales-imprimen-nombres-fotos-elecciones-honduras-LE3897490>

97 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3376-honduras-asfura-nombrado-en-diamante-escandalo-de-corrupcion-en-costa-rica>

98 <https://confidencialhn.com/cementera-interpone-denuncia-contra-yani-rosenthal-por-autorizar-prestamo-de-200-millones-de-lempiras/>

99 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/18/la-confesion-religiosa-de-los-politicos-hondurenos-una-influencia-en-temas-de-debate-publico/>

100 <https://criterio.hn/confraternidad-evangelica-cometio-abuso-al-firmar-convenio-con-nasry-asfura/>

101 <https://proceso.hn/cne-acreditara-alrededor-de-siete-mil-observadores-nacionales-y-400-internacionales/>

international monitoring mission". "Honduran society only aspires to have a reliable and transparent electoral process that guarantees that the electoral results are consistent with the will of the people. For this reason, international electoral observation missions play a fundamental role in promoting the transparency of the process, citizen confidence and avoiding electoral fraud. But this requires that such missions be truly independent, professional, coherent and avoid double standards. We make a special call to the European Union Election Observation Mission to redress its regrettable role in the 2017 elections and demonstrate consistency with the promotion of human rights and democracy."¹⁰² But not all observers were welcomed by the JOH regime. "Stranded for hours, mistreated at customs and border points and many did not even manage to enter Honduras, this was the odyssey that international observers from the World Network of Young Politicians claim to have endured for the upcoming general elections."¹⁰³

On November 24, CESPAD presented the fifth monitoring report of the electoral institutionality, with a view to the elections of November 2021, entitled: "Between delays and uncertainties, electoral process approaches the end", which records the events from October 20 to November 23.¹⁰⁴ They also published the fifth electoral context report. "In this fifth monitoring report "Without peace agreement and with requests for a halt to violence, Honduras enters the final stretch of the 2021 general election process", carried out between October 25 and November 25, 14 very violent events are reported that put mayors, mayoral candidates and supporters of various political parties, who were assaulted in various ways, in the midst of political rallies, at the center as protagonists/victims."¹⁰⁵ The fifth report on public spending followed, "Honduras: the irregular use of state resources during the electoral period". In it, they pointed out that "the non-compliance with the Electoral Law of Honduras, due to the public exposure of public officials to promote the candidates of the ruling party, particularly the figure of the President of the Republic, has been cynical and obscene. This condition intensified and completely deformed the equity that is supposed to prevail in a fair electoral competition".¹⁰⁶

The same day, CNE's Rixi Moncada corroborated that at least 2400 multifunctional printers of the 6000 to be used in the elections had not arrived in the country.¹⁰⁷ Two days before the election, it was promised that they would arrive on time.¹⁰⁸ Another problem resurfaced just a few days before the elections. "Thousands of Hondurans will have to exercise their suffrage in the same voting center where they did it in 2017, despite having updated their domicile. The news had already been announced since last month by the National Electoral Council (CNE), after the National Congress (CN) did not consult this collegiate body to annul the changes of domicile made by the compatriots in September. In this sense, more than 876,000 citizens will have to exercise their vote this coming Sunday in the place where they did it in the last general elections, even though they updated their address in the registration to process the new identity."¹⁰⁹

102 <https://radioprogreso.net/np/la-importancia-de-una-observacion-internacional-coherente/>

103 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/25/denuncian-malos-tratos-y-prohibicion-de-ingreso-a-observadores-internacionales/>

104 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/24/entre-retrasos-e-incertidumbres-proceso-electoral-se-aproxima-a-la-final/>

105 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/25/sin-acuerdo-de-paz-y-con-peticiones-de-un-alto-a-la-violencia-honduras-entra-a-la-recta-final-del-proceso-de-elecciones-generales-2021/>

106 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/26/la-intensificacion-de-la-competencia-desigual-el-uso-abusivo-de-los-recursos-publicos/>

107 <https://confidencialhn.com/2-mil-400-impresoras-multifuncionales-no-han-llegado-al-pais-a-dias-de-las-elecciones-senala-rix-moncada/>

108 <https://confidencialhn.com/afirman-que-en-las-proximas-horas-estaria-llegando-al-pais-el-equipo-del-sistema-trep/>

109 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/elecciones2021/hondurenos-votaran-2017-elecciones-generales-2021-DG3967005>

On November 26, the CNE held a press conference yesterday informing about the state of the elections and how they will inform about the procedure. "The CNE does not have and will not have secrets. All information will be public. In view of the doubts implanted in the population, we unwaveringly ratify that in compliance with the Electoral Law of Honduras, on November 28 at 08:00 at night in public session, we, the three councilors, will begin the disclosure of the results at the presidential level, making known what we have up to that time, continuing periodically, in the understanding that these preliminary results do not define the election."¹¹⁰

A day before the elections, there were already several articles highlighting fraud.¹¹¹ "The deputy of the opposition Partido Innovación y Unidad-Social Demócrata (PINU-SD) and also a member of the opposition unit headed by the Partido Libertad y Refundación (Libre), Luis Redondo, denounced on his Facebook account the disguised vote buying and delivery of bonds by the Partido Nacional. (...) The Electoral Youth Platform (PJE), a space promoted by the Center for the Study of Democracy (Cespad) and Karla García, secretary of international relations of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (Ofraneh), denounced the buying and selling of votes a few hours before the electoral process."¹¹² "Audios are circulating in which neighbors in Nicaragua bordering the department of Choluteca are given instructions to vote for the National Party and are offered money in exchange for voting for the National Party. For its part, the Network of Human Rights Defenders of the South (REDEHSUR), denounces that several buses with Nicaraguans have entered the country, obtaining cloned identity cards."¹¹³ Jeff Ernst published an article solely dedicated to vote-buying by the National Party. "A few days before Honduras holds a crucial general election on Sunday, Adolfo Valladares, 50, already had his vote set in stone. "I'm going to vote for the National Party all the way down the ballot," said Valladares, a subsistence farmer from the mountaintop town of Ojojona, about an hour outside the capital Tegucigalpa. His vote wasn't decided because of a candidate he likes or the party's proposals, but rather because of a promise that he'd receive a direct-cash transfer, called a bonus, in December if he votes for the ruling National Party – and they win. "Otherwise, I wouldn't even vote," he said. Across the country, National Party politicians and activists have feverishly been doling out cash and promises of future payments totaling well over a hundred million dollars in what critics say is a desperate attempt to swing the election in its favor. (...) Four years after a disputed election that was decided by roughly 50,000 votes, hundreds of thousands of households have been targeted by the campaign in the three months leading up to the November 28 vote. (...) To obtain the bonuses in Ojojona, residents must fill out an application that is then delivered to National Party activists. Univision obtained one of the applications and the political implications are clear. People are asked questions that include how many votes are in their household, what their designated voting center is, whether or not they have obtained the new identity card needed to vote in this election, and perhaps most telling of all, what they think of the party's mayoral candidate Aguilar."¹¹⁴

110 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/elecciones2021/800-pm-cne-divulgara-primeros-resultados-preliminares-elecciones-honduras-ID3995684>

111 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/irregularities-reported-on-day-prior-to-elections/>

112 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-que-nacionalistas-compran-votos-con-bonos-a-pocas-horas-de-las-elecciones/>

113 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/choluteca-alerta-por-ingreso-de-nicaraguenses-para-votar/>

114 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/could-the-ruling-party-of-honduras-buy-another-election>

Election Day

Promises by the Armed Forces that they had distributed the electoral equipment to all polling stations turned out to be false as voting was supposed to start in the morning. There were various reports by electoral observers that equipment was missing and voting delayed, up to several hours.¹¹⁵ ¹¹⁶ Some observers denounced not being granted access to the voting centers.¹¹⁷ Additionally, the website of the census, where Hondurans were meant to see where to vote, was down for various hours. The CNE later claimed in a press release that their website had suffered an attack.¹¹⁸ There were also innumerable reports of further vote-buying by the National Party.¹¹⁹ At around 12pm, something new happened, the National Party held a press conference more or less declaring itself the winner hours before any official vote count even started.¹²⁰ The head of the EU observation mission expressed concern about this.¹²¹ In the evening, there were still long lines before various polling stations. According to the Electoral Law, the CNE should prolong the time for voting. While Libre magistrate Rixi Moncada asked centers to attend to people in voting line, her Nationalist counterpart Kevin Aguirre publicly said to close centers at 5 pm.¹²² According to the Libre magistrate at the CNE, some 60'000 people tried to vote a second time.¹²³

In the evening, it was clear that Hondurans went in higher numbers (participation is estimated at around 68%)¹²⁴ than feared to the polls and the opposition candidate Xiomara Castro led with 53.55% over Nasry Asfura's 33.87% with 46.5% of votes counted.¹²⁵

Pasos de Animal Grande documented 15 attacks.¹²⁶ C-Libre documented even 28 attacks.¹²⁷ ¹²⁸ ¹²⁹ ¹³⁰ ¹³¹ ¹³²

Results

The first 24 hours after the election day, there were no new results published by the CNE. This raised some concerns with the memory of 2017 very alive. But at the same time, Xiomara's 20 point lead was significantly higher than the 5 point lead by Salvador Nasralla in 2017. So, it came as no surprise that her victory was first recognized by the Liberal Party¹³³ and the business community organized in COHEP¹³⁴. The next day, the National Party¹³⁵ and the US¹³⁶ also recognized her triumph. Regarding the delayed transmission, Libre magistrate at the CNE, Rixi Moncada, later explained "that the results page has not stopped the counting of votes but only stopped transmitting

115 <https://criterio.hn/con-retrasos-fallas-y-denuncias-se-desarrolla-proceso-electoral-en-honduras/>

116 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/transparencia/1931-descoordinacion-y-faltas-tecnicas-impactan-en-las-juntas-receptoras-de-votos>

117 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1464984595833651206>

118 <https://contacorrente.red/2021/11/28/consejo-nacional-electoral-anuncia-que-uno-de-sus-servidores-fue-atacado/>

119 https://peninsula360press.com/es_mx/reportan-compra-de-votos-en-honduras/

120 <https://criterio.hn/partido-nacional-se-declara-ganador-de-elecciones-una-hora-despues-de-abiertas-las-urnas/>

121 <https://criterio.hn/mision-de-la-ue-preocupada-porque-partido-nacional-se-han-declarado-ganador-en-horas-tempranas/>

122 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1465111163457261569>

123 <https://proceso.hn/unas-60-mil-personas-pretendieron-ingresar-dos-veces-en-las-juntas-receptoras-de-votos-revela-consejera-moncada/>

124 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/honduras-ha-vivido-unas-elecciones-historicas/>

125 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/elecciones-honduras-cierran-las-casillas-tras-los-comicios>

126 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/amenazas/item/3304-15-agresiones-a-periodistas-y-comunicadores-sociales-destaca-monitoreo-en-primera-entrega>

127 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/el-observador/1933-un-total-de-28-agresiones-a-la-prensa-ocurridas-en-el-marco-del-proceso-electoral>

128 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1416-periodistas-de-canal-6-amenazados-por-activistas-nacionalistas>

129 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1420-periodistas-de-tv-azteca-agredidos-y-amenazados-por-activistas-politicos-en-sps>

130 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/alertas/agresion-fisica/1419-comunicador-de-roatan-agredido-por-activista>

131 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/alertas/censura/1418-prohibido-tomar-fotos-dice-militar-a-periodista-en-valle-de-angeles>

132 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/alertas/amenazas/1417-defensor-de-c-libre-amenazado-por-activistas-nacionalistas-por-denunciar-irregularidades>

133 <https://twitter.com/hondurasoll/status/1465386595343814659>

134 <https://confidencialhn.com/el-cohep-reconoce-el-triunfo-de-xiomara-castro-y-del-partido-libertad-y-refundacion/>

135 <https://criterio.hn/partido-nacional-reconoce-triunfo-de-xiomara-castro/>

136 <https://www.state.gov/the-election-in-honduras/>

the preliminary results because the final scrutiny phase has already begun, once the figures are confirmed the portal will be reactivated. In a press release, the highest electoral body informed that tomorrow the scrutiny of the tally sheets that were not disclosed with the TREP system will begin, once the 54,879 documents are reviewed and validated, it will be disclosed in an uninterrupted manner".¹³⁷

After declaring herself the winner,¹³⁸ Xiomara Castro announced her will to form "a government of reconciliation, peace and justice".¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ InSight Crime looked at what her victory could mean for the fight against drug trafficking and corruption as well as for the demilitarization of public security.¹⁴¹ Nasralla gave an interview to El Faro. "Salvador Nasralla, assures that his party will reach out to its opponents, without this implying forgiving those who have to pay for the accusations of corruption and drug trafficking."¹⁴²

Apart from the national level, the opposition also won the two biggest cities in Honduras, the capital Tegucigalpa and the economic hub San Pedro Sula¹⁴³ ¹⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁵ as well as other important cities.¹⁴⁶

Projections for Congress gives the opposition a majority. Apart from Libre and Savior of Honduras Party (PSH), the Liberal Party is split between a wing having supported Yani Rosenthal and another supporting the opposition alliance. The later are estimated to have won at least 10 seats. Combined with between 52 and 55 for Libre and 12 to 15 for PSH, this makes at least 74 out of 128 seats. At the same time, it is important to stress that many important reforms will need an absolute majority.¹⁴⁷

Observation

On November 30, the EU Electoral Observation Mission presented its preliminary report.¹⁴⁸ ¹⁴⁹ While welcoming the peaceful elections, they expressed criticism about the TREP which only worked in have the voting centers. They also criticized the fact that not all Hondurans had received the new ID card in time. Additionally, their preliminary report highlighted the illegal use of state funds by the JOH regime on electoral campaigning.¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵¹ The same day, the OAS observation mission also presented their preliminary report.¹⁵² ¹⁵³

137 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3400-honduras-rix-moncada-pide-paciencia-y-explica-paron-de-resultados>

138 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/29/xiomara-castro-declares-victory-in-honduras-presidential-election>

139 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/xiomara-castro-propone-formar-un-gobierno-de-reconciliacion-paz-y-justicia/>

140 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K92u6fbaQc>

141 <https://insightcrime.org/news/security-takeaways-xiomara-castro-honduras/>

142 <https://elfaro.net/es/2021/11/centroamerica/25872/Salvador-Nasralla-%E2%80%9CNo-podemos-dejar-impune-ni-el-robo-ni-los-asesinatos-de-2017%E2%80%9D.htm>

143 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/29/del-miedo-al-fraude-a-la-catarsis-en-san-pedro-sula/>

144 <https://criterio.hn/alcaldes-de-tegucigalpa-y-san-pedro-sula-reconocen-su-derrota-ante-candidatos-del-partido-libre/>

145 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/30/podrian-caer-pequenos-imperios-en-el-valle-de-sula/>

146 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/galeriaelecciones2021/1504762-509/alcaldias-perdidas-partido-nacional-elecciones-honduras-2021?mainImg=1>

147 <https://criterio.hn/diputados-opositores-seran-mayoria-en-proximo-congreso-nacional-de-honduras/>

148 EN: <https://eeas.europa.eu/election-observation-missions/eom-honduras-2021/108150/el-pueblo-hondure%C3%B1o-mostr%C3%B3-su-compromiso-con-el-proceso-democr%C3%A1tico-pesar-de-una-gesti%C3%B3n-es>

ES: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/hond_2021_ps_final_es.pdf

150 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/trep-ha-sido-un-fracaso-union-europea/>

151 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/30/misiones-de-observacion-electoral-de-union-europea-y-organizacion-de-estados-americanos-destacan-alta-participacion-en-elecciones-de-honduras/>

152 https://www.oas.org/es/centro_noticias/comunicado_prensa.asp?sCodigo=C-108/21

153 https://www.oas.org/es/centro_noticias/comunicado_prensa.asp?sCodigo=D-014/21

The COVID-19 Crisis

November started with 375'778 COVID-19 cases detected in Honduras and 10'256 confirmed deaths.¹⁵⁴ The month ended with 377'888 detected COVID-19 cases and 10'403 deaths.¹⁵⁵ I think, no one really believes that there were only some 3000 new cases in Honduras in a whole month.

Health Sector

On November 1, 225 health workers at the National Cardiopulmonary Institute were fired using WhatsApp. "There are 225 employees of the health personnel who have been thrown out of their jobs after working on the front line at the Thorax. How is it possible if their contracts were until December 31!", he [head of pneumology] lamented. It should be noted that the funds to pay the workers of the capital hospital come from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)."¹⁵⁶ After two days of protest, the Torax Hospital re-hired 125 employees.¹⁵⁷ But throughout the month, protests continued of health workers demanding permanent employment as well as the payment of outstanding salaries.¹⁵⁸ Later this month, and to be seen in the light of the elections, "[a]fter holding a meeting with President Juan Orlando Hernández, health authorities announced the delivery of permanent positions to all personnel who have worked on the front line since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, in compliance with an agreement approved several months ago by the Executive".¹⁵⁹ But as new protests took place a week later, doubt grew about the veracity of the announcement.^{160 161 162 163}

After some months with a lot of vaccine doses arriving in Honduras, this month they received only 1'200'000 doses.^{164 165 166} At the same time, the Minister of Health warned on November 4 that 300'000 doses already in the country were about to expire.¹⁶⁷ On November 22, the Secretary of Health informed that 3.2 million Hondurans had been completely vaccinated and 4.5 million had received one shot.¹⁶⁸ By the end of the month, 3.35 million Hondurans had been fully vaccinated.¹⁶⁹

Corruption

The trial against Marco Bográn and Alex Moraes in the mobile hospital corruption case was reprogrammed for January 19-31, 2022.¹⁷⁰

154 <https://proceso.hn/la-pandemia-suba-a-375-mil-778-casos-con-31-pacientes-en-uci-informa-sinager/>

155 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-suma-29-nuevos-casos-covid-y-acumula-377-mil-888-desde-inicio-de-pandemia/>

156 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/01/instituto-nacional-cardiopulmonar/>

157 <https://proceso.hn/recontratado-personal-sanitario-del-incp-hasta-fin-de-ano-con-fondos-del-bid/>

158 <https://confidencialhn.com/protestan-enfermeras-para-exigir-asignacion-de-plazas-y-contratacion-de-personal-anuncian-paro-a-nivel-nacional/>

159 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/gobierno-se-compromete-con-nombramientos-definitivos-para-personal-de-salud-de-primera-linea/>

160 <https://confidencialhn.com/enfermeras-siguen-demandando-asignacion-de-plazas-y-pago-de-salarios-pendientes/>

161 <https://confidencialhn.com/trabajadores-de-los-hospitales-de-la-region-norte-anuncian-posible-paralizacion-de-labores-para-la-proxima-semana/>

162 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/sigue-la-demanda-de-asignacion-de-plazas-en-salud/>

163 <https://confidencialhn.com/enfermeras-realizan-planton-frente-a-sesal-para-exigir-plazas/>

164 <https://proceso.hn/llegan-394-mil-290-vacunas-anticovid-de-pfizer-a-honduras/>

165 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-recibe-nuevo-lote-395-mil-460-dosis-de-vacuna-contrala-covid-19/>

166 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/masnoticias/honduras-recibio-nuevo-lote-de-395460-dosis-de-vacunas-anticovid-YL3836076>

167 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/04/salud-advierte-que-unas-300-mil-dosis-contrala-covid-19-estran-a-punto-de-vencerse/>

168 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/masnoticias/honduras-recibio-nuevo-lote-de-395460-dosis-de-vacunas-anticovid-YL3836076>

169 <https://proceso.hn/el-35-3-de-los-hondurenos-ya-recibio-esquema-completo-de-vacuna-anticovid/>

170 <https://proceso.hn/reprograman-hasta-enero-de-2022-juicio-oral-en-caso-de-hospitales-moviles/b>

Education

"The health crisis increases the exclusion of the right to education; according to figures from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (OHCHR), 48, 27% of students with fewer resources in the country have been left out of education because they did not have Internet service."¹⁷¹

Poverty

According to a study by Latinobarómetro, 60% of Hondurans don't have enough resources to eat daily.¹⁷² On November 9, the National Statistics Institute (INE) published the executive summary of the LXXII Permanent Multipurpose Household Survey 2021, in which it specified that 73.6% of Honduran households are in conditions of poverty. However, hours later the publication was deleted.¹⁷³ The business community in the form of COHEP denounced that some 500 billion Lempiras were spent "to reduce poverty" these last year with nothing to show for it, even worse, poverty is higher than when JOH took office.¹⁷⁴ There is a clear lack of strategy to fight poverty, social programs are completely politicized and used as vote buying mechanisms by JOH, and Hondurans count mostly on remittances to improve their situation.^{175 176}

Remittances sent to Honduras rose to 26% of GDP, a record.¹⁷⁷

Human Rights and Their Defenders

The highly controversial reforms made by the Nationalist in Congress during the Morazán Holiday came into law (see last month).¹⁷⁸ "The Office in Honduras of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) expresses its deep concern over the entry into force of the reforms to the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Special Anti-Money Laundering Law, which contravene the human rights obligations of the Honduran State, restrict civic space and limit the capacity to conduct effective investigations in corruption cases. (...) The urgency and lack of transparency in the approval of these reforms prevented a citizen debate representative of the diversity of the country and the groups and communities affected by them. The fact that the reforms to the Penal Code extend the application of the crime of usurpation to public spaces, seriously aggravate its penalties and turn it into a crime of continuous flagrancy would result in illegitimate restrictions to the right to participate in public affairs, freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and the right to defend human rights. (...) For their part, the reforms to the Code of Criminal Procedure enable preventive and immediate evictions without judicial control. (...) "We are concerned that the entry into force of these reforms will aggravate the situation of conflict over access to land, particularly for peasant groups and

171 <https://criterio.hn/crisis-sanitaria-aumenta-exclusion-del-derecho-a-la-educacion/>

172 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/06/estudio-indica-que-el-60-de-los-hondurenos-no-tienen-la-suficiente-alimentacion-diaria/>

173 <https://criterio.hn/ine-borro-publicacion-que-establecia-que-pobreza-en-honduras-es-del-74/>

174 <https://confidencialhn.com/cohep-cuestiona-que-se-gastaron-500-mil-millones-de-lempiras-y-no-se-redujo-la-pobreza/>

175 <https://confidencialhn.com/estrategia-de-reduccion-de-la-pobreza-fracaso-por-su-politizacion-asegura-economista/>

176 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-no-tiene-estrategia-de-reduccion-de-la-pobreza-tiene-remesas/>

177 <https://proceso.hn/aumento-historico-de-remesas-este-ano-que-alcanza-el-26-del-pib-bch/i>

178 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1500608-466/cobran-vigor-polemicas-reformas-penales-ley-lavado-de-activos>

indigenous peoples. Both our Office and international human rights mechanisms have recommended that Honduras address the structural causes of conflicts over land and territories and avoid the use of criminal law as a response to this conflict," added the Representative. "The work of civil society organizations that carry out social audits and denounce corruption, and in general, of all those that defend human rights, is fundamental for the promotion and guarantee of human rights, the development of the country and the full functioning of the rule of law," said the Representative. Furthermore, OHCHR notes with concern the negative impact of these reforms on the investigative capacities of the Public Prosecutor's Office in corruption cases. The reforms related to bank secrecy and the functions of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) in the Special Law on Money Laundering restrict access to financial information needed in the investigation of corruption and organized crime cases."¹⁷⁹

"The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and its Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression (RELE) warn about the regressive impact on the exercise of human rights due to the entry into force of reforms to the Penal Code and the Special Law on Money Laundering in Honduras, which by their wording could affect the right to protest, and call on the State to ensure that the regulations are in line with Inter-American standards."¹⁸⁰ Social movements, campesino and indigenous organizations presented a constitutional challenge to the reforms.¹⁸¹ On November 24, the CNA presented another constitutional challenge specifically against the reforms made to the money laundering law.¹⁸²

On November 16, "[a]head of the upcoming general elections in Honduras, Amnesty International sent today an open letter to the candidates for the presidential candidates, in which it shares seven points necessary to build a more just and human rights-based country."¹⁸³ Human rights organizations and social movements challenged the changes before the Supreme Court.¹⁸⁴

Assassinations

The Intercept published an investigation into land conflicts in Honduras and how paramilitaries infiltrate local groups and then kill their leaders.¹⁸⁵

On November 21, campesino defenders Nelson García and Celenia Bonilla, members of the National Center of Rural Workers (CNTC) in Guaymaca, Francisco Morazán, were murdered.¹⁸⁶ This community had been constantly threatened and evicted.¹⁸⁷ OACNUDH condemned the assassination.¹⁸⁸

179 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-expresa-preocupacion-por-recientes-reformas-legales-que-contravienen-obligaciones-de-derechos-humanos-y-restringen-el-espacio-civico-en-honduras/>

180 <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2021/304.asp>

181 <https://copinh.org/2021/11/pronunciamento-publico-no-mas-criminalizacion-por-reivindicar-nuestros-derechos-territoriales/>

182 <https://criterio.hn/cna-presenta-garantia-de-inconstitucionalidad-contrareformas-a-la-ley-especial-de-lavado-de-activos/>

183 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/honduras-next-president-must-ensure-more-just-human-rights-based-country/>

184 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1461129449982803971>

185 <https://theintercept.com/2021/11/06/honduras-paramilitaries-land-rights/>

186 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/11/alerta-defensoras-asesinan-a-defensora-celenia-bonilla-y-a-su-esposo-nelson-garcia-integrantes-de-la-empresa-campesina-hombres-y-mujeres-de-fe-en-guaymaca/>

187 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1462564188891627525>

188 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-los-asesinatos-de-los-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-nelson-garcia-y-celenia-bonilla/>

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

Some good at the beginning of the month: "During the development of the Oral and Public Trial, held this November 1 of this year, José Elvis Martínez, of the peasant group "Los Puentes" member of the National Center of Rural Workers (CNTC), was acquitted for the crime of aggravated damages."¹⁸⁹

Human rights defender and director of ACI-Participa, Hedme Castro, has suffered various attacks in the past even having to leave the country once. This week, there was a fire in her house. She demands an investigation into its cause, but the authorities so far did not pay her attention.¹⁹⁰ Swiss congressman Fabian Molina, who was at the time on a pre-electoral fact-finding mission in the country, denounced the attack and demands her protection.¹⁹¹ EU ambassador Jaume Segura also met with her.¹⁹²

On November 11, IM-Defensoras sent out an alert. "Approximately 120 families of the Lenca Tierras del Padre Indigenous Community are under threat of being dispossessed of their land by a violent eviction order from the Criminal Court, scheduled for this Thursday, November 11."¹⁹³ The Lenca community resisted by taking to the streets and the next day a judge stopped the eviction order.¹⁹⁴ OACNUDH welcomed the decision but expressed concern that an eviction could still happen in the future.¹⁹⁵

On November 14, human rights defender Lucía Enamorado was detained and beaten by the police yesterday. She was freed again after national and international pressure.¹⁹⁶

Pasos de Animal Grande denounces that the JOH regime uses provisional dismissals of charges against criminalized defenders as blackmail.¹⁹⁷

"Landowners who threatened to kill peasants in Santa Barbara found guilty. Yesterday the oral and public trial was held against landowners Florencio Ríos Pineda and Renán Ríos Pineda, who since 2011 have harassed and threatened members of the "Jardines del Valle" Peasant Company of Santa Bárbara, in order to take their land. Despite having property titles granted by the INA, Florencio and Renán Ríos have repeatedly threatened and carried out actions against the community leaders, putting their lives at risk. The landowners were found guilty and are awaiting their individualized sentencing hearing."¹⁹⁸

Guapinol

The EU Spanish, French and German representatives in Honduras met with representatives of the criminalized Guapinol defenders this month.¹⁹⁹ They also announced to observe in person the trial

189 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1908-otorgan-carta-de-libertad-a-campesino-miembro-de-la-cntc>

190 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/06/urgente-incendio-en-casa-de-defensora-de-dd-hh-hedme-castro/>

191 <https://twitter.com/FabianMolinaNR/status/1457065133381980162>

192 <https://twitter.com/UEenHonduras/status/1458224587389509638>

193 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/11/alerta-urgente-honduras-juzgados-de-tegucigalpa-ordenan-desalojo-contr-la-comunidad-indigena-lenca-tierras-del-padre/>

194 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/suspenden-desalojo-a-comunidad-indigena-tierras-del-padre-en-francisco-morazan/>

195 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1458922647635513352>

196 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/11/alerta-urgente-honduras-policia-nacional-detiene-y-golpea-a-la-defensora-lucia-enamorado-integrante-de-la-red-nacional-de-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos-de-honduras/>

197 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3303-mp-utiliza-los-sobreseimientos-provisionales-contr-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-como-un-chantaje>

198 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1464694861995679752g>

199 <https://twitter.com/UEenHonduras/status/1458541134804881408>

scheduled to start in December.²⁰⁰ On November 11, the Guapinol community denounced that the location of the trial was unexpectedly changed. “In what is yet another arbitrary ruling, judges Franklin Marvin Arauz Santos, Ricardo Rodríguez Barahona and Henry Geovany Duarte Zaldivar notified the legal team yesterday that the trial location will move to La Ceiba - their motivation? Ensuring no one exercises their right to protest during the legal proceedings.”²⁰¹

On November 17, “[i]nternational and national organizations filed an amicus curiae brief before the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice demanding compliance with international standards and justice for the eight Guapinol River defenders who continue to be imprisoned under arbitrary and illegal detention”.²⁰² Two days later, “UN human rights experts* (..) urged Honduras, elected to the Human Rights Council last month, to release eight environmental defenders in line with recommendations made by another UN body. “As a new member of the UN Human Rights Council, Honduras should be redoubling efforts to clean up its human rights record, and an obvious first step is to release the Guapinol defenders,” said Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders”.²⁰³

A week later, “national, and international organizations announced the formation of the “Observatory for the Justice of the Guapinol River Defenders”, an initiative that aims to monitor the development of the trial that the eight water defenders of the Guapinol community, who have been deprived of their freedom for more than two years, will face as of Dec. 1, 2021”.²⁰⁴

On November 26, there was another setback in the case. “The Guapinol Case seems doomed to regress to an inquisition-type trial where opacity guarantees ease of arbitrary actions to convict the defenders, according to the legal defense team that today was notified that judges Franklin Marvin Arauz Santos, Ricardo Geovanny Rodríguez Barahona and Henry Geovany Duarte Zaldivar have denied the request for observation and transmission. “Once again, the Court has demonstrated why it is not suitable to preside over this case. It is preparing everything to condemn the defenders without society knowing it. Through another arbitrary ruling, the court is not going to guarantee the right of the defenders to have presence in the courtroom through observation, and they have not managed to ensure the live transmission and guarantee transparency in a case of public interest,” said lawyer Edy Tabora upon receiving the notification.”²⁰⁵ OACNUDH expressed concern.²⁰⁶ The next day, the ruling was reversed and the trial was declared public again.²⁰⁷

Indigenous Peoples

A court ordered a repeat of the trial against the former member of the Armed Forces Kevin Yasser Saravia Ortiz. He had been found guilty of the murder of Tomás García Domínguez, the murder had taken place in repression of the protest by the local community and COPINH against the

200 <https://criterio.hn/union-europea-solicitar-observar-presencialmente-juicio-contra-defensores-de-guapinol/>

201 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/guapinol-why-yesterday-s-arbitrary-ruling-to-move-trial-location-is-so-repudiable>

202 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1919-organizaciones-presentan-recurso-legal-demandando-apego-a-estandares-internacionales-en-caso-guapinol>

203 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27835&LangID=E>

204 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/guapinol-press-statement-for-immediate-release>

205 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/court-prepares-to-convict-guapinol-defenders-in-secr>

206 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/146438377380225030>

207 <https://twitter.com/guapinolre/status/1464630906283606023>

hydroelectric project Agua Zarca. Saravia Ortiz now will also face trial for attempted murder against Allan Evey García Domínguez, son of Tomás.²⁰⁸

The Case of Berta Cáceres

On November 1, the Gualcarque Fraud case re-started with a preliminary hearing, now with COPINH recognized as victims in the case.²⁰⁹ COPINH demanded that all 16 initially accused would be invited to court. According to COPINH, only this would be legal as the Appeals Court clearly said that a re-start is needed nullifying every decision where COPINH had not been previously included in the process.²¹⁰ ²¹¹ As expected, the Honduran Judicial System has a different understanding and started without all 16 people on the bench. COPINH filled a complaint.²¹² The hearing was then suspended until late in the evening when the court decided to reject the complaint by COPINH.²¹³ On November 16, COPINH denounced that the Gualcarque trial would be reopened with only 6 of the initially 16 accused.²¹⁴

Efe spoke with Víctor Fernández, lawyer representing Berta Cáceres's family and COPINH, on the lack of a sentence for David Castillo.²¹⁵ On November 12, COPINH held a rally outside the Supreme Court demanding issuing of the sentence.²¹⁶ On November 15, 2021, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued Follow-up Resolution No. 88/2021, in which it addressed the implementation of precautionary measures in favor of the family members of Berta Cáceres, members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations (COPINH) and others in Honduras. (...) In this Resolution, it analyzed the information provided by the parties regarding the investigation processes and urged the State to continue with the corresponding investigations in order to clarify the alleged facts."²¹⁷

On November 17, the MP informed that "[t]he Special Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Officials and Servants of the Justice Sector (FEEFS-SJ) was notified of the resolution of an Appeals Court that revokes the final dismissal and orders to continue with the process against an active policeman and a former member of the police force, who were initially assigned to the investigation of the crime of environmentalist Berta Isabel Cáceres and tried to adulterate the course of the circumstances surrounding the event".²¹⁸

LGBTQ

The Association Arcoíris and the Center for Development and Cooperation LGTBIQ+ (Somos CDC) held a press conference denouncing that in "Honduras, being gay, lesbian or transgender means being exposed daily to insults, humiliation and aggression. It is to feel that you can be tortured, or even killed, simply for being the way you are". According to them, 390 members of the

²⁰⁸ <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/sala-de-cho-resul-ordena-empetr-juicio-contra-ex-militar-que-llamara-su-arma-en-contra-de-miembro-de-comunidad-indigena-lenca/>

²⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1455201543192461325>

²¹⁰ <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/57-pueblos-indigenas/1909-copinh-exige-la-reincorporacion-de-funcionarios-sobreseidos-en-caso-gualcarque>

²¹¹ <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1455556251006423046>

²¹² <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1455570583027060742>

²¹³ <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1455710543826853890>

²¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1460634689199394821>

²¹⁵ <https://www.efc.com/efe/america/sociedad/temen-impunidad-por-la-demora-de-una-sentencia-en-el-caso-hondurena-bertha-caceres/20000013-4672797in>

²¹⁶ <https://copinh.org/2021/10/copinh-presenta-solicitud-exigiendo-sentencia/>

²¹⁷ <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2021/305.asp>

²¹⁸ <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/revocan-sobreseimiento-definitivo-a-policias-que-con-pruebas-falsas-pretendian-desviar-investigacion-del-crimen-de-bertha-caceres/>

LGBTQ+ community have been murdered since the coup d'état in 2009.²¹⁹ "Crimes against members of the LGTBIQ+ population in Honduras exceed 200. So far this year alone, statistics show 22 murders, while between 2015 and 2020, reports indicate that 183 victims were killed. In addition, violence, discrimination and hatred continue to exclude and harm them more and more, according to the report on the situation of the queer community in the country."²²⁰ Reporteros de Investigación covered the role of hate speech in the violence against the LGBTQ+ community.²²¹ Additionally, their participation in Honduran politics is structurally limited, especially for trans persons.²²²

On November 26, "[t]he LGBTI community of Honduras presented (...) a bill for the legal recognition of the change of name of trans persons".²²³

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

Pasos de Animal Grande reported on the challenges faced by community radio stations in Honduras.²²⁴

"Bessy Sánchez reported on November 10 that she was threatened by unknown persons through the profile Anónimos La Paz, the same Facebook account that has launched a smear campaign against Salustio "Tito" Cervantes, Gilberto "Chichí" Gálvez and other journalists in La Paz."²²⁵

"The Honduran government violated journalist Adriana Sivori's right to inform by denying her entry into the country on Friday, November 19, 2021, when she arrived in the country by air to cover the electoral process to be held in eight days."²²⁶ ²²⁷ Two days before the election, another journalist was denied entry.²²⁸

ConexiHon published an investigation into violence against female journalists and social communicators.²²⁹ Criterio published an investigation by Lourdes Ramírez and Daisy Bonilla on the lack of female voices in Honduran journalism.²³⁰

"The correspondent of the Televisión corporation in Santa Rosa de Copán, Ramón Rojas, denounced that on Saturday, November 20, he was beaten by the liberal mayor of that city, Aníbal Erazo Alvarado, who also allegedly stole his cell phone and threatened to kill him."²³¹

Violence against Women

In a rally on November 7, National activist held up a banner depicting Libre candidate Xiomara Castro stabbing a pregnant woman calling her a murderer.²³² Women's rights organizations

219 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3332-honduras-sin-justicia-casi-400-asesinatos-de-comunidad-lgbt-tras-golpe-de-estado>

220 <https://proceso.hn/la-violencia-y-el-odio-impactan-cada-vez-mas-en-la-poblacion-lgbtq-en-honduras/>

221 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/04/discursos-de-odio-en-los-medios-ha-generado-crmenes-de-odio-contra-personas-lgbt/>

222 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3285-estructura-politica-hondurena-limita-participacion-de-la-comunidad-lgbt-en-las-elecciones>

223 <https://criterio.hn/comunidad-lgbt-de-honduras-presenta-ante-el-congreso-iniciativa-ciudadana-para-cambio-de-nombre/>

224 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/amenazas/item/3287-radios-comunitarias-se-preparan-para-cubrir-otro-proceso-electoral-en-medio-de-ataques>

225 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/alertas/amenazas/1404-periodista-bessy-sanchez-recibe-amenazas-de-perfil-anonimo-en-la-paz>

226 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/amenazas/item/3296-migracion-niega-ingreso-a-periodista-internacional-que-llegaba-a-la-cobertura-de-las-elecciones-en-honduras>

227 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/20/alerta-gobierno-de-honduras-prohibe-ingreso-de-periodista-internacional-a-cubrir-elecciones-generales/>

228 <https://twitter.com/CMonteroOficial/status/1464383186172063753>

229 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/opiniones/1924-contexto-de-las-agresiones-cometidas-contra-mujeres-comunicadoras-sociales-y-periodistas-en-honduras>

230 <https://criterio.hn/la-pantalla-chica-y-el-dial-reflejan-un-machismo-historico-en-honduras/>

231 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1410-alcalde-de-santa-rosa-de-copan-agrede-a-periodista-y-le-amenaza-de-muerte>

232 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3290-con-campana-antiaborto-partido-nacional-promueve-el-odio-contra-las-mujeres-de-honduras>

denounced this.²³³ Libre later presented a legal challenge against the National Party.²³⁴ On November 15, feminist organizations protested yesterday outside the CNE demanding that they make a stop to campaign promoting hate against women.²³⁵

At the end of the month, CESPAD published a new report on femicide in the region. Honduras has the highest per capita rate in Latin America.²³⁶ At least 308 women have been murdered this year in Honduras.²³⁷ "Feminist activists and UN Women on Thursday called on the Honduran state to act "more firmly" to protect the lives of Honduran women and defend their rights in the country, where more than 300 have been murdered this year. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, dozens of women marched today in Tegucigalpa against the wave of femicides that shakes the Central American country."²³⁸

Protection Mechanism

Indigenous and human rights organizations held a press conference outside the MP to denounce that the protection mechanism does not comply with its mandate, to apply protection to human rights defenders. "This action was taken as a result of a complaint, filed on September 2 of this year, by beneficiaries of precautionary measures of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, "for actions that violate or rather transgress the rights of the beneficiaries of precautionary measures, actions that were committed by officials of the mechanism, including the director of the National Protection System, Mr. José Danilo Morales," said Walter Miguel Díaz, of the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ)."²³⁹ They also discussed the complaint with OACNUDH.²⁴⁰

Political Prisoners

"The Committee for the Liberation of Political Prisoners in Honduras, demanded today through a sit-in and press conference in front of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the closure of the files and the immediate release of the people who remain imprisoned for demonstrating. Since the electoral crisis of 2017 provoked by the monumental fraud of the continuistas, two young people are still in prison subjected to torment, deprived of justice and respect for their dignity. And 174 prosecuted people have to sign-in every week in different courts of the country."²⁴¹

Extractive Industries

CESPAD looks at what either a win of the National Party or of the opposition would mean for the territorial struggles in Honduras. "A hypothetical triumph of the National Party would imply the continuity/deepening of the land concentration and neo-extractivist project. (...) The triumph of the forces of the Opposition Political Coalition may represent an opportunity to move towards

233 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/10/la-campana-de-odio-hacia-las-mujeres-detras-de-la-campana-politica-del-partido-de-gobierno/>

234 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/11/12/denuncian-al-partido-nacional-ante-la-fiscalia-de-la-mujer-por-violencia-de-genero/>

235 <https://confidencialhn.com/organizaciones-feministas-protestan-frente-al-cne-y-piden-eliminar-propaganda-politica-que-incita-a-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres/>

236 <https://oig.cepal.org/es/documentos/la-pandemia-la-sombra-femicidios-o-feminicidios-ocurridos-2020-america-latina-caribe>

237 <https://criterio.hn/308-femicidios-se-han-registrado-en-honduras-en-2021/>

238 <https://proceso.hn/activistas-y-onu-mujeres-piden-mayor-firmeza-frente-a-violencia-en-honduras/>

239 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1913-organizaciones-de-ddhh-califican-de-ineficaz-al-mecanismo-nacional-de-proteccion>

240 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1458200714560299018h>

241 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/el-proceso-electoral-del-28-de-noviembre-no-debe-ser-fabrica-de-nuevos-presos-politicos/>

democratizing access to land and control of territory, to the benefit of rural, indigenous, peasant and Garifuna communities."²⁴² Also on this topic, "Honduran civil society organizations issued a letter aimed at responding to the agrarian crisis and socio-environmental violence faced by women, indigenous and peasant communities in the struggle and defense of the territory in the face of the next government".²⁴³

ZEDEs

At the beginning of the month, CESPAD summarized some of the newest developments regarding the ZEDEs.²⁴⁴ They also put together a 61-page profile of the Próspera ZEDE.²⁴⁵ Reporteros de Investigación also published an investigation into the Próspera ZEDE.²⁴⁶

JOH traveled to the south of Honduras for a ceremony with the BCIE after they had approved a \$207 million credit for the construction of a bridge between the mainland and Amapala (see last month).²⁴⁷ This zone is widely known as the place of a possible future ZEDE and the credit is denounced by local residents and human rights organizations.²⁴⁸ ²⁴⁹ Later, JOH traveled to Taiwan in what seemed to be a promotion of exactly that region and its importance as a future logistic hub.²⁵⁰ ²⁵¹ ²⁵² On November 16, Congress approved the first batch of the disputed loan.²⁵³

On November 6, there were town hall meetings in both Choloma and Villanueva, both Cortés, where the inhabitants rejected the ZEDEs.²⁵⁴ ²⁵⁵ In Choloma, the ZEDE Morazán has started construction against the will of the local people and the question arises, what will happen now. "Is Choloma free of ZEDE, we asked Mayor Crivelli: "By the will of the people it is already free, we have to make this claim before the National Congress and we could go all the way to the Supreme Court of Justice and there we will see what can happen. Here the will is already decreed and it is not the will of the corporation, it is the will of the people", he answered. Regarding the possibility of stopping construction in Ciudad Morazán, he said: "There are other issues that are beyond our powers as mayor. That is a decree that comes from Congress. We do not have enough power to be able to say: 'go away'". In simple words, the construction of the ZEDE will continue as before, in spite of the Cholomeño people present in the central park, although the municipality will try to put pressure on Congress."²⁵⁶

The ZEDEs are also an electoral topic with the National Party as the only one in favor of them. But given their unpopularity, its presidential candidate said three weeks before the election that he would revise them.²⁵⁷ With the victory of the opposition, the ZEDE promoters know that they will

²⁴² <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/26/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-elecciones-generales-riesgos-y-oportunidades-para-las-luchas-territoriales/>

²⁴³ <https://criterio.hn/piden-a-aspirantes-presidenciales-dar-respuestas-a-crisis-agraria-y-violencia-socioambiental-en-honduras/>

²⁴⁴ <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/05/coyuntura-electoral-a-pasos-acelerados-avanza-la-construccion-de-las-zede-en-honduras/>

²⁴⁵ <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/15/zonas-de-empleo-y-desarrollo-economico-zede-el-caso-crawfish-roatan-prospera/>

²⁴⁶ <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/25/entre-prospera-y-pandora-abrimos-la-caja-de-las-zede/>

²⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1456332803449163781>

²⁴⁸ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3334-honduras-puente-amapala-sin-veeduria-del-bcie-apunta-a-trans-maritimo>

²⁴⁹ <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/17/puente-vehicular-maritimo-de-coyolito-amapala-una-amenaza-para-las-comunidades-del-sur/>

²⁵⁰ <https://proceso.hn/el-golfo-de-fonseca-protagonista-en-la-reunion-entre-herandez-y-tsai/>

²⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1459897076351971330>

²⁵² <https://canal6.com.hn/presidenta-tsai-impulsara-la-inversion-de-navieras-taiwanesas-en-el-golfo-de-fonseca.html>

²⁵³ <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-aprobo-prestamo-entre-el-bcie-y-el-gobierno-para-la-construccion-de-puente-maritimo-en-coyolito-amapala/>

²⁵⁴ <https://confidencialhn.com/pobladores-de-choloma-y-villanueva-cortes-ratificaran-este-domingo-rechazo-rotundo-a-proyecto-perverso-de-las-zede/>

²⁵⁵ <https://proceso.hn/sector-obrero-exige-frenar-operaciones-de-zede-morazan-tras-decir-no-al-proyecto-en-cabildo-abierto/e>

²⁵⁶ <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/07/alcaldia-de-choloma-declara-al-municipio-libre-de-zede-aunque-aun-no-basta-para-detener-ciudad-morazan/>

²⁵⁷ <https://confidencialhn.com/revisare-las-zedes-nasry-tito-asfura-ante-el-cohep/>

now face even more resistance. Próspera sent a letter to Xiomara congratulating her and inviting her to talks. But the voice of the Honduran people has been clear, the clear victory of the opposition is a clear no to ZEDEs.²⁵⁸ "Regarding the issue of the ZEDEs he [Pedro Barquero, coordinator of PSH] said that the government of Xiomara Castro maintains its position that "they will be eliminated, the commitment of our president since the campaign was clear that eliminate the law of the ZEDEs and this will be one of the first decrees that will be taken to the National Congress of the Republic".²⁵⁹

Mining

The situation in Azacualpa remained tense this month (see October Monitor). On the night of November 1, "employees of the mining company MINOSA, guarded by the Honduran National Police, illegally exhumed one of the remains from the Azacualpa cemetery".²⁶⁰ Mid-month, "[t]he Bufete Estudios Para la Dignidad denounced the militarization of the cemetery of the community of Azacualpa in La Union, Copán, by members of the Armed Forces and the National Police with the objective of ensuring exhumations despite the resistance of the community".^{261 262}

"El Corpus is a mining town in Choluteca, southern Honduras. Its history is marked by tragedies such as the one that occurred in 2014, when 11 miners died underground during gold mining. Mining activity dates back to colonial times, several centuries later the communities, rather than wealth, face contamination of their water sources and increased violence. The State has been the main absentee. This reality extends to other communities in the country. Honduras currently has 217 mining projects in operation, 183 in exploration and 292 mining concessions."²⁶³

Hydroelectricity

"The communities of the municipality of Arizona organized in the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ) established in the Dignity Camp for the Defense of Water, gathered this day with international organizations in front of the offices of HERMACASA in Honduras and SIMONDS SAW INTERNATIONAL in Massachusetts, USA, both companies are partners of INGELSA and the IESA Group owned by Emin Abufele Marcos main shareholder of the Jilamito Hydroelectric Project (PHJ). (...) That the people of Arizona have already decided, in at least three open town hall meetings, that the waters of the Jilamito River will be used exclusively for the consumption of present and future generations of the municipality and in this way overcome the shortage of water supply that nearly 30,000 inhabitants are already suffering."²⁶⁴

Palm Oil

In Latin America, Honduras has been one of the pioneer countries in the export of oil palm derivatives. Despite international complaints of environmental damage, the competent authorities

258 <https://twitter.com/eledelcid/status/1465827367985762313>

259 <https://confidencialhn.com/gobierno-de-xiomara-castro-sostiene-compromiso-de-reducir-la-pobreza-y-eliminar-las-zedes/>

260 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1455528628926795783>

261 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-militarizacion-de-cementerio-maya-chorti-en-azacualpa-la-union-copan/>

262 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1460285964157435906>

263 <https://radioprogreso.hn/especiales/el-corpus-la-pobreza-de-un-pueblo-hondureno-donde-hay-mas-oro-que-agua/>

264 <https://madij.org/2021/11/15/las-aguas-del-rio-jilamito-son-para-la-gente-fuera-ingelsa/>

within the country have not registered any sanctions against oil palm companies or independent producers.²⁶⁵

Corruption and Its Enemies

Expediente Público published an article on "eight years of President Juan Orlando Hernandez, eight years of corruption". According to the article, under the JOH regime more than \$20 billion were robbed and lost to corruption.²⁶⁶

UFERCO's Luis Santos raises the question why the BCIE continues to finance large scale projects in Honduras (for example a \$207 million bridge) even though previous ones have been marred in corruption. He would welcome an anti-corruption conditionality for such loans.²⁶⁷ UN Resident Coordinator Alice H. Shackelford, meanwhile, highlighted the clear link in fighting corruption in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁶⁸

Once again, Honduras remained outside the Millennium Challenge Fund due to corruption.²⁶⁹ For the ninth time in a row, i.e. during all the years JOH was in power.²⁷⁰ On November 10, "[t]he Sentencing Court in matters of corruption unanimously declared guilty the former members of the municipal corporation of Yoro, among them the former mayor Arnaldo Urbina Soto".²⁷¹ He is a close ally of JOH and has been accused of drug trafficking by the US.²⁷² At the same time as declaring him guilty, the court dropped 63 charges of abuse of authority and 122 charges of embezzlement against him.²⁷³ It remains to be seen what the sentence will be.

Radio Progreso published an investigation into the Honduran electricity sector.²⁷⁴ "An exhaustive investigation of the mechanisms and business and family networks behind the energy contracts with the State reveals that some private companies are profiting from the crisis of the National Electric Energy Company, ENEE".²⁷⁵

CESPAD published an article on the role of banks in corruption cases. "The Banking and Insurance Commission (CNBS) is the entity in charge of supervising the institutions of the financial system such as commercial banks (state banks, financial companies, representative offices and second-tier banks), pension and insurance institutions (public pension funds, private pension funds, insurance administrators and institutions), and other institutions such as private financial development organizations, money remittance companies, guarantee fund administrators and private credit bureaus. According to estimates by organizations dedicated to the subject, each year corruption costs the people of Honduras approximately 12% of its GDP, or 3,000 million dollars. Much of the

265 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/09/honduras-el-pais-aceitero-donde-ninguna-empresa-ha-sido-sancionada-por-danos-al-ambiente/>

266 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/ocho-anos-de-corrupcion-del-gobierno-de-juan-orlando-hermandez/>

267 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1456060326345064452

268 <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1456067179636563968>

269 <https://confidencialhn.com/la-deficiencia-en-la-gobernanza-y-la-corrupcion-vuelven-a-dejar-a-honduras-fuera-de-la-cuenta-del-milenio-hugo-noe-pino/>

270 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3355-honduras-juntos-hicimos-historia-mas-del-millon-de-nuevos-pobres-con-joh>

271 <https://proceso.hn/culpables-excorporacion-municipal-de-yoro-entre-ellos-arnaldo-urbina-soto/>

272 <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/second-honduran-congressman-charged-conspiring-import-cocaine-united-states-and-related>

273 <https://confidencialhn.com/absuelven-a-ex-alcalde-arnaldo-urbina-de-183-delitos-de-abuso-de-autoridad-y-malversacion/>

274 <https://energiasobrealorada.radioprogreso.hn/>

275 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3295-las-cuentas-de-empresas-se-inflan-con-energia-sobrealorada-mientras-la-enee-esta-al-borde-de-la-queiebra>

money linked to corruption cases is deposited in many banks that belong to a banking system that should have a CNBS as a guarantor of the correct use of banking in the country."²⁷⁶

Several independent media outlets collaborated in an investigation into "the scandalous and accelerated enrichment of the Chávez Madison family". "Seventeen years ago, David Guillermo Chávez, the apparent head of this powerful family, began to hold public office. He is currently the president of the National Party and candidate for mayor of the Central District, and all facts and evidence point to him becoming the political successor of Juan Orlando Hernández."²⁷⁷ A second part was published a day later. "David Chávez Madison's privileged position as director of the National Institute of Vocational Training (Infop) allowed him to award contracts for almost 60 million lempiras to his associates through the companies Grupo Visión and Dynamic".²⁷⁸

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

The highly controversial reforms made by the Nationalist in Congress during the Morazán Holiday came into law (see last month).²⁷⁹ UFERCO's Luis Santos speaks of a consolidated impunity pact.²⁸⁰ Additionally, the reforms include the further criminalization of protest and stigmatization of NGOs. Just days later, the changed laws already had a first result. "A Judge of Criminal Letters in matters of corruption issued this Tuesday a definitive dismissal in favor of the former members of the Judiciary Council. The dismissed had been accused of more than 600 crimes of corruption by diverting funds from the Judiciary during their tenure, from October 2013 to February 2016."²⁸¹ The MP presented a challenge to the underlying ruling.²⁸²

The CNA produced a report naming the members of Congress seeking reelection who have been involved in corrupt behavior - or as the report calls them, "the allies of impunity".²⁸³

A day before the election, a judge, unilaterally, without hearing the MP and while the case is pending an appeal, released seized real estate from the Nationalist presidential candidate Nasry Asfura.²⁸⁴ ²⁸⁵ The next day, Proceso Digital reported: "The Court of Deprivation of Ownership clarified in the last hours that six assets of the mayor of the Central District, Nasry Asfura and members of the municipal corporation are still under seizure. In the last hours, the Specialized Prosecutor Unit Against Corruption Networks (Uferco) denounced that these assets had been released by the resolution of a judge. However, the Court of Deprivation of Ownership clarified that the measure dictated on March 19 of this year is still in force. He pointed out that the defense attorney of the accused filed an appeal to adjust the security measure, alleging that it represents a value that exceeds the claim of the Public Prosecutor's Office. In this sense, he informed that the judge resolved the appeal partially, but that the security measure continues. According to the appraisal of the experts, the amount of the assets is sufficient to cover the value of 28 million 559

²⁷⁶ <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/18/el-silencio-del-sistema-bancario-sobre-el-dinero-que-los-corruptos-depositan-en-los-bancos-del-pais/>

²⁷⁷ <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3297-el-escandaloso-y-acelerado-enriquecimiento-de-la-familia-chavez-madison>

²⁷⁸ <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3298-la-red-empresarial-de-david-chavez-y-sus-socios-una-estructura-de-corrupcion>

²⁷⁹ <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1500608-466/cobran-vigor-polemicas-reformas-penales-ley-lavado-de-activos>

²⁸⁰ https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1455379305568129034

²⁸¹ <https://confidencialhn.com/sobreseimiento-definitivo-a-exmiembros-del-consejo-de-la-judicatura-fueron-acusados-por-mas-de-600-delitos-de-corrupcion/>

²⁸² <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-interpone-apelacion-por-decision-de-juzgado-anticorrupcion-al-favorecer-a-exmiembros-del-consejo-de-la-judicatura/>

²⁸³ <https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/La-reeleccion-de-los-aliados-de-la-impunidad.pdf>

²⁸⁴ https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1464679804129665033

²⁸⁵ <https://criterio.hn/de-manera-unilateral-liberan-bienes-asegurados-a-presidenciable-del-partido-nacional-nasry-asfura/>

thousand 062 lempiras with 20 cents, which is the money that the accused stole according to the Public Prosecutor's Office." (see yesterday)²⁸⁶

IHSS

"The National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF) was notified of the order to open a trial issued against the former administrative and financial manager of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS), José Ramón Bertetty Osorio, for three crimes of improper passive bribery and one crime of money laundering."²⁸⁷

In another of the many IHSS sub-cases, the two former ministers Javier Pastor and Carlos Montes were found guilty.²⁸⁸

One sub-case is against congressman Reynaldo Ekónomo (see last month). On November 16, it was announced that trial will be opened against him for fraud, but the money laundering charges were dropped.²⁸⁹ The MP announced to appeal the decision.²⁹⁰

Pandora

In the MACCIH-era corruption case Pandora, the only high-ranking official left, Jacobo Regalado, could walk free, "because the Public Prosecutor's Office did not comply with the agreements made with the main witness in the case, Fernando José Suárez, to become a collaborating witness and this could lead to the nullity of the whole process".²⁹¹ A few days later, the Pandora case was further undermined with Suárez Ramírez leaving the protected witness program by the MP. "For his part, defense attorney Omar Menjívar responded that he had just been notified by prosecutor Luis Javier Santos of his client's determination. "It could be that they have applied what they call "escape law", or that he really escaped knowing that he could be killed", reacted the legal professional. Menjívar pointed out that the Public Prosecutor's Office refused to grant a benefit to his client after he collaborated with the State Prosecutor's Office, exposing himself to risks. (...) Menjívar condemned that the State prosecutor did not want to use the information provided by Luis Suárez and did not grant him any benefit such as the reduction of the sentence and the removal of his relatives from the criminal process. He confirmed that his client spent around three years under the custody of the Public Prosecutor's Office in the witness protection unit."²⁹² UFERCO's Luis Santos expresses deep concern about the departure of Suárez as a protected witness. "UFERCO is extremely concerned about the departure of protected witness FERNANDO SUAREZ from the MP facilities, without his lawyer's knowledge, on a Saturday and his whereabouts are unknown. A call is made to human rights organizations to investigate what happened. Witness feared for his life."²⁹³ After 48 hours of "disappeared", no human rights organization has pronounced itself on the real danger in which the

286 <https://proceso.hn/csj-aclara-que-se-mantiene-aseguramiento-de-seis-bienes-de-nasry-asfura/>

287 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/elevan-a-juicio-causa-contra-exadministrador-del-ihss-por-fraude-y-lavado/>

288 <https://proceso.hn/caso-ihss-culpables-carlos-montes-y-javier-pastor-por-cohecho-y-absueltos-por-lavado/>

289 <https://confidencialhn.com/auto-de-formal-procesamiento-por-fraude-a-ekonomo-aunque-es-sobreseido-por-lavado/>

290 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-apelara-resolucion-de-magistrado-de-la-csj-que-sobresee-a-diputado-por-lavado-de-activos-en-el-ihss-pese-a-que-por-este-mismo-caso-y-delito-ya-hay-15-personas-con-auto-de-formal-procesamiento/>

291 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/17/por-estas-razones-se-podria-declarar-nulo-juicio-contra-jacobo-regalado-principal-cabeza-del-caso-de-corrupcion-pandora/>

292 <https://proceso.hn/caso-pandora-actor-clave-suarez-ramirez-abandona-programa-de-testigos-protegidos/fr>

293 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1462833921700290574

witness and accused Fernando Suarez is in. His lawyers and UFERCO do not know his whereabouts, his family is out of the country, and he has not renounced to his protection..."²⁹⁴

On November 24, ContraCorriente reported: "Just a week before the elections that will define a change of government, the protected witness and also accused in the Pandora case, Fernando Suarez, disappeared. Today a sentencing court issued an immediate arrest warrant for him and declared him in absentia. The Public Prosecutor's Office, through the Directorate of the protected witness program, maintains that Suarez abandoned the program, however there is still no report to determine what happened to him."²⁹⁵

Open Chest

In another MACCIH-era case, "[f]or the third time, a judge with National Jurisdiction for the Deprivation of the Domain of Assets of Illicit Origin, resolved to admit the request for securing the assets of those involved in the Open Chest case, filed on October 1, 2021."²⁹⁶

State Security Forces

The obscure Security Tax will collect some 2.5 billion Lempiras this year according to its director.²⁹⁷

Six members of the Police Investigation Bureau (DPI) were arrested with at least 50kg of cocaine.²⁹⁸
²⁹⁹ They will have to await trial in custody.³⁰⁰

"The Special Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of Women (FEP-Mujer) obtained convictions for several crimes that were committed by two military police officers in 2019 in the capital."³⁰¹ "The Special Prosecutor's Office for Human Rights (FEDH) obtained a formal indictment for the crime of illegal detention and harassment against four National Police officers."³⁰²

On November 23, COFADEH denounced that "[t]he judge of the Juticalpa Court, Rosa Posadas, does not allow the entry of international observers during the Initial Hearing against police agents who tortured and captured the Amaya brothers."³⁰³

Repressions

"Police and military from the municipality of San José, La Paz, arrived in the community of Llano Largo on Wednesday, November 10, and attacked two young men, warned social communicators from the National Center of Rural Workers (CNTC). Ronald Alexander Gutiérrez Molina (24), has bruises on his chest and a bullet wound in his right ankle."³⁰⁴

²⁹⁴ https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1462949971066601475

²⁹⁵ <https://contracorriente.red/2021/11/24/que-paso-con-fernando-suarez/>

²⁹⁶ <https://confidencialhn.com/juez-de-privacion-de-dominio-de-bienes-de-origen-ilicito-ordena-el-aseguramiento-de-bienes-a-involucrados-en-caso-arca-abierta/>

²⁹⁷ <https://confidencialhn.com/arriba-de-2-mil-500-millones-de-lempiras-preve-recaudar-el-fideicomiso-de-la-tasa-de-seguridad/>

²⁹⁸ <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1501262-466/captura-policias-cocaina-colon-allanamiento>

²⁹⁹ <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/con-50-kilos-de-supuesta-cocaina-detienen-a-seis-miembros-de-la-policia-en-tocoa-colon/>

³⁰⁰ <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-logra-prision-preventiva-contraseis-policias-y-nueve-civiles-por-trafico-de-50-kilos-de-cocaina/>

³⁰¹ <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/policias-militares-son-sentenciados-por-violacion/>

³⁰² <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/auto-de-formal-procesamiento-para-cuatro-policias/>

³⁰³ <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-impiden-observacion-internacional-en-caso-de-hermanos-torturados-en-olancha/>

³⁰⁴ <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/joven-denuncia-ataque-policial-militar-en-san-jose-la-paz/>

On November 17, Defensores en Línea denounced that state security forces were about to evict the Empresa Asociativa Campesina “11 de Marzo” in El Porvenir near Siguatepeque, Comayagua. "The eviction would be in favor of the alleged owner, timber and transportation businessman Marco Antonio Valeriano, who accused the president of the peasant group, Vicente Castro, together with Juan Mejía and José Vásquez, members of the association, of the crimes of damages, threats and usurpation."³⁰⁵ As feared, the eviction took place and destroyed their fields.³⁰⁶

Assassinations

The police officer Jarol Rolando Perdomo Sarmiento will face trial for the murder of nursing student Keyla Martínez inside a police station (see last month).³⁰⁷ OACNUDH has observed the hearing. "In view of the imminent resolution that will resolve the order to open the case to trial, we urge the judicial authorities to incorporate a gender perspective in their analysis, in line with Honduras' obligations regarding the right of women to live free of violence."³⁰⁸ Importantly, he is being accused of "aggravated femicide". Previously, the court tried to accuse him only for homicide. COFADEH had successfully challenged this.³⁰⁹ In the same case, students who had protested after the murder of Keyla and were criminalized as a consequence have now seen the charges dropped against them.³¹⁰

Eight members of the police were arrested accused of murdering Erick Rafael Vallecillo on August 1, 2021 during a police stop in the Bajo Aguán. The police agents were all assigned to the Xatruch Mission.³¹¹

Penitentiary System

Militarization

Criterio published an article on the role of the Armed Forces in the electoral process. "According to sociologist and political analyst Julio Navarro, the National Party, which has governed Honduras for twelve years, controls the security institutions and in case of losing power could resort to them. Navarro assures that "the National Party is an armed party" because it has the armed forces and the National Police on its side, being a key piece in its continuity in power."³¹² CESPAD asked if the Armed Forces will respect the will of the people. "During the last three government administrations, the Armed Forces of Honduras has been one of the institutions that has benefited the most with the strengthening of its budget, the approval of laws and the placement of military and ex-military in

305 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-desalojo-contr-empresa-campesina-en-siguatepeque/>

306 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/39-conflictos/1921-destruyen-cultivos-a-grupo-campesino-en-siguatepeque>

307 https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/auto-de-apertura-a-juicio-contr-policia-acusado-de-femicidio-agravado-de-keyla-patricia-martinez?doing_wp_cron=1635847006.1878089904785156250000

308 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1455253396861165570>

309 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-interpone-recurso-de-amparo-ante-decision-erronea-de-la-csj-en-el-caso-de-keyla-martinez/>

310 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/caso-keyla-estudiantes-criminalizados-reciben-cartas-de-libertad/>

311 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/ministerio-publico-ejecuta-capturas-contr-policias-que-dieron-muerte-a-ciudadano-en-un-reten-carretero/>

312 <https://criterio.hn/fuerzas-armadas-generan-incertidumbre-en-elecciones-por-su-falta-de-credibilidad/>

key and important positions within the Executive Branch. Therefore, it is valid to ask what role will the military play in the scenarios that Hondurans will face in the general elections?"³¹³

International Community

Swiss Parliamentarian Fabian Molina traveled to Honduras to inquire about the situation in the country just three weeks before the general elections and about the general human rights situation.³¹⁴ Molina emphasized that the human rights violations taking place during the 2017 elections, i.e. the murder of protesters by state security forces for which no one was brought to justice, cannot be repeated.³¹⁵

Honduras wants to include the UK at the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE).³¹⁶ The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), meanwhile, has a new representative in Honduras, María José Jarquín.³¹⁷

"The Government of Honduras and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN agency for rural development, agreed today in Glasgow to work together to access Green Climate Fund (GCF) financing to promote small-scale climate-smart agriculture in the country. To demonstrate that mutual commitment, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández and IFAD's Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Rossana Polastri, signed a joint statement in the context of the UN's COP 26 Climate Change Conference."³¹⁸

The JOH regime had moved its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem last year to please the Trump administration and strengthen its ties with Israel. This month, Israel opened an embassy in Honduras.³¹⁹ "In the opinion of sociologist Armando Orellana, President Juan Hernández is committing an abuse of authority by giving space in the Government Civic Center to the Israeli embassy, because the building was built with Honduran money."³²⁰

US

The Honduran Armed Forces continued claiming great success in fighting drug trafficking (see also last month). "The Secretary of National Defense, Fredy Santiago Díaz Zelaya, assured on Monday that authorities from the US Southern Command congratulated Honduras for its "efforts in the fight against drug trafficking".³²¹

"Administrator Samantha Power announced a five-year, \$300 million initiative to empower local organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to address the drivers of irregular migration to the United States. The announcement was made during the Administrator's keynote address at Georgetown University where she presented her vision for USAID's priorities under the Biden-

313 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/11/26/respetaran-los-resultados-de-las-elecciones-generales-las-fuerzas-armadas-de-honduras/>

314 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/parlamentario-suizo-arriba-a-honduras-para-observacion-de-ddhh-y-situacion-politica/>

315 <https://criterio.hn/violaciones-a-derechos-humanos-del-2017-no-se-pueden-repetir-en-este-proceso-electoral/>

316 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1500503-466/joh-pide-incluir-reino-unido-bcie-cumbre-climatica>

317 <https://confidencialhn.com/nicaraguense-maria-jose-jarquín-es-la-nueva-representante-del-bid-en-honduras/>

318 <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/honduras-and-ifad-will-work-together-to-foster-resilient-small-agriculture>

319 <https://confidencialhn.com/inauguran-embajada-de-israel-en-honduras/>

320 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3377-honduras-embajada-de-israel-en-presidencial-es-abuso-de-autoridad>

321 <https://confidencialhn.com/estados-unidos-felicita-a-honduras-por-lucha-contra-el-narcotrafico-secretario-de-defensa/>

Harris Administration. Under this new initiative, Centroamérica Local, USAID intends to invest up to \$300 million, subject to the availability of funds, toward engaging, strengthening, and funding local organizations to implement programs to advance sustainable and equitable economic growth, improve governance, fight corruption, protect human rights, improve citizen security, and combat sexual and gender-based violence. These programs are being carried out under the Biden-Harris Administration's Root Causes Strategy and deliver on the Agency's goal to foster greater engagement with local organizations and communities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and advance stability in the region."³²²

On November 4, the US chargé d'affaires met with the Network for Democratic Equity in Honduras to talk about "free, fair, transparent, and peaceful elections".³²³ A week later, she also met with the CNE.³²⁴ Later, Brian A. Nichols, Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, also tweeted: "The United States supports the people of Honduras as they prepare to hold elections on November 28. The Honduran people deserve free, fair, transparent, and peaceful elections that reflect their will."³²⁵ The same Nichols made a surprise announcement on November 20 of a three day visit to Honduras.³²⁶ He met, among others, with the CNE as well as the Minister of Security and the Head of the Armed Forces.³²⁷ ³²⁸ He later said that the US had no preference for a candidate.³²⁹

On November 5, the Biden Administration nominated Laura Dogu as ambassador to Honduras. The US Senate will still have to confirm her.³³⁰ "Dogu is the current Foreign Policy Advisor to Chief of Staff of Army at the Pentagon. Honduras hasn't had an US ambassador since James Nealon left in 2017".³³¹ "The nomination of Laura Farnsworth Dogu as ambassador of the United States (US) in Tegucigalpa is due to the fact that the government of Joe Biden wants to have its eyes firmly fixed on Honduras, said Graco Perez, an expert in international law. (...) The international law expert expressed that transparency in the upcoming elections will be decisive to strengthen this relationship with the North American country. "The presence of the ambassador will be useful for her to make more direct statements about what is happening in the country, because so far chargé d'affaires have not done so," he said."³³²

On November 15, US Senators and members of Congress wrote a joint letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken pushing the U.S. State Department to do more to ensure a free and fair elections in Honduras. "With only two weeks remaining before the general elections take place, there is increased potential for violence, fraud, or restrictions on the ability of Honduran citizens to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, all of which are protected under the Honduran constitution," the members wrote in a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. "We believe it is essential that the United States be viewed as a neutral, credible, and impartial observer and support an outcome in Honduras that is genuinely democratic and inclusive."³³³

322 <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/nov-4-2021-usaid-announces-centroamerica-local-initiative-empower-local>

323 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1456391617569492998>

324 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1458157251940716550>

325 <https://twitter.com/WHAAsstSecy/status/1458474106698059783>

326 <https://www.state.gov/assistant-secretary-of-state-for-western-hemisphere-affairs-brian-a-nichols-travel-to-honduras-november-21-23/>

327 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1503506-508/brian-nichols-consejo-nacional-electoral-reunion>

328 <https://proceso.hn/alto-funcionario-de-eeuu-habla-con-autoridades-de-honduras-sobre-los-comicios/>

329 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1503697-508/brian-nichols-elecciones-honduras-2021-estados-unidos>

330 <https://criterio.hn/laura-dogu-sera-la-nueva-embajadora-de-ee-uu-en-honduras/>

331 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1456796235206176769>

332 <https://proceso.hn/designacion-de-embajadora-es-porque-eeuu-quieren-tener-los-ojos-bien-puestos-en-honduras-graco-perez/>

333 <https://www.merkley.senate.gov/news/press-releases/members-of-congress-lead-push-to-ensure-free-and-fair-elections-in-honduras-2021>

EU

Berta Zúniga, general coordinator of COPINH, wrote an open letter to the EU Commission. "I am writing to you from Honduras regarding the proposed European Union (EU) Sustainable Corporate Governance legislation. On behalf of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH), I call on you to ensure that the legislation is robust and effective, in order to prevent brutal corporate human rights abuses, like what my family have experienced."³³⁴

Drug Trafficking

The US Attorney in New York filed charges against an MS-13 leader in Honduras.³³⁵ Journalist Jeff Ernst believed that the "[i]ndictment of alleged MS-13 leader in Honduras known as "El Porky" - who violently escaped from prison in Feb 2020 in an operation that must have involved complicity from authorities at some level - further suggests that the gang has expanded into large-scale drug trafficking. Gangs had long provided security for drug shipments & engaged in street-level distribution, but many believe that as the DEA captured the leaders of major drug clans in Honduras, the MS-13 climbed up the ladder and filled the void."³³⁶ InSight Crime also picked up the story. "US prosecutors have charged an alleged MS13 leader in Honduras and his associate with international cocaine trafficking, raising fresh questions about the gang's role in the regional drug trade. (...) The latest indictment provides further evidence that Archaga Carías was not only a central leader of the MS13's criminal activities in Honduras, but has a level of underworld capacity not typically associated with his counterparts in the gang. The military-style operation that led to his remarkable escape from jail last year was arguably the most advanced strike the MS13 is alleged to have carried out in recent years. It was almost certainly aided by official corruption, something a gang leader of Archaga Carías' stature could secure. Not only that, but the escape wasn't bloodless, as various police officers were killed. The fact that he doesn't seem to be heavily targeted by police and remains free almost two years later also speaks to the potential protection he enjoys from authorities in Honduras."³³⁷

"Today the judge for the Southern District of New York Paul G. Gardephe, who is in charge of the case of drug trafficker and former liberal congressman Fredy Nájera Montoya ordered by means of a document that Montoya's sentencing, which was scheduled for November 12, 2021, will be postponed until further notice, due to the need to carry out a criminal procedure called "Fatico hearing" which consists of a pre-sentencing hearing in which both the prosecution and the defense can present evidence to help the judge determine what the defendant's sentence should be, in this hearing both parties can dispute the conclusions of the sentencing report through probative material that may include testimonies, videos or other evidence. (...) Therefore, during the development of the Fatico Hearing the prosecution would be presenting evidence to support these facts that include the participation of the current candidate of the Liberal Party of Honduras Yani Rosenthal for

334 <https://copinh.org/2021/11/carta-bertha-zuniga-a-comisionados-ue-esen/>

335 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2021/11/03/fbi-ofrece-recompensa-de-100000-2-5-millones-de-lempiras-por-informacion-que-conduzca-al-arresto-del-porky/>

336 <https://twitter.com/jeffernst/status/1455958086708076558>

337 <https://insightcrime.org/news/ms13-honduras-regional-drug-trade/>

having received one million dollars from the Sinaloa cartel to finance his presidential campaign during the internal elections held in 2012."³³⁸

"Honduras has seen a surge in marijuana seizures and plantations, indicating a booming trade in illegal cannabis that stands to benefit the country's largest street gang."³³⁹

Reporteros de Investigación has a multi-chapter series on drug trafficking in Honduras. The first chapter has five parts. Part 1: From big cartels to narco-politics³⁴⁰; Part 2: Military pioneers of drug trafficking in Honduras³⁴¹; Part 3: Drug trafficking in the 21st century³⁴²; Part 4: First narco-deputies detained³⁴³; Part 5: The final lunge and the change of command.³⁴⁴ Chapter 2 has only one part: Part 6: The Narco Log in Honduras: JOH's Betrayal.³⁴⁵ Chapter 3 followed with four parts.^{346 347 348 349}

On November 22, a judge approved the extradition of Michael Dixon Rivers to the US.³⁵⁰ Nasry Asfura was the only presidential candidate who did not respond to a question by Proceso Digital if he would maintain the extradition of drug traffickers to the US.³⁵¹

Varia

JOH

Radio Progreso published a short portrait of JOH - "from professional mafioso to builder of a narco-state" - and the grim legacy he leaves Honduras.³⁵² The New Yorker has an in-depth article on the JOH regime with an interesting focus on the US-Honduras relations. "Over the years, Hernández has proved adept at cultivating American politicians. Tim Rieser, an aide to Senator Patrick Leahy who has worked for decades on foreign policy, recalled that Hernández visited Washington and invited him to meet at the Willard InterContinental, a Beaux-Arts hotel near the White House. "He told me how much he loved human rights—he actually used the term 'love,' " Rieser said. "J.O.H. is a polished politician. He calls you by your first name and tells people in Washington what they want to hear. With me, it was about human rights. With others, it's about capturing drug traffickers." (...) Cresencio Arcos, a former U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, described the transactional nature of American officials' relationship with the government there: "The most important thing to our people is their access to the élites. It's not important whether they've committed human-rights abuses, or even if they're drug traffickers. J.O.H. is an evil scoundrel, and he outsmarted us because he figured out that by supporting us on drug interdiction and migrants he could blackmail us into going along with him." n January, 2021, a few days after Kamala Harris was sworn in as Vice-President, she was briefed about the allegations against President Hernández. An official who was present said that

338 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2021/11/08/fiscalia-estaria-presentando-evidencia-sobre-el-millon-de-dolares-que-yani-rosenthal-recibio-del-cartel-de-sinaloa/>

339 <https://insightcrime.org/news/ms13-profits-marijuana-boom-honduras/>

340 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/08/parte-i-de-los-grandes-carteles-a-la-narcopolitica/>

341 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/09/el-inicio-de-la-ruta-hacia-el-control-total-los-militares-iniciaron-el-narcotrafico/>

342 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/10/el-narcotrafico-a-inicios-del-siglo-xxi/>

343 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/11/el-narco-en-el-nuevo-siglo-la-primera-guerra-y-extermio-de-rivales/>

344 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/12/el-hermano-del-presidente/>

345 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/13/capitulo-2-la-traicion-de-joh-y-el-origen-de-la-nueva-mafia/>

346 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/15/narcoalcaldes-van-a-reeleccion/>

347 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/17/tierra-de-sangre/>

348 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/18/los-narco-diputados-y-los-17-legisladores-asesinados-en-una-decada/>

349 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/11/19/narcopoliticos-van-por-la-extradicion-quieren-blindar-el-proximo-congreso-nacional/>

350 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1503529-466/juez-ordena-extradicion-michael-dixon-rivers-trafico-drogas-honduras>

351 <https://proceso.hn/brujiula-electoral-contundente-respaldo-para-mantener-la-extradicion-de-hondurenos-a-eeuu/>

352 <https://radioprogreso.hn/portada/juan-orlando-herandez-de-profesional-mafioso-a-constructor-de-un-narco-estado/>

Harris, a former prosecutor, had an immediate response: “Let’s go get him now.” (A White House official said that the Vice-President’s team has never heard her say anything like this.) The attendees informed Harris that the U.S. government had a long-standing unwritten policy against indicting sitting heads of state—though the official added that he personally would like to “cut him off at the knees.” A senior Biden official told me that the Administration intended to work around Hernández, by engaging with other levels of the Honduran government, and would avoid sending officials to visit while he remained in office. Much of this awkward work will fall to Ricardo Zúniga, the newly appointed special envoy for the Northern Triangle—as Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador are called. On several trips this year, Zúniga has refrained from stopping in Honduras. Instead, he has held Zoom meetings with leaders in civic society and in the private sector. (...) Roberta Jacobson, who worked for decades as a U.S. diplomat specializing in Latin America, called the Northern Triangle “a poisoned chalice.” Harris and Zúniga need reliable partners, but the United States’ willingness to encourage despots has left the region largely in the hands of corrupt autocrats. As Jacobson said, “Who is there to trust?”³⁵³ JOH, meanwhile, invited to a book presentation at the Honduran embassy in Washington DC about his eight years as president.³⁵⁴ He was met with protest.³⁵⁵

Migration

Honduras and Haiti lead in asylum demands in Mexico in 2021. So far this year, almost 110'000 people requested asylum in Mexico, more than three times in all 2020. 31% of the demands come from Hondurans.³⁵⁶ At the same time, deportations back to Honduras have increased by 27.1% so far this year.³⁵⁷ At least 11'000 minors have been deported back to Honduras so far this year compared to 9000 in all of 2020.³⁵⁸

The UNHCR reported on climate change as an important factor sparking displacement.³⁵⁹ The World Food Program and others published a report on “The Complex Motivations and Costs of Central American Migration”.³⁶⁰

And Light at the End of a Month

“This November 30, the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (Cofadeh) celebrates its 39th anniversary. Almost four decades of commitment to the rescue of memory and the demand for truth and justice.”³⁶¹

And yes, there was something about a historic election...

353 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/11/15/is-the-president-of-honduras-a-narco-trafficker>

354 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1458281688413343746>

355 <https://criterio.hn/fuera-joh-asesino-gritan-en-lanzamiento-de-libro-de-juan-orlando-hernandez-en-ee-uu/>

356 <https://proceso.hn/mexico-supera-las-100-mil-peticiones-de-migrantes-que-buscan-asilo-en-2021/>

357 <https://proceso.hn/sube-un-27-2-la-deportacion-de-inmigrantes-a-honduras-en-diez-meses-de-2021/>

358 <https://confidencialhn.com/un-total-de-11-mil-menores-hondurenos-han-sido-deportados-en-2021/va>

359 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2021/11/61844ee4/honduras-climate-change-factor-sparking-displacement.html>

360 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000134199/download/>

361 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-39-anos-de-memoria-y-presente/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

Past Activities:

- The Honduras Forum Switzerland invited Swiss congressman Fabian Molina to Honduras for a five-day pre-electoral fact-finding mission which took place from November 3 to 7.

Upcoming Activities:

-

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