



# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – December 2021

The victory of the opposition and Xiomara Castro as the president was officially confirmed this month when all votes were counted. Libre and PSH won 60 out of the 128 seats in Congress. Not a majority, but with some Liberal votes enough to start the recovery of the last 12 years under the Nationalist rule. On a grimmer note, the Guapinol defenders remain in the illegal pre-trial detention and were not able to go home to their families. The Omicron variant arrived in Honduras where the pandemic has not been big news lately and the JOH regime even started to disappear triage centers and fire health workers. The new international airport Palmerola started operation mid-December raising questions about the future of the Toncontín airport in the capital. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

## Table of Contents

The 2021 General Elections.....	3
The Xiomara Castro Government.....	3
Congress.....	6
Mayoral Races.....	8
Parlacen.....	9
Women.....	9
Small Parties.....	9
Post-Electoral Violence.....	9
Electoral Reforms.....	10
Human Rights and Their Defenders.....	10
Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment.....	10
Guapinol.....	11
Indigenous Peoples.....	13
The Case of Berta Cáceres.....	13
LGBTQ.....	14
Freedom of Expression and Journalists.....	14
Violence against Women.....	15
Political Prisoners.....	15
Extractive Industries.....	15
Mining.....	16
ZEDEs.....	16
Corruption and Its Enemies.....	17
The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies.....	18
IHSS.....	18
Open Chest.....	19
State Security Forces.....	19
Assassinations.....	19
Penitentiary System.....	20
Militarization.....	20
International Community.....	20
US.....	20
EU.....	22
Drug Trafficking.....	22
JOH.....	22
Varia.....	23
JOH.....	23
COVID-19.....	24
Migration.....	25
China.....	26
Violence.....	26
Poverty.....	27
Education.....	27
Palmerola.....	28
And Light at the End of a Month.....	28

## The 2021 General Elections

On December 1, almost 60% of the ballots had been processed with Xiomara surpassing 1'000'000 votes and maintaining a lead of over 17 points (see last month). After three days of silence, JOH also recognized her victory.<sup>1</sup> A week later, with 98.83 of the votes counted, Xiomara led with over 1.7 million votes (50.63%) over Nasry Asfura with 1.2 million votes (36.43%). On December 20, Xiomara was officially declared the winner by the CNE<sup>2</sup>, the first female president of Honduras and the one who received the most votes.<sup>3</sup> On December 28, the CNE presented the final results at the congressional level. Libre will have 50 seats, the National Party 40, the Liberal Party 22, the Savior of Honduras Party 10, and the Christian Democrat and PAC each one.<sup>4</sup> The CNE called the elections a success.<sup>5</sup> Not everyone shared this reading. Over 35 challenges of the results have been presented to the Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE).<sup>6</sup>

CESPAD published its sixth electoral monitor covering November 20 to December 15 called "Amidst uncertainty, boycotts and distrust, the electoral institutions guaranteed transparent and peaceful elections".<sup>7</sup> They also published the sixth reports on the electoral context<sup>8</sup> and on public spending.<sup>9</sup>

## The Xiomara Castro Government

Already in the first days of December, Xiomara met with different stakeholders<sup>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</sup> and started the transition period.<sup>17 18</sup> Xiomara answered some questions by AFP about priorities for her government. She emphasized her intention to get rid of the ZEDEs and to install a UN-backed anti-corruption mission.<sup>19</sup> She later also said that she will request an international anti-corruption commission on her first day in office.<sup>20</sup> "The resident coordinator of the United Nations (UN) in Honduras, Alice Shackelford, said Saturday that the international organization wants to work on strengthening institutions to fight corruption in the country. (...) When questioned on whether she will support the new government for the installation of an international anti-corruption commission, she responded that it will depend on the focus of action and nature."<sup>21</sup> ContraCorriente published an article dedicated to the beginning of negotiations about this new body.<sup>22</sup>

1 <https://confidencialhn.com/joh-felicita-a-la-presidenta-electa-xiomara-castro-por-su-triunfo-electoral/>

2 <https://twitter.com/CneHonduras/status/1473001900681408518>

3 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1507002-508/xiomara-castro-presidenta-gano-eleccion-honduras-diferencia-votos>

4 <https://proceso.hn/estos-son-los-diputados-del-congreso-nacional-2022-2026/>

5 <https://proceso.hn/pese-a-adulteracion-de-actas-el-proceso-electoral-ha-sido-un-exito-consejera-del-cne/>

6 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/28/denuncian-escrutinio-selectivo-del-cne-en-actas-impugnadas-por-candidatos/>

7 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/22/institucionalidad-electoral-entre-la-incertidumbre-el-boicot-y-la-desconfianza-la-institucionalidad-electoral-garantizo-la-realizacion-de-elecciones-transparentes-y-pacificas/>

8 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/23/contexto-electoral-mientras-asume-nuevo-gobierno-la-justicia-en-honduras-se-ensana-con-pobladores-de-guapinol/>

9 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/23/gasto-publico-proceso-electoral-2021-no-se-sanciona-incumplimiento-a-la-ley-de-politica-limpia-y-continua-bloqueada-informacion-sobre-el-origen-de-los-fondos-utilizados-por-los-partidos-politicos/>

10 <https://confidencialhn.com/presidenta-electa-xiomara-castro-se-reune-con-rectores-de-unah-y-unitec-para-tratar-temas-orientados-a-fortalecer-el-sistema-de-educacion-en-honduras/>

11 <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1466754178911453185>

12 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/bcie-gobierno-honduras-xiomara-castro-dialogo-proyectos-AB4164288>

13 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/comision-de-xiomara-castro-aborda-temas-economicos-con-el-bid-y-banco-mundial-EB4201372>

14 <https://confidencialhn.com/inicia-acercamiento-con-la-policia-nacional-para-brindar-seguridad-en-el-traspaso-de-mando/>

15 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/27/piden-al-gobierno-entrante-derogar-el-empleo-por-hora-y-eliminar-juntas-interventoras/>

16 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/29/campesinos-piden-al-nuevo-gobierno-que-frene-criminalizacion-del-estado/>

17 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/02/gobierno-de-castro-inicia-proceso-de-transicion-con-la-mirada-a-la-reactivacion-economica/>

18 <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/214499>

19 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505277-508/xiomara-castro-pedira-comision-onu-contra-impunidad-honduras>

20 <https://confidencialhn.com/en-su-primer-dia-de-gobierno-xiomara-castro-solicitar-comision-internacional-anticorrupcion/>

21 <https://confidencialhn.com/onu-asegura-que-le-interesa-trabajar-en-la-lucha-contra-la-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

22 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/12/17/gobierno-entrante-comienza-a-negociar-la-posible-instalacion-de-una-cicth/>

The former head of the Central Bank of Honduras (BCH) and future congressman, Hugo Noé Pino, is a close ally of Xiomara. He spoke with Proceso Digital about some of the plans of the coming administration. According to him, the 2022 budget presented by the JOH regime will be revisited.<sup>23</sup> The JOH regime will inherit the new administration a huge debt load whose service costs more than \$2 billion, i.e. some 30% of the national budget.<sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> FOSDEH estimated that the JOH regime took up more than \$1 billion in debt in the last five months.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, it undermines the Xiomara administration wherever they can. "With a little more than a month to go before the end of the current government, the ministries, decentralized and deconcentrated entities began a sort of piñata of permanent contracts, despite repeated complaints from the transition team of Xiomara Castro's government. El Pulso gathered information in some entities such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where established budgetary norms are being violated, since appointments are being made with retroactive payments, promotions of officials to the detriment of the diplomatic career ladder and payment of labor indemnity to those who worked under contract."<sup>27</sup> The Nationalist-controlled Congress approved in just one session a reform to the law to protect public officials and former public officials. It vastly expanded the number of public officials for which the Honduran public would have to pay their private security.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, the reform includes a 250 million Lempiras entailment.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, Congress approved the 2022 budget, and this without discussing it with the transition team of the incoming administration.<sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup>

Later in December, "[w]ithout prior notice, and without knowing precisely the number of deputies connected virtually, (...) the National Congress approved four loans valued at US\$590.4 million (14,464.8 million lempiras)."<sup>32</sup> Additionally, they promoted members of the police force, reformed the Law of the National Institute of Retirement and Pensions for Public Employees, and more.<sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> <sup>35</sup> In a third irregular session, they approved 70 million Lempiras for the transport sector<sup>36</sup> and gave authorization to the Municipal Mayor's Office of the Central District (AMDC) to contract municipal bonds for up to 3 billion Lempiras.<sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> On December 22, Roxana Rodríguez, Vice Minister of Finance, informed that more than 200 million lempiras had been disbursed to pay salaries to employees of the "Con chamba vivís mejor" program.<sup>39</sup> But just a week later, more than 2000 people employed by the JOH regime as part of the program were demanding to be paid.<sup>40</sup>

On December 12, Xiomara nominated the members of the commission coordinating her presidential handover, Jari Dixon, Natalie Roque and Belinda Martínez.<sup>41</sup> "The transition commission informed that Xiomara Castro's government will concentrate its work in seven main areas of the country in

---

23 <https://proceso.hn/vamos-a-formar-un-gobierno-que-restaure-las-heridas-profundas-noe-pino/>  
24 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/nuevo-gobierno-de-honduras-enfrentara-deuda-deficit-electrico-y-subempleo-DI4192324>  
25 <https://confidencialhn.com/fosdeh-calcula-que-servicio-de-deuda-superara-los-56-mil-millones-de-lempiras-en-2022/>  
26 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/en-mas-de-mil-millones-en-dolares-se-endeudo-gobierno-en-los-ultimos-cinco-meses/>  
27 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/08/al-descubierta-pinata-de-contratos-permanentes-en-cancilleria-al-cierre-de-actual-gobierno/>  
28 <https://criterio.hn/pese-a-rechazo-ciudadano-diputados-aprueban-reformar-ley-que-protecte-a-funcionarios-y-exfuncionarios/>  
29 <https://confidencialhn.com/fernando-emilio-garcia-rodriguez-condena-gasto-de-250-millones-de-lempiras-en-dar-seguridad-a-funcionarios-y-exfuncionarios-publicos/>  
30 <https://proceso.hn/cn-aprobo-el-presupuesto-general-para-el-ano-2022/>  
31 <https://confidencialhn.com/hugo-noe-pino-asegura-que-gobierno-saliente-no-quiso-discutir-con-el-entrante-la-aprobacion-del-presupuesto-general-para-el-ejercicio-fiscal-de-2022/>  
32 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1506813-466/congreso-nacional-aprueba-prestamo-pandemia>  
33 <https://confidencialhn.com/cn-sigue-endeudando-al-pueblo-hondureno-al-aprobar-convenios-de-financiamiento-entre-bch-y-gobierno-para-atender-calamidad-y-pandemia/>  
34 <https://confidencialhn.com/legislativo-aprobo-ampnistia-para-las-obligaciones-con-la-enee-ihs-conatel-y-hondutel/>  
35 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-nacional-recurre-a-arbitraria-aprobacion-masiva-de-leyes-ante-cierre-de-gobierno/>  
36 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1507236-466/congreso-nacional-aprueba-bono-excepcional-transporte-70-millones-contratos-alcaldia>  
37 <https://confidencialhn.com/abuso-de-poder-consideran-parlamentarios-la-contratacion-de-bonos-municipales-admc-por-1-3-mil-millones/>  
38 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-aprueba-varios-contratos-para-la-alcaldia-municipal-del-distrito-central/>  
39 <https://confidencialhn.com/secretaria-de-finanzas-desembolsa-mas-de-200-millones-de-lempiras-para-pago-de-empleados-del-programa-con-chamba-vivis-mejor/>  
40 <https://proceso.hn/cientos-de-empleados-de-con-chamba-vivis-mejor-reclaman-pago-de-salario/>  
41 <https://proceso.hn/jari-dixon-natalie-roque-y-belinda-martinez-coordinaran-traspaso-de-mando-a-xiomara-castro/>

the first 100 days of the State's administration. The member of the transition commission, Marcio Sierra, explained that these areas are the generation of employment, economic reactivation and the analysis of the internal and external debt. It also includes an analysis of the finances of the Empresa Nacional de Energía Eléctrica (ENEE), review of tax evasion and the general budget for 2022 and the intensification of the fight against corruption. According to Sierra, for each area there is a working group designated to carry out plans within certain time frames."<sup>42</sup> Regarding the challenge to fight corruption, CESPAD presented different scenarios of the role to be played by the current Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla in his last 1.5 years in office. Will he try to undermine the Xiomara Castro administration or will he be helpful?<sup>43</sup>

The transition team also announced to conduct a forensic audit of state institutions once in power.<sup>44</sup> "All contracts that have been negotiated during the current administration in a dubious manner will be reviewed and any necessary corrections will be made, as guaranteed this Wednesday by Congressman Jorge Cálix."<sup>45</sup> "The head of the transition commission of the new government, Héctor Zelaya, stated that they identified 29 public entities created in the last government periods, which did not provide feasible results for the country. "It has been identified that there are 29 more institutions that were created in the last 10 years, which represent around 100 million lempiras in budget increase. From this point of view, we analyze that if these institutions were created, why are there no good results for the country," he emphasized. He indicated that many state agencies have duplicity of functions and that is why a restructuring should be made in the Executive Branch."<sup>46</sup> On December 23, "Hugo Noé Pino, member of the Transition Commission of the government to be presided over by Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, revealed (...) that a team of legal experts has been appointed to advise on the review of all contracts signed by the current government administration."<sup>47</sup> Another challenge are the so-called intervention bodies on which the JOH regime heavily relied upon - "with juicy salaries and people close to Hernández Alvarado".<sup>48</sup>

ContraCorriente took a particular look at the challenges of the future government regarding improving the life of Honduran women.<sup>49</sup> One of the open question is regarding of the Armed Forces. In, a possible hopeful sign, its head, general Tito Livio Moreno, said that they were available to work with the new government.<sup>50</sup> ContraCorriente covered the topic of the Armed Forces and the new administration.<sup>51</sup> CESPAD published a proposal for the new administration on how to increase citizen security and promote human rights.<sup>52</sup> FOSDEH presented a Economic, Social and Political Reconversion Plan for Honduras in the face of the sanitary, political and corruption collapse.<sup>53</sup> Former head of the Central Bank of Honduras and member of Xiomara's Transition Commission, Hugo Noé Pino, fears that energy prices will rise because the JOH regime

42 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/13/nuevo-gobierno-anuncia-que-priorizara-generacion-de-empleo-y-lucha-contr-la-corrupcion/>

43 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/13/los-escenarios-del-penoso-fiscal-general-de-honduras/>

44 <https://confidencialhn.com/gobierno-de-xiomara-castro-hara-auditoria-forense-a-todas-las-instituciones-comision-de-transicion/>

45 <https://proceso.hn/todos-los-contratos-leoninos-seran-revisados-y-correctos-garantiza-jorge-calix/>

46 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/16/equipo-de-transicion-revela-que-29-oficinas-publicas-no-generan-resultados-al-pais/>

47 <https://proceso.hn/nombran-equipo-legal-para-asesorar-nuevo-gobierno-en-revision-de-contratos-heredados-de-actual-administracion/>

48 <https://confidencialhn.com/papel-de-juntas-interventoras-en-regimen-cachureco-de-joha/>

49 <https://contracorriente.red/2021/12/06/puede-xiomara-castro-resolver-los-problemas-de-las-mujeres-hondurenas/>

50 <https://confidencialhn.com/las-ff-aa-se-ponen-a-disposicion-para-trabajar-con-el-nuevo-gobierno-que-liderara-xiomara-castro/>

51 <https://proceso.hn/assume-nueva-junta-de-comandantes-en-la-vispera-de-nuevo-gobierno/>

52 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/14/a-proposito-del-nuevo-gobierno-en-honduras-propuesta-de-politicas-de-seguridad-en-democracia-y-fortaleciendo-los-derechos-humanos/>

53 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/elementos-de-diagnostico-y-lineamientos-de-propuesta-para-un-plan-de-reconversion-economica-social-y-politica-de-honduras-frente-al-colapso-sanitario-politico-y-de-corrupcion/>

froze them in an attempt to gain popularity. But Pino also announced that those using less than 150kw of energy per month will receive support by the new administration.<sup>54</sup>

The Citizen Board (Mesa ciudadana), consisting of social and human rights leaders of Honduras, published a press release on the election of Xiomara Castro. "The Mesa Ciudadana celebrates the victory that makes Xiomara Castro Sarmiento president-elect, thanks to a successful campaign, since the people of Honduras - determined and clear - voted for her massively. The great winner is the people, who analyzed the person, listened attentively to her positions, interpreted her sincere intention and decided to believe in her. (...) Beyond satisfying party demands or good relations with the powers that be, from inside and outside, the new government has acquired a commitment to the profound change that the nation needs to survive and prosper. It must immediately implement changes that respond to the widespread demands of a population beset by burdens. (...) On the very day of the inauguration, the President must propose to Congress the unavoidable repeal of all unconstitutional laws. And to proclaim an amnesty to immediately release political prisoners and defenders of the common goods and nature, as well as to announce the repatriation of the politically persecuted of the regime. Afterwards, with more time, it will be necessary to build new legal norms to fill the legal vacuum. But what is null and void cannot survive and does not require negotiation. The recovery of Honduras, in addition to being an economic and social project, must be a project of civic, moral and ethical recovery, of the sense of national identity, of the Homeland, which involves guaranteeing the rights of all. LIBRE and Xiomara swore that the sovereignty of the people would be above any private utility, privilege, group benefit or sectorial or partisan convenience. The new government also has an obligation of transparency. (...) The people voted to take back their own role in guiding their destiny. The new government must continuously dialogue with the people, empower citizens and enrich its policies with the permanent flow of popular opinion. In the same way, laws must be forged democratically to ensure the improvement of the systems with which the citizenry generates institutional democracy, the electoral and consultation systems."<sup>55</sup>

## Congress

With the presidential election already decided by the beginning of the month, Congressional races became the center of attention. "The next National Congress of Honduras will have four important benches, which we list in hierarchical order: Libertad y Refundación (Libre), Partido Nacional, Partido Liberal and Partido Salvador de Honduras (PSH). Despite the fact that at the presidential level there was a crushing defeat for the ruling party, in the Legislative of 2022 there will be no concentration of power of either Libre or the National Party. Currently there are allegations of fraud favoring the National Party, which, according to some analysts, is due to an extra-electoral arrangement."<sup>56</sup> Criterio cited system engineer and expert on electoral matters David Raudales who claims that "there is duplicity in the Electoral Results Transmission System (TREP) allowing electoral fraud at the level of deputies".<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1507458-466/hugo-noe-pino-subsidio-energia-bajo-consumo-energia-electrica-xiomara-castro-2022>

<sup>55</sup> <https://criterio.hn/una-eleccion-democratica-es-un-pacto-sagrado-con-el-pueblo/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://contracorriente.red/2021/12/05/partidos-manchan-proceso-electoral-en-conteo-de-votos-para-el-congreso-nacional/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://criterio.hn/investigador-afirma-que-existen-dos-sistemas-de-resultados-electorales-en-plataforma-del-cne/>

On December 2, the CNE announced to only present projections of a future Congress once 80% of the ballots would have been processed.<sup>58</sup> The Savior of Honduras Party denounced fraud at the congressional level.<sup>59</sup> Nationalist congressional candidate María Antonieta Mejía also denounced electoral fraud in favor of JOH's right hand man and also Nationalist congressional candidate Ebal Díaz.<sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup> Libre magistrate at the CNE, Rixi Moncada, showed a ballot on Twitter which shows an adulteration favoring Díaz.<sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup>

On December 3, more complaints surfaced.<sup>64</sup> As a consequence, the (CNE prolonged the time to file complaints for another 72 hours.<sup>65</sup> Congressional candidates of the Partido Salvador de Honduras (PSH), challenged more than three thousand ballots of the department of Francisco Morazán.<sup>66</sup> In one case, PHS candidate Isis Romero denounced that she has zero votes on a ballot where all her family members went to vote for her.<sup>67</sup> Nationalist candidate Waleska Zelaya running for reelection said she would challenge 57 ballots in total.<sup>68</sup> The CNE called on the MP to urgently start investigating the complaints.<sup>69</sup> The MP took this up and requested the necessary information from the CNE<sup>70</sup> and sent teams of public prosecutors to their offices.<sup>71</sup>

Even El Heraldo reported on ballots favoring the National Party.<sup>72</sup> The public outcry about the fraud was accompanied by calls for a vote-by-vote counting at the congressional level.<sup>73</sup> "The Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Cortes (CCIC), regarding the vote counting process at the level of deputies to the National Congress, stated this Monday that the National Electoral Council (CNE) and the Public Ministry (MP) must set a precedent regarding the tampering of electoral records."<sup>74</sup> The same day, on December 6, the CNE announced recount<sup>75</sup>. It started the next day, the minutes of 2'581 ballot boxes, 14% of the total, would be recounted one by one.<sup>76</sup> Criterio reported that an additional forensic audit is needed. "According to IT experts, part of the fraud mounted at the deputy and even presidential election level could be discovered by performing a forensic audit of the results system due to a possible duplicity in the system that prevents the true results from not being fully accounted for even though they appear in the platform data."<sup>77</sup>

On December 9, the Liberal Party made an important announcement. Their future members of Congress would only vote from someone from the Libre party as the new president of Congress.<sup>78</sup> <sup>79</sup> If true, it would be a devastating blow to the National Party. A week later, even Nationalist congressman Antonio Rivera said that Libre should have the presidency in Congress.<sup>80</sup> On

58 <https://proceso.hn/cne-aclara-que-no-se-visualizara-integracion-del-cn-y-alcaldias-hasta-que-haya-80-de-actas-procesadas/>

59 <https://proceso.hn/se-estran-robando-las-diputaciones-hay-pruebas-denuncia-candidata-a-diputada-por-psh/>

60 <https://confidencialhn.com/estamos-en-empate-tecnico-con-ebal-diaz-lo-extrano-es-que-a-medida-pasa-el-tiempo-el-sube-y-los-demas-vamos-de-bajada-maria-antonieta-mejia/>

61 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/02/senal-an-injerencia-sobre-ultima-diputacion-nacionalista-en-francisco-morazan/>

62 By the end of the month and after the recount and the correcting of some of the fraud, Díaz did not win a seat after all.

63 <https://twitter.com/riximga/status/1466647262155579393>

64 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/cne-no-es-supermercado-ni-tienda-para-hacer-negociaciones/>

65 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/cne-amplia-plazo-para-imaginaciones-y-pide-al-ministerio-publico-investigar-adulteracion-de-actas/>

66 <https://proceso.hn/candidatos-a-diputados-del-psh-piden-impugnar-mas-de-tres-mil-actas/>

67 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505219-508/lleve-padres-votar-candidata-diputada-partido-salvador-honduras-acta-elecciones-honduras>

68 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505208-508/elecciones-generales-waleska-zelaya-actas-adulteradas-partido-nacional-diputados>

69 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505185-508/cne-pide-investigacion-actas-irregulares-elecciones-honduras-diputados-fiscalia>

70 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/unidad-contra-delitos-electorales-solicita-al-cne-respaldo-documental-y-electronico-de-supuestas-adulteraciones-de-actas/>

71 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/equipos-fiscales-se-desplazan-hasta-el-cne-para-continuar-con-investigaciones-por-supuestas-adulteraciones-de-actas/>

72 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505409-508/video-muestran-actas-infladas-diputados-partido-nacional>

73 <https://proceso.hn/aspirante-del-pinu-sd-tambien-pide-recuento-de-votos-en-el-nivel-electivo-parlamentario/>

74 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505529-508/conferencia-episcopal-honduras-dudas-transparencia-elecciones>

75 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1505552-508/verificacion-recuento-votos-comienza-este-martes-anuncia-cne>

76 <https://criterio.hn/recuento-voto-por-voto-en-mas-de-4300-urnas-por-fraude-en-papeleta-de-diputados/>

77 <https://criterio.hn/auditoria-al-sistema-electoral-podria-revelar-fraude-entre-votos-y-porcentaje-a-nivel-presidencial/>

78 <https://criterio.hn/liberales-anuncian-que-solo-votaran-por-diputado-del-partido-libre-para-presidencia-del-cn/>

79 <https://proceso.hn/partido-liberal-apoya-que-un-diputado-de-libre-presida-el-congreso/>

80 <https://proceso.hn/quien-presida-el-proximo-cn-debe-ser-de-libre-opina-diputado-rivera-callejas/>

December 17, the CNE announced to present the official results of the presidential and Parlacen elections two days later (see above). The congressional and municipal results would follow on December 28.<sup>81</sup> The EU electoral observation mission left Honduras on the day of the announcement.<sup>82</sup> While awaiting the official results at the congressional level, more denunciations of fraud were made, also among Nationalist candidates accusing each other.<sup>83 84</sup>

On December 22, important news broke. Luis Redondo is the likely next president of Congress.<sup>85</sup> The next day, president-elect Xiomara Castro supported his nomination."<sup>86</sup> The Liberal Party also announced to support any candidate nominated by Libre.<sup>87</sup> Redondo presented a plan, a legislative commitment, for his presidency.<sup>88</sup> "With the triumph of President-elect Xiomara Castro Sarmiento and the nomination of Congressman Luis Redondo to the presidency of the National Congress, Honduras could be at the doorstep of a great opportunity to recover the rule of law, establish auditing systems for public institutions and achieve the installation of an International Commission against Corruption and Impunity, said sociologist Elvin Hernández on Radio Progreso."<sup>89</sup>

On December 28, the CNE presented the final results of the congressional races. In Congress, Libre will have 50 seats, the National Party 40, the Liberal Party 22, the Savior of Honduras Party 10, and the Christian Democrat and PAC each one.<sup>90</sup>

## Mayoral Races

The National Party has lost its grab on the most important cities and lost over 30 mayoral posts. Tegucigalpa was in the hand of the National Party the last 24 years. The main cities are now in the hand of the opposition.<sup>91</sup> But in some lost cities, the National Party tried to undermine the future leadership. "The lawyer Omar Menjívar denounced this Saturday the destruction of documents by employees of the municipal mayor's office of San Pedro Sula. Menjívar, who is the virtual vice mayor of this municipality, revealed that he has seen videos and images of employees removing documentation in boxes and bags. "There are videos, information and photographs circulating that show employees of the municipal mayor's office of San Pedro Sula taking out documentation in boxes, even destroying them and taking it out in garbage bags", he declared to a radio station."<sup>92 93</sup> Later, El Tiempo reported that the outgoing mayor denied meeting with Mayor-elect Roberto Contreras' transition team.<sup>94</sup> On December 6, both the mayor-elect of Tegucigalpa<sup>95</sup> and San Pedro Sula<sup>96</sup> commented on their plans for Honduras' main two cities. In total, Libre won 50 municipalities compared to 31 in 2017.<sup>97</sup>

81 <https://proceso.hn/el-20-de-diciembre-se-dara-declaratoria-de-resultados-a-nivel-presidencial-y-parlacen/>

82 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1506761-508/mision-observadores-union-europea-se-retira-honduras-elecciones-generales-promete-volver-informe>

83 <https://criterio.hn/pedro-chavez-la-estampa-detras-del-fraude-electoral/>

84 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1507085-508/renan-inestroza-denuncia-fraude-partido-favoreciendo-pedro-chavez>

85 <https://twitter.com/Lredondo/status/1474185823704731660>

86 <https://twitter.com/XiomaraCastroZ/status/1474372897602945042>

87 <https://proceso.hn/pl-apoyara-a-diputado-que-libre-designe-para-presidencia-del-congreso-confirma-mario-segura/>

88 <https://ellibertador.hn/2021/12/24/desarmar-la-dictadura-y-montar-la-republica-mision-de-redondo/>

89 <https://radioprogressohn.net/portada/honduras-podria-estar-a-las-puertas-de-recuperar-el-estado-de-derecho-y-acabar-con-la-corrupcion/>

90 <https://proceso.hn/estos-son-los-diputados-del-congreso-nacional-2022-2026/>

91 <https://proceso.hn/partidos-liberal-y-libre-ganan-alcaldias-de-las-principales-ciudades/>

92 <https://proceso.hn/virtual-vicealcalde-de-sps-denuncia-destruccion-de-documentos-por-actuales-empleados-municipales/>

93 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/demanda-investigacion-seria-en-supuesta-destruccion-de-documentos-en-alcaldia-sampedrana/>

94 <https://tiempo.hn/contreras-alcaldia-no-recibe-comision-transicion/>

95 <https://confidencialhn.com/jorge-aldana-no-somos-escoba-de-personas-solo-vamos-a-barrer-la-corrupcion/>

96 <https://confidencialhn.com/roberto-contreras-funcionarios-que-ganaban-mas-de-1100-mil-seran-despedidos-la-gente-pobre-no/>

97 <https://criterio.hn/nacionalistas-y-liberales-tendrian-mayoria-de-alcaldias-y-libre-gana-principales-ciudades/>



The CNE presented the final results of the mayoral races. In Congress, The National Party won 142 races, the Liberal Party 90 and Libre 50. Some cities were won by smaller parties and alliances.<sup>98</sup>

## Parlacen

The current setup of the Honduran delegation to the Central American Parliament, Parlacen, is 10 seats for Libre, 8 for the National Party and 2 for the Liberal Party. The current Nationalist president of Congress, Mauricio Oliva Herrera, was among those elected and may enjoy immunity for some more years.<sup>99</sup> And so will the Nationalist vice-president Ricardo Álvarez.<sup>100</sup> Several voices denounced its main function as a place for corrupt politicians to enjoy immunity.<sup>101 102</sup>

## Women

Women will still be a minority in Congress, projected to reach 34 out of the 128 seats. This would be seven more than in the previous Congress.<sup>103</sup> Among the 298 elected mayors, only 17 will be women.<sup>104</sup>

## Small Parties

Honduran law states that parties which do not win any post have to disappear - in this elections this would apply to several parties, five<sup>105</sup> or even six.<sup>106</sup> Later, the CNE informed that one of the small parties, the Patriotic Alliance won a mayoral race, i.e. surviving as a party.<sup>107</sup> On December 17, Proceso Digital reported that Frente Amplio (Frente), Partido Nueva Ruta, Unificación Democrática (UD) and Partido de Centro Social Cristiano Va Movimiento Solidario (Vamos) would disappear.<sup>108</sup>

## Post-Electoral Violence

"Armed men attempted to enter the house of the coordinator of the Partido Libertad Refundación (Libre), Sabino Sorto, in the community of Nueva Esperanza, La Campa, Lempira. Sorto, a recognized political leader, denounced to the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), that around 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 30, unknown persons went to look for him at his house, who "supposedly" mistook the place, so the intention to attack did not materialize, according to some witnesses. The leader of the Libre party fears for his life and that of his family, since in October 2020, his son, who is a municipal councilor for Libre, was the victim of an attack."<sup>109</sup>

98 <https://proceso.hn/estos-son-los-diputados-del-congreso-nacional-2022-2026/>

99 <https://proceso.hn/definidos-los-diputados-al-parlamento-centroamericano/>

100 <https://criterio.hn/cuestionado-exalcalde-de-tegucigalpa-es-nombrado-diputado-al-parlacen/>

101 <https://criterio.hn/sindicados-por-corrupcion-y-narcotrafico-entre-los-diputados-que-integraran-el-parlacen/>

102 <https://confidencialhn.com/parlacen-refugio-de-politiqueros-senalados-por-actos-de-corrupcion-y-narcotrafico/>

103 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/interactivos/1505254-529/mujeres-minoria-congreso-nacional-honduras>

104 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1506985-508/17-alcalde%3%ADas-honduras-dirigidas-mujeres-elecciones-2021>

105 <https://confidencialhn.com/partidos-minoritarios-desapareceran-en-honduras-tras-elecciones-del-28-de-noviembre/>

106 <https://criterio.hn/al-menos-seis-partidos-deberian-ser-extinguidos-con-base-a-la-ley-electoral/>

107 <https://proceso.hn/la-alianza-patriotica-sobrevive-al-ganar-la-alcaldia-de-san-marcos-en-santa-barbara/>

108 <https://proceso.hn/cuatro-partidos-en-corredor-de-la-muerte/>

109 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/coordinador-de-libre-en-la-campa-lempira-teme-por-su-vida/>

Probable future congressman for the Christian Democrats (DC), Carlos Raudales, denounced death threats from leaders of his own party who dispute the only seat DC is predicted to win.<sup>110</sup> On December 11, the former mayoral candidate from the Liderh party in Olanchito, Yoro, César Cáliz Zelaya, was shot dead in an ambush.<sup>111</sup>

## Electoral Reforms

"Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Luis León, said this Monday that the Voting Boards (JRV) did not work because it was there where the tampering of the ballots in the framework of the general elections held last November 28th in Honduras took place. (...) He pointed out that Libertad y Refundación, Partido Nacional and Liberal, knew that by putting a representative as president, secretary and scrutineer, this problem could occur "what this indicates is that Honduras must continue advancing in electoral reforms and having citizens control the polling stations may be the best option", he said."<sup>112</sup> Fonac also called for reforms to the setup of the Voting Boards having citizens constitute them and not party activists.<sup>113</sup> CNE magistrate Rixi Moncada presented some proposals for electoral reforms such as more independence for the CNE as well as a two-round presidential election.<sup>114</sup>

## Human Rights and Their Defenders

On December 16, "more than 30 organizations around the world and international law experts, including UN rapporteurs, presented the Protocol of Hope. The first international tool to promote an effective response to threats against human rights defenders who protect democracy and rights globally, 85%\* of whom claim to have received or know someone who has received some form of threat for their advocacy work in recent years."<sup>115</sup>

## Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

IM-Defensoras sent out an alert. "Unknown individuals damage defender Nidia Castillo's vehicle. On December 2, Nidia Castillo was at her home after doing multiple activities as a member of the Network of Women Human Rights Lawyers in Choluteca. (...) Upon leaving her house with the damaged vehicle and in the company of a family member, she was followed by an unknown man on a motorcycle to her destination. That same day, the defender had been at a press conference to denounce the impact of the ZEDES."<sup>116</sup> <sup>117</sup> Three days later and also in the south, German Chirinos, coordinator of MASSVIDA, was approached by an unknown man who threatened to kill him.<sup>118</sup>

On December 8, Defensores en Línea denounced that state security forces, DPI and ATIC, raided the house of environmental defender Pedro Iván Juárez in Cuaca, Olancho.<sup>119</sup> The same day, IM-

110 <https://proceso.hn/periodista-carlos-raudales-denuncia-amenazas-a-muerte-por-entrar-como-diputado-de-la-dc/>

111 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1506058-466/matan-julio-calix-excandidato-alcaldel-olanchito-yoro-honduras>

112 <https://proceso.hn/jrv-no-funcionaron-hay-que-avanzar-a-la-ciudadanizacion-de-las-mesas-electorales-luis-leon/>

113 <https://proceso.hn/fonac-propone-que-mesas-electorales-se-integren-por-ciudadanos-independientes-a-partidos/>

114 <https://confidencialhn.com/los-desafios-son-que-el-cne-no-sea-mercado-de-venta-y-compra-de-candidaturas-y-la-segunda-vuelta-electoral-rix-moncada/>

115 <https://cejil.org/comunicado-de-prensa/protocolo-de-la-esperanza-primera-herramienta-internacional-para-responder-a-las-amenazas-contra-las-personas-defensoras-de-los-derechos-humanos/>

116 <https://twitter.com/RedDefensoras/status/1466920316068933634>

117 <https://twitter.com/RedDefensoras/status/1466920801840549893>

118 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1424-dos-sabotajes-sistematicos-a-automoviles-de-periodista-y-defensor-de-ddhh-en-zona-sur-de-honduras>

119 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-dpi-y-atic-allanan-vivienda-de-defensor-del-ambiente-en-olanchito/>

Defensoras sent out an alert denouncing that the authorities are postponing the investigation into a fire at the house of human rights defender Hedme Fátima Castro. The fire, which destroyed at least half of the house, took place on November 5 and now the authorities say that they will look into it in January or maybe even February.<sup>120</sup>

"On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, the Regional Agrarian Platform of the Aguán Valley and the Coalition of Popular Organizations of the Bajo Aguán (COPA) held a joint press conference in the city of Tocoa, Colón, Honduras. Their purpose was to draw attention to a developing situation in the Bajo Aguán region, where Honduran state authorities are enforcing unlawful eviction orders against peasant farmers."<sup>121</sup> "On Dec. 16th, 2021, the eviction of the San Isidro community took place without any injuries, and no community members were detained. The eviction order was presented to the community, with a Juez Ejecutor/Executing Judge present, and the remaining community members soon after left the property. The CONADEH (Honduras Government Human Rights Agency) was present when we arrived at the 2nd entrance of the property, where the eviction order was presented. After a closer examination of the order, it seems to be an order issued in 2019. We have not been able to verify yet whether the order was actually valid, or if the police carried out an eviction using an expired order. The cooperative of San Isidro, affiliated with the Plataforma Agraria, has a definitive land title for the San Isidro farm, and they have been on the land for 2 years. Dinant Corporation claims to have tenure over the land and had planted the land with oil palm trees before it was last occupied by the cooperative. The cooperative had removed small sections of Dinant's palm plantings to plant yucca, maize, beans, plantains, and other subsistence crops."<sup>122</sup>

On December 27, "[a]t least seven people were injured early this morning when they were attacked by alleged security guards of Inversiones Ceibeñas, said in Radio Progreso the Coordinator of the Agrarian Platform, Jaime Cabrera."<sup>123</sup> <sup>124</sup> OACNUDH expressed concerns and demanded an investigation.<sup>125</sup>

## Guapinol

On December 1, the trial of the criminalized Guapinol defenders was scheduled to start. OACNUDH announced to observe the proceedings.<sup>126</sup> US Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky tweeted before the trial: "The #Guapinol River defenders have been arbitrarily detained in Honduras for more than two years & are now being subjected to a sham trial. I join the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions in calling for their immediate release!"<sup>127</sup> Both the EU and US embassies called for due process and transparency.<sup>128</sup> <sup>129</sup>

120 <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/12/alerta-defensoras-honduras-retrasan-investigacion-del-incendio-en-casa-de-la-defensora-hedme-castro/>

121 <https://www.uusc.org/press/uusc-condemns-forced-evictions-in-honduras/>

122 <https://www.solidaritycollective.org/post/december-2021-evictions-in-the-bajo-aguan-honduras>

123 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/enfrentamiento-entre-campesinos-y-supuestos-guardias-deja-siete-heridos-en-tocoa-colon/>

124 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3324-recrudece-violencia-contra-campesinos-en-el-aguan-guardias-de-seguridad-disparan-contra-familias-a-vista-y-paciencia-de-la-policia>

125 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1475848285525004303>

126 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1466057013297926157>

127 <https://twitter.com/janschakowsky/status/1466068719625506816>

128 <https://twitter.com/UEenHonduras/status/1466464707892682758>

129 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1466530691626242061>

The trial was then postponed for a day due to health reasons of one of the defense attorneys.<sup>130</sup> Human rights organizations denounced that "[t]he prosecutors in the Guapinol case (..) are refusing to give the defense the supposed proofs they plan to use - secret and invented "proofs" are the only way the MP can try this unjust case".<sup>131</sup> The next day, with the MP still not presenting the proof, the trial was rescheduled to December 9.<sup>132</sup>

"The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint program of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) and FIDH, has received new information about acts of intimidation and threats against the Guapinol River defenders: Porfirio Sorto Cedillo, José Abelino Cedillo, Kelvin Alejandro Romero, Arnol Javier Alemán, Ever Alexander Cedillo, Orbin Nahún Hernández, Daniel Márquez and Jeremías Martínez Díaz and their families. (...) In this context [of the trial], the campaign of intimidation and threats on social networks has intensified, especially on Facebook and Twitter, which, through anonymous accounts, stigmatizes the work in defense of the human rights of the eight detained defenders and aims to misinform the users of these social networks about the criminalization case against the Guapinol defenders. Likewise, on December 1, 2021, unknown individuals went to the "Justice and Freedom for Guapinol" camp, installed outside the Tocoa Palace of Justice, to take videos and photographs of the families of the eight defenders and people who are accompanying the process against them."<sup>133</sup>

On December 9, the trial restarted. Honduras Now summarized the first day. "- Despite there being no electricity in the court and the inability to publicly broadcast the trial, all parties decided to begin the trial. The prosecutors begin by formalizing the charges against the eight accused water defenders followed by the defense's response to the official accusations. - In their opening statement, the prosecutors explain the incident on September 7 and surprise the defense by adding an additional charge of aggravated damages allegedly suffered by Inversiones Los Pinares, in addition to three other accusations: aggravated arson against Santos Correa [Los Pinares security guard]; unjust detention of Santos Correa; and aggravated arson in damage to Inversiones Los Pinares. - The team of defense attorneys highlight: that the prosecutors lack of evidence of the alleged facts, and in fact, are lying about what happened on September 7, 2018; that adding the additional charge of damages at this phase of the process is not procedurally permitted; failed to explain the individual participation of each accused in the September 7 incident which is required at this phase of the process; and lack objectivity. - After lunch, the court ruled in favor of the prosecutors, allowing prosecutors to add a fourth accusation against the water defenders, sparking an entire afternoon of the defense attorneys explaining why the court's decision is "procedural fraud." Defense attorneys asked the court to reconsider the decision. Trial was suspended for judge's to deliberate and is convened for tomorrow at 9 am."<sup>134</sup> The same day, the people of Guapinol continued to denounce acts of persecution and vigilance against community members. "According to reports from fellow defenders in the Aguán area, there have been more incidents of surveillance in private homes and workplaces, such as the one that occurred on Thursday, December

130 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3307-ministerio-publico-esconde-pruebas-contra-defensores-de-guapinol-en-el-preambulo-del-juicio-oral-y-publico>

131 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1466109696964710403>

132 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3308-juicio-oral-y-publico-contra-defensores-de-guapinol-no-inicio-porque-mp-no-quiso-entregar-seis-medios-de-prueba>

133 <https://criterio.hn/intimidacion-contra-las-familias-de-los-defensores-de-guapinol-ha-arrecciado-en-honduras/>

134 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-three-the-trial-begins/>

9 at the San Alonso Rodríguez Foundation when a vehicle was found to be watching the institution."<sup>135</sup>

The next day, Honduras Now denounced: "The court hearing the Guapinol case just made it INCREDIBLY CLEAR that they are working on behalf of Inversiones Los Pinares & Nucor Corporation. This is a sham trial. The court just allowed the addition of another charge."<sup>136</sup> Later, the trial was suspended after the defense recused the Sentencing court arguing partiality from three judges.<sup>137</sup> Honduras Now published again a helpful summary of the events of the day.<sup>138</sup> On December 14, a writ of habeas corpus was filed in favor of the defender.<sup>139</sup> The same day, the Constitutional Chamber appointed a judge.<sup>140</sup> A day later, nine national and international human rights organizations filed an amicus curiae brief in support of the habeas corpus.<sup>141</sup> OACNUDH called on the Constitutional Chamber to swiftly resolve the habeas corpus.<sup>142</sup> But this did not happen and the Supreme Court judges went on their holiday break without resolving the habeas corpus.<sup>143</sup>

At the end of the month, Libre coordinator José Manuel Zelaya Rosales announced that they would fight for the liberation of the imprisoned Guapinol defenders.<sup>144</sup> A day later, The US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, Uzra Zeya, tweeted: "During my recent trip to Honduras I underscored the importance of transparently and expeditiously resolving legal processes, including #Guapinol and other human rights cases. We continue to monitor these processes closely."<sup>145</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

OFRANEH sent out an alert that CONATEL was going after the Garífuna community radio Faluma Bimetu in Triunfo de la Cruz. Th radio had been attacked, burnt down and threatened in the past.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>147</sup>

## The Case of Berta Cáceres

David Castillo, convicted, but not sentenced, for the death of Berta Cáceres, will also face trial in the Gualcarque Fraud case.<sup>148</sup> "When Roberto David Castillo graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point, the Honduran cadet was confident he'd leave behind a legacy. "He will be remembered by all as being a fearless leader committed to God, his family and serving others," read the caption under his yearbook portrait. Castillo is certain to be remembered: earlier this year, the Honduran high court found him guilty as the joint perpetrator in the 2016 assassination of the

<sup>135</sup> <https://im-defensoras.org/2021/12/alerta-urgente-honduras-vigilancia-y-control-se-incrementan-alrededor-de-la-reanudacion-del-juicio-contralos-defensores-de-guapinol-y-sector-san-pedro/>

<sup>136</sup> <https://cespad.org/hn/2021/12/10/alerta-juicio-contradefensores-de-guapinol-avanza-en-medio-de-inconsistencias-y-arbitrariedades/>

<sup>137</sup> <https://radioprogreso.net/aplicacion-movil/tras-recusacion-contrajueces-suspenden-juicio-de-guapinol/>

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-four-the-court-is-recused-trial-suspended-until-further-notice/>

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/supreme-court-must-release-arbitrarily-detained-guapinol-river-defenders-in-time-for-christmas>

<sup>140</sup> <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/guapinol/las-cortes/item/3315-sala-de-lo-constitucional-nombra-jueza-ejecutora-para-investigar-las-anomalias-cometidas-en-ampliacion-de-prision-a-defensores-de-guapinol>

<sup>141</sup> <https://criterio.hn/presentan-amicus-curiae-para-que-csj-resuelva-habeas-corpus-a-favor-de-defensores-de-guapinol/>

<sup>142</sup> <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1471261053564915713>

<sup>143</sup> <https://criterio.hn/csj-se-fue-de-vacaciones-sin-resolver-habeas-corpus-a-los-defensores-de-guapinol-en-honduras/>

<sup>144</sup> <https://proceso.hn/lucharemos-por-liberacion-de-ambientalistas-de-guapinol-expresidente-manuel-zelaya/>

<sup>145</sup> <https://twitter.com/UnderSecState/status/1475530578535632900>

<sup>146</sup> <https://twitter.com/hondurasol/status/1468582798994853888>

<sup>147</sup> <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/alertas/censura/1425-conatel-amenaza-con-cerrar-radio-comunitaria-garifuna-faluma-bimetu-en-tela>

<sup>148</sup> <https://copinh.org/2021/12/a-pesar-de-apelacion-de-defensa-david-castillo-mejia-va-a-juicio-en-el-proceso-del-fraude-del-gualcarque/>

indigenous activist Berta Cáceres, then one of Latin America's most prominent environmental defenders. (...) A Guardian investigation reveals how Castillo's time at the prestigious military academy helped shape his career – and raises questions about the training provided by the institution to generations of Central American soldiers, some of whom later became involved with human rights abuses."<sup>149</sup>

On December 13, human rights defender and lawyer Víctor Fernández denounces that Congress intends to illegally grant a customs concession to the company CAMOSA which is linked to the murder of Berta Cáceres.<sup>150</sup>

On December 15, Honduras Now tweeted: "An anti-corruption court orders the extraction of data from Daniel Atala's computers. Atala was the Chief Financial Officer of the Honduran energy company DESA & the judicial order is related to the investigation into Berta Cáceres' murder".<sup>151 152</sup> "The lawyer of the law firm Estudios para la Dignidad, Víctor Fernández, denounced that the Twitter account of the institution was censored after making public the resolution of the Anti-Corruption Court ordering the removal of two computers owned by the former financial manager of the company Desarrollos Energéticos S.A. (DESA), Daniel Atala Midence."<sup>153</sup>

In the Netherlands, the development bank FMO, involved in the Agua Zarca project, landed in the headlines for not complying with money laundering regulations.<sup>154</sup>

## LGBTQ

Reporteros de Investigación published an article on the challenges for trans women to find work in Honduras. "Thalía, Amelian and Lucía are women from different realities, but they face discrimination and lack of opportunities both in the workplace and in the community. They struggle day by day for their livelihoods. Meanwhile, the State of Honduras ignores the rulings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that mandate the recognition of the gender identity law to allow transgender people to adapt their identity data, something crucial to improve their quality of life."<sup>155</sup>

## Freedom of Expression and Journalists

"In a period of 15 days, 30 aggressions against communication workers were registered by the Observatory for Freedom of Expression in the context of the electoral process of November 28, 2021. With the support of 50 members of the Network of Alerts for the Protection of Journalists and Social Communicators (RAPCOS), for the third time (2014, 2017 and 2021), C-Libre set up the Observatory for Freedom of Expression to the electoral process of 2021, documenting and systematizing aggressions in the days before, during and after the general elections in Honduras."<sup>156</sup>

149 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/dec/21/the-us-military-trained-him-then-he-helped-bertha-caceres>

150 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1470483878515298307>

151 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1471337551969456133>

152 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/especial/bertha-caceres/item/3316-por-orden-judicial-expertos-examinaran-dos-computadoras-de-daniel-atala-ejecutivo-de-la-hidroelectrica-des>

153 <https://criterio.hn/twitter-censura-a-bufete-de-dd-hh-en-honduras-tras-publicar-resolucion-judicial/>

154 <https://copinh.org/2021/12/statement-revelations-in-the-netherlands-prove-the-lenca-people-right/>

155 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2021/12/04/discriminacion-prejuicios-y-exclusion-los-obstaculos-para-el-acceso-al-trabajo-de-las-mujeres-trans-en-honduras/>

156 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/el-observador/1937-informe-del-observatorio-de-la-libertad-de-expresion-en-las-elecciones-generales-2021>

Journalist Melissa Hernández Quintana had her car sabotaged (three tires were loosened) and broken into.<sup>157</sup> "Two individuals wearing ski masks beat the social communicator, Carlos Antonio López, as he left the premises of Radio Lepaterique, located in the municipality of the same name."<sup>158</sup>

Pasos de Animal Grande reports on the persecution and criminalization of journalist Jairo López who faces 28 years in prison.<sup>159</sup>

## Violence against Women

By the beginning of December at least 314 women had been murdered, according to CONADEH.<sup>160</sup>

After the coup, the already limited women's reproductive rights in Honduras were further restricted. With Xiomara's win, there is some hope that the situation will improve again. Feminist and women's rights organizations held a protest on December 17, demanding access to the emergency contraceptive pill.<sup>161</sup>

## Political Prisoners

"Under the care of the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), Henry Arturo Bonilla Acevedo, regained his freedom after four months and 10 days in the National Penitentiary "Marco Aurelio Soto". The good news that the university student Henry Bonilla was waiting for, was ratified when he signed his letter of release with alternative measures to prison, together with his legal representatives Karol Cárdenas and Cinthia Turcios, human rights attorneys of COFADEH, the organization that represents him. The student of Banking and Finance at the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) had remained in preventive detention since last August 3, accused of the alleged crime of aggravated arson against the headquarters of the Embassy of the United States of America, in Tegucigalpa, on May 31, 2019, during a day of protests in defense of health and education."<sup>162163</sup>

## Extractive Industries

Reuters published a special report from the Bajo Aguán. "Fighting over farmland in Honduras has led to nearly 150 murders and disappearances. But few cases have been fully investigated, let alone solved. Reuters examines a conflict that leads poor Hondurans to flee the rich fields of the Aguán Valley."<sup>164</sup> CESPAD published an analysis of the challenges faced by the new administration to resolve the agrarian crisis.<sup>165</sup>

157 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1422-en-48-horas-periodista-melissa-hernandez-sufre-atentado-y-asalto>  
158 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1426-encapuchados-golpean-a-comunicador-social-frente-a-radioemisora-donde-labora>  
159 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/amenazas/item/3319-tras-ocho-anos-de-persecucion-periodista-jairo-lopez-tendra-otra-navidad-sin-libertad>  
160 <https://tiempo.hn/conadeh-muerte-violenta-de-una-hondurena/>  
161 <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2021/12/17/honduras-pildora-anticonceptiva-orix/>  
162 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-logra-libertad-de-henry-bonilla/>  
163 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/henry-bonilla-estoy-desesperado-pero-con-esperanza-que-pronto-tendre-buenas-noticias/>  
164 <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/honduras-migration-land/>  
165 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/24/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-honduras-la-crisis-agraria-y-alimentaria-que-heredara-el-nuevo-gobierno/>

## Mining

Bad news again this month from Azacualpa (see also last monitor). "Contrary to the order of protection issued by the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), which orders the cessation of exhumations in the cemetery of San Andres in Azacualpa, La Union, Copán, the Court of Santa Rosa de Copán declared without place the appeal for annulment filed by the law firm Estudios Para la Dignidad. The resolution was issued by Judge Rafael Rivera, who at the end of October of this year granted a court order to "urgently" order the exhumation, transfer and burial of the skeletal remains from the Maya-Chortí cemetery, which are at least two hundred years old."<sup>166</sup>

The people of Sabá, Colón, have declared their territory free of mining in no less than three town hall assemblies. Nevertheless, the JOH regime illegally granted the environmental licensing and mining permit to the company Canteras y Más.<sup>167</sup> "Residents and members of the water boards of the municipality of Sabá, Colón, represented by the law firm Estudios Para la Dignidad, filed an amparo action before the Constitutional Court due to the threat of destruction posed by the mining company Canteras y Más to the Carlos Escaleras National Park and its water basins."<sup>168</sup> The next day, inhabitants of Sabá presented an injunction before the Constitutional Chamber to guarantee their rights to health, life, water, political participation, access to justice and due process in the case of the Las Golondrinas mining project.<sup>169 170</sup>

## ZEDES

By the beginning of the month, some 70 municipalities had already spoken out against the ZEDes.<sup>171</sup> This month, Omoa joined them.<sup>172</sup> The question is, will Congress take up their call. To repeal the law, a two-third majority in Congress is needed. Will some Nationalist members of Congress after the demise of JOH and his legacy join the opposition? Some analysts explains that a repeal by itself won't suffice. "However, its repeal is not enough, since, according to the doctor in economics, the legislation already contemplates the suppression of the Employment and Economic Development Zones, but "they left so many locks with the ZEDE" that, in case of repeal, it is established that the benefits received will remain in force for ten years after the law is repealed. The only way to deal with all the locks left by Juan Orlando Hernández during his time as president of the National Congress, he said, would be to present an appeal of unconstitutionality once the new magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice are elected in two years, which if accepted would mean that "everything that has been done would be in a certain way illegal".<sup>173</sup>

On December 8, Libre coordinator Mel Zelaya proposed to get rid of the ZEDes by a plebiscite.<sup>174</sup> But maybe this won't even be necessary. "The National Party could vote in the Legislative for the elimination of the Economic "Employment" and "Development" Zones (ZEDE), after they

166 <https://criterio.hn/juez-desconoce-resolucion-de-csj-sobre-cementerio-de-azacualpa-la-union-copan/>

167 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1470816505873018888>

168 <https://criterio.hn/presentan-accion-de-amparo-ante-instalacion-de-proyecto-minero-en-parque-nacional-carlos-escaleras/>

169 [https://twitter.com/ASFC\\_CA/status/1471128898872266752](https://twitter.com/ASFC_CA/status/1471128898872266752)

170 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/comunidades-de-saba-colon-presentan-recurso-de-amparo-contra-proyecto-minero-las-golondrinas/>

171 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1466222558546694147>

172 <https://radioprogressohn.net/portada/bajo-presion-popular-omoa-se-declara-libre-de-zede/>

173 <https://criterio.hn/joh-biando-las-zede-para-que-solo-puedan-ser-derogadas-por-%e2%85%94-del-congreso/>

174 <https://proceso.hn/las-zedes-las-dejaran-amarradas-pero-pueden-ser-derogadas-por-plebiscito-mel-zelaya/>



themselves approved them in 2013 and put them into effect, in violation of the Constitution of the Republic. The announcement was made by the "cachureco" deputy for Santa Barbara, Mario Perez, who would present the initiative in the next National Congress to be installed on January 25, 2022."<sup>175</sup> Similar words were later heard by Congress' Nationalist vice-president Antonio Rivera.<sup>176</sup> On December 20, "[t]he member of the transition commission of the new government, Hugo Noé Pino, revealed this Monday that they will initiate a dialogue with the owners of the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE), since they were created in an irregular manner".<sup>177</sup> Later, it was revealed that this was not really the case. "Economist Hugo Noé Pino himself came out and denied the alleged news of a reform to maintain the ZEDEs, while promising that the bet will be the total repeal of the regimes. "The ZEDES are going to be repealed, it is the mandate of the people. No second thoughts about it," he wrote on his Twitter account."<sup>178</sup>

In Congress, a citizen's initiative from the CNA to derogate the ZEDEs was discussed. Some months ago, they handed in almost 15'000 certified signatures.<sup>179</sup> The CNA denounced that the Nationalist intended to ignore the popular demand.<sup>180</sup> <sup>181</sup> The Liberal Party published a press release supporting the derogation of the ZEDEs, while also stating that they would not attend the session in Congress because they considered it irregular. But they also said to support the derogation in an upcoming session under the leadership of the new government.<sup>182</sup> Shortly afterwards, PINU also announced not to attend.<sup>183</sup> Libre has not attended the virtual sessions for a while and so the necessary quorum could not be reached. While previously no obstacle for the Nationalists, this time was different and they archived the initiative.<sup>184</sup> This gives the incoming Congress the possibility to take it up again.<sup>185</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

"The Center for the Study of Democracy (CESPAD), with the support of Open Society Foundations (OSF), conducted a documentary and empirical research during the period from February 2021 to September 2021 focusing on the development of proposals for public policy reforms in the field of criminal justice and the design of the national anti-corruption system in Honduras. This research investigates three aspects: The main normative blockages to anti-corruption criminal action; the alternatives or possibilities for the legal and institutional dismantling of these blockages, through reforms or laws and; proposals for the legal and institutional design of an effective national anti-corruption system, taking as a reference the recent report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on: Corruption and Human Rights (2019)."<sup>186</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/nacionalistas-votarian-en-el-legislativo-por-eliminar-las-zede-luego-que-ellos-las-aprobasen/>  
<sup>176</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/antonio-rivera-dice-que-esta-dispuesto-a-derogar-las-zedes-pero-con-incentivos-fiscales-a-inversionistas/>  
<sup>177</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/revelan-que-nuevo-gobierno-iniciara-dialogo-con-los-propietarios-de-las-zedes/>  
<sup>178</sup> <https://criterio.hn/proximo-gobierno-de-honduras-aclara-que-su-lucha-sera-por-lograr-la-derogacion-de-las-zede-no-reformarlas/>  
<sup>179</sup> <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1473791296368164878>  
<sup>180</sup> <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1473730534027182082>  
<sup>181</sup> <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1474056371259727873>  
<sup>182</sup> <https://tiempo.hn/partido-liberal-pide-derogacion-zede/>  
<sup>183</sup> [https://twitter.com/Doris\\_Gutierrez/status/1474065007759474688](https://twitter.com/Doris_Gutierrez/status/1474065007759474688)  
<sup>184</sup> <https://criterio.hn/cn-posterga-sesion-encaminada-a-declarar-desfavorable-iniciativa-contra-las-zede/>  
<sup>185</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/congreso-nacional-engaveta-iniciativas-ciudadanas-para-derogar-zede/>  
<sup>186</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/19/reformas-penales-y-sistema-anticorruptcion-en-honduras/>

On December 9, Honduras commemorated the International Day against Corruption with a high-level panel on the issue including the former head of the MACCIH, Juan Jiménez Mayor. "Jiménez Mayor, who knows Honduras extensively, said that this is a historic moment for the new government of Xiomara Castro to fight corruption, and in that sense, he hopes that the new authorities will not let the people down or waste the opportunity."<sup>187</sup> Of course, the question of a new anti-corruption mission, wanted by the new administration, was also discussed.<sup>188</sup> Jiménez Mayor named the UN as the best-suited body to host such a mission.<sup>189</sup> One big challenge to fight corruption are the laws approved by Congress under the JOH regime to protect the powerful from investigations. To get rid of them must be the starting point for a turnaround in Honduras.<sup>190 191</sup>

An appeal has been admitted against the decision to drop the charges against the former members of the Judiciary Council (see last month).<sup>192</sup>

"The teachers' leader, Daniel Esponda, denounced that there is an intention to take 110 million dollars out of the coffers of the Teacher's Welfare Institute (Inprema), to invest them in the Palmerola airport project, in Comayagua, central Honduras."<sup>193</sup>

## The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

CESPAD presents some ideas on how to strengthen UFERCO under the new administration.<sup>194</sup> One of the key steps would be to get rid of the secrecy law.<sup>195 196</sup>

"At least ten cases of those charged with money laundering - among them two involved in the embezzlement of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS), four people linked to "Los Cachiros" and a former mayor - were acquitted after the reforms to the Money Laundering Law approved in the National Congress, as a shield of impunity after the revelations of the "Pandora Papers"."<sup>197</sup>

## IHSS

The Constitutional Court also showed again this month its preference for the corrupt. In the IHSS corruption case, after an anti-corruption judge filed charges and an appeals court confirmed them, the highest judges revoked the indictment against 10 former IHSS board members.<sup>198 199</sup>

In a second IHSS case, "[t]he Sentencing Court in matters of corruption imposed a sentence of one year of imprisonment to the former Vice Ministers of Health and Labor, Javier Pastor and Carlos Montes, respectively, for a case of embezzlement of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS). Both former officials were sentenced for the crime of passive bribery. They were also sentenced for

187 <https://confidencialhn.com/el-gobierno-de-xiomara-castro-podra-desmontar-la-corrupcion-y-reconstruir-la-justicia-juan-jimenez-mayor-ex-vocero-de-la-maccih/>

188 <https://radioprogreso.net/instante-nuevo-congreso-nacional-podria-aprobar-la-instalacion-de-una-cicih/>

189 <https://proceso.hn/onu-seria-el-ente-mas-idoneo-para-instalar-una-mision-anticorrupcion-en-honduras-sugiere-exvocero-de-la-maccih/>

190 <https://criterio.hn/derogar-leyes-que-limitan-la-investigacion-de-la-corrupcion-es-punto-de-partida-para-nuevo-gobierno/>

191 <https://criterio.hn/lucha-contra-la-corrupcion-en-honduras-pasa-por-derogar-la-ley-de-secretos/>

192 <https://confidencialhn.com/corte-de-apelaciones-ordena-nulidad-absoluta-de-actos-procesales-en-caso-de-exconcejales/>

193 <https://proceso.hn/magisterio-denuncia-que-110-millones-de-inprema-irian-a-parar-a-proyecto-de-palmerola/>

194 <https://cespad.org.hn/2021/12/16/el-fortalecimiento-de-la-uferco-uno-de-los-retos-del-gobierno-electo/>

195 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/el-observador/1941-la-ley-de-secretos-de-honduras-se-mantiene-en-la-opacidad>

196 <https://criterio.hn/ley-de-secretos-ha-profundizado-la-corrupcion-en-honduras/>

197 <https://contra corriente.red/2021/12/01/reformas-a-la-ley-de-lavado-de-activos-derivan-en-absoluciones/>

198 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/sala-constitucional-favorece-a-exdirectivos-del-ihss-acusados-por-mega fraude-de-118-millones-de-dolares/>

199 [https://twitter.com/Luis\\_Santos\\_C/status/14679103278758401](https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/14679103278758401)

the accessory penalty of special disqualification for two years, which they will serve in addition to the prison sentence. Pastor and Montes also received the accessory penalty of civil interdiction for the duration of the main sentence and declared the responsibility for the amount that they could prove before the competent authority for the reparation of the expenses incurred, compensation and indemnification of the damages caused. It should be noted that both had been sentenced to 16 years in prison together with Mario Zelaya on February 6, 2019 for the case of "Coimas a Viceministros". However, the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), annulled the conviction and ordered the repetition of the oral and public trial for Javier Pastor and Carlos Montes".<sup>200</sup>

## Open Chest

"The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), by a unanimous vote, ruled in favor of the State of Honduras through a writ of amparo that was filed by attorney Tanya Arasely Pavón Solís, against the resolution issued by a judge assigned in the "Open Chest" case."<sup>201</sup>

## State Security Forces

The current head of the Armed Forces, Tito Livio Moreno Coello, announced mid-December that he would retire and announced his successor: José Jorge Fortín Aguilar, the current head of the Naval Forces.<sup>202</sup> It seems that the Armed Forces wants to avoid that the new administration can nominate the new leadership. But it is unclear if this works out for them. El Libertador reported that the Constitution stipulates that the new president will have to ratify the nominations.<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, on December 21, the new leadership of the Armed Forces took over.<sup>204</sup> It remains to be seen if Xiomara will make some changes once in office.<sup>205</sup>

As part of the Omega XII operation, ATIC seized goods and properties from two former police commissioners, Leonel Luciano Saucedo Guifarro and Ambrosio Maradiaga Ordóñez.<sup>206</sup>

On December 19, Luis Echeverría, the head of the Prosecutorial Unit of Support to the Police Purification Process, announced that at least seven prosecutorial requirements against high-ranking officials of the National Police for alleged money laundering would be ready in the next few days to be presented by his unit.<sup>207</sup>

## Assassinations

On December 3, Defensores en Línea reported: "The Sentencing Court of the city of Siguatepeque, suspended this day the hearing of exceptions and nullities in the case of the basic scale police officer Jarol Rolando Perdomo, accused of the femicide of the nursing student Keyla Martínez, in police custody, the night between February 6 and 7, 2021. (...) The cancellation of the trial was due

200 <https://proceso.hn/caso-ihss-penas-conmutables-e-inhabilitacion-especial-para-javier-pastor-y-carlos-montes-por-cohecho/>

201 <https://confidencialhn.com/sala-de-lo-constitucional-falla-a-favor-del-estado-de-honduras-en-caso-de-arca-abierta/>

202 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1506757-466/contraalmirante-jose-jorge-fortin-aguilar-nuevo-jefe-estado-mayor-conjunto-tito-livio-moreno>

203 <https://ellibertador.hn/2021/12/17/honduras-nuevo-jefe-y-junta-de-comandantes-debera-ser-ratificada-por-xiomara/>

204 <https://proceso.hn/assume-nueva-junta-de-comandantes-en-la-vispera-de-nuevo-gobierno/>

205 <https://confidencialhn.com/traspaso-de-mando-de-ffaa-evidencio-malestar-en-cupula-militar-segun-experto-en-seguridad/>

206 <https://confidencialhn.com/mp-ejecuta-operacion-omega-xii-con-privacion-de-bienes-vinculados-a-excomisionados-de-policia/>

207 <https://proceso.hn/se-aproximan-juicios-contra-policias-mientras-alistan-nuevos-casos/>

to the fact that the defense rejected the request for the annulment of the trial. Attorney Cárdenas pointed out that "with this withdrawal of the defense it is proven that it did not have a legal argumentation to support its claim". She also expressed that "the use of this term by the defense, without having a legal basis, was forced to retract it".<sup>208</sup>

## Penitentiary System

At the end of the month, the outgoing Congress approved the continuation of the (failed) militarization of Honduras' penitentiary system until the end of February.<sup>209</sup>

## Militarization

The Military Police for Public Order (PMOP) was created by JOH back in 2013. It was widely criticized from its inception from national and international human rights bodies. On various occasions, the JOH regime promised that it is only a temporary body only to increase its budget and staff. Now, the chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces (FFAA), Tito Livio Moreno, wants the PMOP to acquire constitutional rank. They want to stop the Xiomara administration to get rid of JOH's private army.<sup>210</sup>

## International Community

On December 3, the BID approved another \$400 million loan for Honduras to address natural and public health disasters.<sup>211</sup> "Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Venezuela were included in the 2022 assistance plans of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which has allocated a total of US\$1,692.5 million from its global appeal."<sup>212</sup>

"The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) and the European Union (EU) signed on Thursday in Tegucigalpa an agreement for more than US\$5.5 million for the preparation of climate change adaptation and disaster management projects in the region."<sup>213</sup>

## US

Dana Frank in an OpEd in the Washington Post writes about the chance for the US to finally do the right thing in Honduras. "Castro's control over Honduras's democratic institutions could be threatened by its terrifying military and police forces. They're loyal to Hernández, tight with drug traffickers, long practiced at repressing dissent and capable of anything. Hondurans are rightly worried about a new coup or more complex disruption and violence involving provocateurs, paramilitaries, drug traffickers and gangs. Despite all of this, the United States has continued to fund, train and share intelligence with the Honduran military and police, in the face of powerful

208 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/defensa-de-policia-acusado-del-crimen-de-keyla-martinez-desestima-audiencia-de-excepciones-y-nulidades/>

209 <https://confidencialhn.com/cn-aprueba-que-continue-la-intervencion-del-sistema-penitenciario-hasta-el-28-de-febrero-del-2022/>

210 <https://confidencialhn.com/jefe-de-las-ffaa-aboga-por-rango-constitucional-para-la-pmop/>

211 <https://proceso.hn/el-bid-aprueba-ayudas-por-1650-millones-de-dolares-para-seis-paises-entre-ellos-honduras/>

212 <https://confidencialhn.com/onu-incluye-a-seis-paises-de-latinoamerica-entre-ellos-honduras-en-planes-de-asistencia-para-2022/>

213 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-y-ue-financian-proyectos-contra-cambio-climatico-en-centroamerica/>

congressional opposition. What message is President Biden sending to the Honduran military and police now? The final, and deepest issue, is if the Biden administration will try to interfere to stop Castro from governing in accordance with the policy mandate she was given. Despite media efforts to cast her as a flaming leftist looking to turn Honduras into Venezuela or Cuba, Castro has reached out the business community and there is no indication that she will eject the United States from the Soto Cano Air Base. She has promised to restore the rule of law and civil liberties, rebuild the country's health care and education systems, address mass poverty and stop the repression of Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous communities devastated by extractivist industries. Her agenda is likely to clash with Washington's, which often sides with transnational capital only interested in profits from dams, mines, garment factories and bananas and is deeply invested in keeping Honduras geopolitically under the U.S. thumb. Washington spends hundreds of millions on "soft power" civil society initiatives that it chooses itself, not the Hondurans through a democratic process. That needs to change. There's common ground around addressing mass migration, but contradictory approaches to what the root causes are. Biden now must demonstrate a commitment to the democratic will of the people. Hondurans want to see their aspirations flourish, without interference. Castro might reach out to Washington for support, but a new dynamic must take root based on mutual respect and sovereignty."<sup>214</sup> Dana Frank had another piece on US-Honduran-relations this month in the New Left Review.<sup>215</sup>

On December 2, president-elect Xiomara Castro met with US chargé d'affaires who congratulated her<sup>216</sup>, and talked to Brian A. Nichols, Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs.<sup>217</sup> The chair of the progressive caucus at the US Congress, Rep. Pramila Jayapal congratulated Xiomara on her victory and presents her win as an opportunity of the US "to reset our countries' relationship".<sup>218</sup> On December 10, US Vice-President Kamala Harris congratulated Xiomara Castro and talked with her on the phone.<sup>219</sup> <sup>220</sup> The US Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Uzra Zeya traveled to Honduras on December for a two-day visit.<sup>221</sup> <sup>222</sup> <sup>223</sup> <sup>224</sup>

On December 13, US Vice-President Kamala Harris gave an update on a controversial program to tackle migration. "As part of her role addressing the root causes of migration from Central America, Vice President Kamala Harris announced seven new commitments as part of the Call to Action she launched on May 27 for businesses and social enterprises to make new, significant commitments to sustainably address the root causes of migration by promoting economic opportunity. Commitments announced today include those from: CARE International, Cargill, Grupo Mariposa, Parkdale Mills, PepsiCo, JDE Peet's, and PriceSmart."<sup>225</sup>

214 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/12/01/us-biden-honduras-xiomara-castro-do-the-right-thing/>

215 <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/honduran-dreams>

216 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1466469833848070145>

217 <https://twitter.com/WHAAsstSecy/status/1466506325882511362>

218 <https://twitter.com/USProgressives/status/1466861229184536579?s=20>

219 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/eleccioneshonduras2021/1506010-508/kamala-harris-felicita-presidenta-xiomara-castro-resultado-elecciones>

220 <https://proceso.hn/trabajaremos-en-defensa-de-los-ddhh-y-de-la-mujer-dice-xiomara-castro-a-vicepresidenta-de-euu/>

221 <https://criterio.hn/subsecretaria-de-derechos-humanos-de-ee-uu-se-reunira-con-xiomara-castro/>

222 <https://proceso.hn/subsecretaria-de-euu-y-presidenta-electa-de-honduras-hablan-sobre-corrupcion-y-migracion/>

223 <https://twitter.com/UnderSecState/status/1470415789593440259>

224 <https://twitter.com/UnderSecState/status/1470476467217833997>

225 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/13/vice-president-kamala-harris-announces-new-commitments-as-part-of-the-call-to-action-for-the-private-sector-to-deepen-investment-in-central-america-now-totaling-over-1-2-billion/>

## EU

The EU awarded the Honduran human rights and LGBTQ+ organization Cattrachas with the European Human Rights Award.<sup>226</sup>

The Spanish ambassador to Honduras, Guillermo Kirkpatrick, announced plans to support the new administration with 215 million Euros. However, he indicated that "for this to happen, we need to confirm them in concrete projects, look for local partners, develop good projects and execute them".<sup>227</sup>

## Drug Trafficking

The Armed Forces reported to have captured over 1000 people linked to drug trafficking this year as well as seized almost 18 tons of cocaine and half a million coca plants.<sup>228</sup>

The former mayor of Yoro, Arnaldo Urbina Soto, and his municipal corporation, were sentenced to a three-year prison sentence for the crime of violation of the duties of public officials.<sup>229</sup> He had been charged by the US back in 2018 for conspiring to import cocaine into the US.<sup>230</sup> But the JOH regime failed to extradite him so far.

El Faro reported on the loss of the congressional seat for Nationalist Óscar Nájera. "Congressman Oscar Najera admits that Honduras is a narco-state. He knows this because he has been representing a prominent province in the cocaine corridor for three decades. He knows this because he is and has been, in his own words, a friend of the main drug lords in the department of Colon. His name is included in all the US sanctions lists for links to drug trafficking and corruption, but he, a master of survival, is one of the few who are not in prison in the United States. But his political career has just come to an end, with the defeat in last month's election. The septuagenarian cacique of Colon has lost his immunity."<sup>231 232</sup>

On December 14, Michael Dixon Rivers was extradited to the US accused of drug trafficking.<sup>233</sup> According to the president of the Supreme Court Rolando Argueta, there are still some 14-16 outstanding extradition orders by the US.<sup>234</sup>

## JOH

"On December 27th, the defense of Geovanny Fuentes requested the Southern District Court in New York headed by Judge Kevin Castel, the minimum sentence of forty years, Fuentes has been identified as a direct partner of Juan Orlando Hernandez in the production and distribution of hundreds of tons of cocaine that were sent to the United States, in addition the prosecution requests

226 [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/honduras/108761/node/108761\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/honduras/108761/node/108761_en)

227 <https://confidencialhn.com/espana-anuncia-que-apoyara-al-nuevo-gobierno-hondureno-con-215-millones-de-euros/>

228 <https://proceso.hn/ffaa-capturo-este-ano-a-mas-de-mil-traficantes-de-drogas-en-honduras/>

229 <https://confidencialhn.com/condenan-a-tres-anos-de-prision-al-ex-alcalde-de-yoro-arnaldo-urbina-soto/>

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

231 <https://elfaro.net/es/202112/centroamerica/0000025889>

232 <https://elfaro.net/en/202112/centroamerica/25897/in-Honduras-a-Friend-of-Drug-Lords-Loses-His-Seat-in-Congress.htm>

233 <https://confidencialhn.com/extraditan-a-michael-dixon-rivers-a-eeuu/>

234 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1507103-466/rolando-argueta-presidente-csj-captura-pendientes-extraditables>

the seizure of more than \$151.7 million dollars he obtained through his drug trafficking activities and a fine of \$10 million dollars."<sup>235</sup>

The trial in the US for drug trafficking against JOH's alleged cousin and former police agent Mauricio Hernández Pineda will take place on January 25, 2022 after having been postponed on several occasions.<sup>236</sup>

## Varia

### JOH

David C Adams and Jeff Ernst report on what JOH may expect in the coming weeks. "After eight years as president, Hernandez is due to step down on January 27 after his ruling National Party suffered a humiliating defeat at the polls late last month. That leaves him vulnerable to possible – some say inevitable – indictment in U.S. federal court, likely to be followed by a request for extradition to stand trial in New York. That is what many Hondurans would like to see happen. On election night, Nov 28, after it became clear that opposition candidate Xiomara Castro had won, thousands of Hondurans took to the streets, some singing along to a song whose chorus ends “ Yuanchi [Hernández] is going to New York.”<sup>237</sup>

On December 23, JOH said the quiet part loud. There have been various theories circulating on how JOH would protect himself from an extradition after leaving office: moving to a ZEDE, going to Nicaragua or taking a seat at the Central American Parliament (Parlacen). It seems that the third option won out. In an interview with El País, in which he once again disputed all accusations against him, JOH said: "By law, each president of Central America must be a member of the Central American Parliament at the end of his term of office. That is what has been proposed and from there we are going to contribute to Central American integration. I want to take advantage of my presence here to expand the customs union with Guatemala, which has had a tremendous impact on the GDP of Honduras and Guatemala. There is a whole interesting and productive agenda that will be good for Central America."<sup>238</sup> According to lawyer and former Parlacen congressman Raúl Pineda Alvarado, JOH, as a member of Parlacen, would only have immunity in all the member countries of the Parlacen, but not Honduras itself. <sup>239</sup> Journalist Jeff Ernst also commented on this: "In conclusion, there is no international or national law or treaty that prevents the possible capture and extradition of JOH in Honduras. However, JOH's influence over the MP and the CSJ could protect him while their mandates continue."<sup>240</sup>

Criterio and Reporteros de Investigación published a joint investigation into the death under suspicious circumstances of JOH's sister, minister Hilda Hernández, on December 16, 2017.<sup>241</sup>

235 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2021/12/28/geovanny-fuentes-se-enfrenta-a-la-misma-condena-de-tony-herandez-cadena-perpetua-mas-treinta-anos/>

236 <https://tiempo.hn/posponen-juicio-mauricio-herandez/>

237 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/imminent-extradition-is-that-what-awaits-juan-orlando-herandez?>

238 <https://elpais.com/internacional/2021-12-22/las-acusaciones-de-narcotrafico-contra-mi-son-una-venganza-de-los-capos.html>

239 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1507275-466/parlacen-no-inmunidad-juan-orlando-herandez-honduras-narcotrafico>

240 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1475550693738127360>

241 <https://criterio.hn/investigadores-de-ee-uu-indagan-sobre-accidente-aereo-y-muerte-de-hilda-herandez/>

## COVID-19

Honduras closed the year with 379'542 detected COVID-19 cases and 10'434 deaths since the start of the pandemic.<sup>242</sup>

By the end of the month, the new omicron variant seemed to have reached Honduras.<sup>243</sup> Just days before, the JOH regime announced to close some triage centers. "After the announcement of the closure of several triage centers, the head of the Pneumology Service of the National Cardiopulmonary Institute of Honduras, Suyapa Sosa, said that closing triage centers and dismissing trained personnel is the worst mistake that health authorities are making, given the threat of omicron in the country."<sup>244</sup> Health experts demand to reopen triage centers.<sup>245</sup> On December 30, El Tiempo reported that hospitalization rates for COVID-19 were on the rise again.<sup>246 247</sup>

The outgoing JOH regime dramatically increased its vaccination rate by subtracting over 1 million Hondurans from the pool of eligible Hondurans for a vaccine claiming that they had left the country. So the new vaccination rate, those who received both shots, is 56% now.<sup>248</sup> On December 4, Honduran scientist Marco Tulio Medina criticized that many vaccine doses against COVID-19 are expiring in Honduras due to the refusal of thousands of people to be immunized, citing "religious principles and media campaigns associated with pseudo-scientific information".<sup>249</sup> On December 18, JOH claimed that Honduras signed a purchase agreement for 2 million vaccine doses to vaccinate children between 5 and 11 years old. But he did not give a date when they should arrive.<sup>250</sup> Two days later, the Secretary of Health claimed that they would arrive by the end of January.<sup>251</sup> At the same time, they claimed to have vaccinated 620'000 minors since September.<sup>252</sup> On December 22, the Health Minister announced that Honduras would apply a booster shot three months after the second shot.<sup>253</sup>

Health workers protested outside the Government Civic Center (CCG) demanding permanent employment as promised by the JOH regime in the run up to the elections.<sup>254</sup> Just days later, more than 60 doctors at the National Emergency System 911 were informed about their dismissal on January 1, 2022, even though they had also been promised fixed contracts.<sup>255</sup> On December 19, the National Association of Auxiliary Nurses (ANEAAH) demanded fixed contracts for 1200 health workers.<sup>256</sup> A day later, "[h]ealth personnel who were dismissed from the San Felipe Hospital, after working on the front line during the Covid-19 pandemic, are holding a protest (...) in front of the hospital, demanding reinstatement and permanent positions."<sup>257</sup> Health workers at the Leonardo Martínez hospital protested several days in a row demanding three months of unpaid wages.<sup>258</sup>

242 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-acumulo-10-mil-434-muertos-por-covid-y-379-mil-542-contagios-desde-2020/>

243 <https://tiempo.hn/largas-filas-en-ihss-de-sps-tras-navidad/>

244 <https://www.elpais.hn/2021/12/22/doctora-suyapa-sosa-cierre-de-triajes-es-el-peor-error-que-est-an-cometi-endo/>

245 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/28/medicos-y-sociedad-civil-piden-reapertura-de-triajes-ante-amenaza-de-omicron/>

246 <https://tiempo.hn/hospitalizaciones-por-covid-en-hospital-escuela/>

247 <https://proceso.hn/gremio-medico-avizora-punto-critico-en-saturacion-de-hospitales-en-honduras/>

248 <https://proceso.hn/mas-del-76-de-poblacion-recibio-vacuna-contr-la-covid-19-en-honduras/>

249 <https://proceso.hn/vacunas-contr-la-covid-19-se-vencen-en-honduras-por-los-que-las-rechazan/>

250 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1506816-466/vacuna-pediatrica-honduras-coronavirus>

251 <https://confidencialhn.com/vacunas-contr-la-covid-19-para-ninos-llegarian-al-pais-la-ultima-semana-de-enero/>

252 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/26/honduras-mas-de-620-mil-menores-de-edad-se-han-vacunado-contr-covid-19-asegura-salud/>

253 <https://proceso.hn/salud-aplicara-la-dosis-de-refuerzo-a-los-tres-meses-a-mayores-de-18-anos/>

254 <https://confidencialhn.com/personal-medico-en-primer-a-linea-exigen-nombramientos/>

255 <https://confidencialhn.com/finalizan-contrato-a-mas-de-60-medicos-del-911/>

256 <https://tiempo.hn/aneeah-sesal-contratacion-empleados/>

257 <https://confidencialhn.com/personal-sanitario-del-hospital-san-felipe-exigen-reintegro-y-plazas-permanentes/>

258 <https://proceso.hn/que-nos-paguen-hoy-dice-personal-del-hospital-leonardo-martinez-ante-falta-de-pago/>



Nevertheless, at the end of the month, 238 health workers left without employment.<sup>259</sup> At the University Hospital, health workers also demanded fixed contracts.<sup>260</sup> On December 30, health workers at the Torax hospital protest the dismissal of 40 employees.<sup>261</sup>

The JOH regime spends only \$101 per person per year on public health, much less than the regional average of \$392. It is estimated that 18% of Hondurans do not have any access to health care.<sup>262</sup> JOH then tried to blame others for the lack of permanent employment for them.<sup>263</sup>

## Migration

48'051 Hondurans were deported from January to November, 33.8% more than last year.<sup>264</sup> In the first ten months of this year, Mexico arrested almost 230'000 migrants, a number not seen in the previous 15 years. Most of those arrested were Hondurans, almost 100'000.<sup>265</sup> Hondurans have one of the lowest acceptance rate of asylum in the US of all nations.<sup>266</sup> "Record numbers of migrant crossings and deaths along the U.S.-Mexico border marked the year 2021, making it one of the deadliest for those seeking protection and a better life outside their countries. "This year we undoubtedly experienced one of the most difficult times for migrants at the border. The crossings, detentions, deportations and above all the deaths were something very regrettable," Vicki Gaubeca, director of the Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC), told Efe. According to official figures from Customs and Border Protection (CBP), in fiscal year 2021, which ended Sept. 30, a total of 557 deaths were recorded at the border with Mexico."<sup>267</sup>

"In response to alarming levels of gender-based violence in the north of Central America, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is calling for more effective, innovative and immediate measures to protect the rights of women, girls and LGBTIQ+ people on the move in the region."<sup>268</sup>

Contracorriente critically reported on a Mexican development program in Honduras meant to keep young Honduras from migrating. "The Youths Building the Future program was launched two and half years ago, and now nearly 4,000 Honduran youths are working at 130 companies in jobs funded by a Mexican government program. They are paid a stipend that is half the minimum wage in Honduras. Despite its slow implementation, Mexican President Andres Lopez Obrador is urging the United States to adopt and fund this model as an incentive for Central American young people to stay home instead of migrating north."<sup>269</sup> But the same month, "Mexico and the United States announced (...) "Sowing Opportunities", a program to enhance the development of Central America and that "addresses the root causes of irregular migration from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras", according to a joint statement."<sup>270</sup> Just a day later, the Guardian reported: "The Biden administration's move to revive Donald Trump's "Remain in Mexico" policy will subject thousands

259 <https://confidencialhn.com/al-menos-238-empleados-de-salud-recipientes-su-finiquito-del-hospital-leonardo-martinez/>

260 <https://confidencialhn.com/personal-medico-reclama-asignacion-de-plazas-en-el-hospital-escuela/>

261 <https://confidencialhn.com/empleados-sanitarios-protestan-por-despidos-en-hospital-el-torax/>

262 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/el-18-de-la-poblacion-en-honduras-no-tiene-acceso-a-la-salud-DH4292665>

263 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1506524-466/joh-acuerdos-laborales-no-tiene-excusa-ministra-salud>

264 <https://www.radioh.hn/deportados-inmigrantes-deportaciones-honduras-aumento-2021-mexico-estados-unidos>

265 <https://proceso.hn/mexico-rebasa-228000-arrestos-de-migrantes-y-82000-deportaciones-en-2021/>

266 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-entre-paises-las-tasas-mas-bajas-de-obtencion-de-asilo-en-eeuu/>

267 <https://proceso.hn/record-de-cruces-y-muertes-de-migrantes-marcaron-frontera-sur-de-eeuu-en-2021/>

268 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2021/12/61ae0e8a4/unhcr-urges-effective-action-against-gender-based-violence-north-central.html>

269 <https://contracorriente.red/en/2021/12/09/mexican-youth-employment-program-in-honduras-has-serious-shortcomings/>

270 <https://proceso.hn/mexico-y-ee-uu-anuncian-programa-de-desarrollo-sembrando-oportunidades/>

of people to “enormous suffering” and leave them vulnerable to kidnap and rape as they languish in dangerous Mexican border cities, migration advocates have warned. After reaching a deal with Mexico, the US will by 6 December start returning asylum seekers from other Latin American countries to Mexico, where they will be obliged to wait while their case is assessed.”<sup>271</sup>

Different digital media outlets published an investigation into violence against migrants passing through Honduras.<sup>272</sup> Proceso Digital spoke with Doctors without Borders about the situation of migrants transitioning through Honduras.<sup>273</sup>

## China

Many an observer wonder what the new government's China policy will be. “In an apparent attempt to salvage the relationship, Taiwan’s president, Tsai Ing-wen, on Wednesday congratulated Castro for her victory and reminded her of their bilateral relations. “I look forward to working with you to benefit the people of our countries & strengthen the longstanding Taiwan–Honduras partnership,” Ing-wen said on Twitter. Castro retweeted the message with a terse reply: “Many thanks President Tsai Ing-wen.” Castro’s proposal has prompted concern in Washington, which has urged her to maintain the relationship with Taiwan, according to sources within her campaign. During a visit to Honduras the week before the election, a US delegation made clear its hope that the country would maintain its current relationship with Taiwan – which the Chinese foreign ministry denounced as “arm-twisting and bullying behavior”. But experts say a move to establishing diplomatic relations with China would be partly motivated by a desire to counter US influence – and that the potential financial benefits were too enticing to pass up.” (...) Although Taiwan has donated generously to its poorer allies, including Honduras, it cannot compete with the economic largesse of China, which has showered gifts, loans and investments upon other countries in the region who have switched diplomatic allegiances in recent years. Panama cut ties with Taipei in 2017 and has since seen a wave of Chinese investment. And Castro will take the reins of a country still reeling from the impacts of the pandemic and a pair of major hurricanes. Seventy-four per cent of residents fall below the poverty line – the highest percentage in at least four decades.”<sup>274</sup> On December 3, Reuters reported: “The government of incoming Honduran president Xiomara Castro does not plan to establish diplomatic ties with China as it prioritizes U.S. relations, a high-ranking ally of Castro said on Thursday, signaling a reversal of her pre-election stance.”<sup>275</sup>

## Violence

The Wilson Center published a commentary by Gema Santamaría on violence in Mexico and Central American in which she outlines why describing the violence as “non-political” or “post-political” is misguided.<sup>276</sup> 3607 Hondurans were murdered this year leading to a homicide rate of 37.9 per 100’000, slightly higher than in 2020.<sup>277</sup>

271 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/03/remain-in-mexico-migrants-face-deadly-peril-as-biden-restores-trump-policy>

272 <https://criterio.hn/cubanas-y-haitianas-sufren-abusos-sexuales-y-asaltos-en-frontera-con-nicaragua/>

273 <https://proceso.hn/aumenta-flujo-de-migrantes-en-transito-por-honduras/>

274 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/01/honduras-xiomara-castro-taiwan-china-diplomacy>

275 <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/top-ally-incoming-honduran-president-casts-doubt-initiating-china-ties-2021-12-02/>

276 <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/politics-criminal-violence-mexico-and-northern-central-america>

277 <https://confidencialh.com/honduras-contabilizo-cerca-de-10-homicidios-cada-dia-en-el-transcurso-de-2021/>

## Poverty

Radio Progreso reported on the rising consumer, especially food, prices in Honduras.<sup>278 279</sup> "Food insecurity, which continues to rise in Honduras, is another pandemic that the new government, headed by Xiomara Castro, will have to face as of January 27, 2022. This is what analysts and the office of the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) warn."<sup>280</sup> Honduras paid over \$1.5 billion to import fuel in the first ten months of 2021, that is 77.7% more than in 2020.<sup>281</sup> Remittances sent to Honduras reached more than \$7 billion this year<sup>282</sup>, 30% more than last year.<sup>283</sup>

"The national advocacy coordinator of the NGO World Vision, Mauricio Valladares, said that child labor is an invisible phenomenon in Honduras. "Child labor is a phenomenon that has not been given the importance it requires, it has been made invisible and this is noticeable in the absence of public policies and laws to protect this population group," he said. According to World Vision data, before the Covid-19 pandemic there were more than 400'000 children between 5 and 17 years of age working in Honduras. However, Valladares estimated that this figure increased to 900'000 minors due to the loss of jobs in many families as a collateral cause of the health emergency, in addition to the closing of educational centers and the onslaught of the tropical phenomena Eta and Iota."<sup>284</sup>

## Education

Yuri Hernández, president of the First Honduran Professional Teachers' Association (Pricphma), denounced: "They have left us with an educational system that is a disaster, 12 years of anguish and misery".<sup>285</sup> Part of the misery was a lack of a plan during the pandemic on how to safely reopen school. But there is some hope now. "The president of the Colegio de Pedagogos de Honduras (Colpedagogosh), Edwin Rodríguez, suggested that there should be a return to face-to-face classes next year, for which they will present a proposal to president-elect Xiomara Castro. "We have been working on a proposal for the safe return to face-to-face classes and we will present a plan for the recovery of the educational system to the new authorities," he said."<sup>286</sup> Later, the new administration expressed their will to return to in-person classes in their first 100 days in power.<sup>287</sup>

## Palmerola

"EL HERALDO's sources informed that operations have not started because the operator Palmerola International Airports (PIA) has not complied with all the requirements of international airline regulators."<sup>288</sup> On this topic, Salvador Nasralla commented that the new administration won't close the Toncontín airport.<sup>289</sup>

278 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/consumidores-en-alarma-por-aumento-de-precios-de-los-productos-de-la-canasta-basica/>

279 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/en-peligro-los-tamales-navidenos-por-alto-costo-de-sus-insumos/>

280 <https://proceso.hn/la-inseguridad-alimentaria-la-otra-pandemia-que-arrastra-honduras/>

281 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-pago-1503-9-millones-de-dolares-por-los-combustibles-en-diez-meses/>

282 <https://proceso.hn/bch-proyecta-cierre-de-remesas-con-7150-millones-en-2021/>

283 <https://proceso.hn/remesas-enviadas-a-honduras-crecen-289-y-suman-6-8547-millones-de-dolares/>

284 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/26/trabajo-infantil-trunca-los-suenos-de-unos-900-mil-ninos-en-honduras-estima-oeneg/>

285 <https://confidencial.hn.com/nos-dejan-un-sistema-educativo-hecho-un-desastre-reprocha-dirigente-magisterial/>

286 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/22/expertos-sugieren-retorno-a-clases-presenciales-a-partir-de-2022/>

287 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/27/el-nuevo-gobierno-buscara-el-retorno-a-clases-presenciales-en-sus-primeros-100-dias/>

288 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1505704-466/agencias-transporte-aereo-todavia-no-visto-bueno-palmerola>

289 <https://tiempo.hn/nasralla-no-cerrara-toncontin/>

But then, on December 11, the first commercial light, from Spirit Airlines, landed at the new Palmerola airport.<sup>290</sup> President-elect Xiomara wrote on Twitter: "Monopolies are constitutionally prohibited and harmful to the national interest. Palmerola is an illegal contract and a monopoly that closes Toncontín affecting the people who gave me their mandate to defend it. This contract eliminates competition and will be reviewed and modified by law."<sup>291</sup> "The executive director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Tegucigalpa (CCIT), Rafael Medina, mentioned that it is necessary to review the existing contract with the Palmerola International Airport."<sup>292</sup> <sup>293</sup> Criterio published an investigation into the corruption allegations accompanying the construction of the airport.<sup>294</sup>

On December 13, two airlines, Avianca<sup>295</sup> and Copa<sup>296</sup>, announced to change their operations in Honduras from Toncontín to Palmerola. A day later, American Airlines followed.<sup>297</sup> The badly planned opening of the Palmerola airport then led to traffic jams on the highway to Comayagua. The business sector demanded to provisionally close the toll system on the way there to speed up traffic.<sup>298</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

Honduras will also go back to its original colors on its flag. "Tiburcio Carias Andino was a right wing (Partido Nacional) dictator in the first half of the 20th century. He had the original colors changed to navy blue during his reign. The navy colors do not represent the people of Honduras or the HND that is about to reset & begin anew."<sup>299</sup>

---

290 <https://proceso.hn/spirit-primer-vuelo-comercial-en-aterizar-en-palmerola/>

291 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1506057-466/presidenta-xiomara-castro-planea-revisar-contrato-palmerola-monopolio-ilegal-aeropuerto>

292 <https://tiempo.hn/ccit-pide-revision-contrato-palmerola/>

293 <https://elpulso.hn/2021/12/14/expertos-solicitan-no-cerrar-aeropuerto-toncontin-a-llegada-y-salida-de-vuelos-internacionales/>

294 <https://criterio.hn/palmerola-el-millonario-aeropuerto-de-honduras-que-se-traduce-en-una-estafa/>

295 <https://confidencialhn.com/avianca-traslada-sus-operaciones-al-nuevo-aeropuerto-palmerola/>

296 <https://confidencialhn.com/copa-traslada-sus-operaciones-de-tegucigalpa-al-aeropuerto-de-palmerola/>

297 <https://confidencialhn.com/american-airlines-tambien-movera-sus-operaciones-al-aeropuerto-de-palmerola-desde-el-16-de-diciembre/>

298 <https://confidencialhn.com/fedecamaras-recomienda-la-eliminacion-provisional-del-peaje-de-zambrano/>

299 [https://twitter.com/All\\_Things\\_HND/status/1470823205245968384](https://twitter.com/All_Things_HND/status/1470823205245968384)

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

Past Activities:

-

Upcoming Activities:

-

Subscribe to this monthly report: [foro\\_honduras\\_suiza@riseup.net](mailto:foro_honduras_suiza@riseup.net)

Subscribe to our daily press overview: [daniellm@bluewin.ch](mailto:daniellm@bluewin.ch)

Become a member: [info@honduras-forum.ch](mailto:info@honduras-forum.ch)

Support our work: IBAN: CH54 0900 0000 8003 3036 3

<http://honduras-forum.ch/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Honduras-Forum-Schweiz-753337355053820/>