

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – January 2022

2022 started in Honduras with everything in place for a new start. Xiomara Castro won the election with a clear mandate for change and even in Congress, the opposition alliance together with some Liberal Party dissidents could have reached a simple majority. But this is not the story of this month. The defeated powers of the 2021 elections once more flexed their muscles. They succeeded in splitting the opposition in Congress and elected their own congressional leadership so that January ended with not one, but two different Congresses, one led by Luis Redondo and supported by Xiomara, one led by Jorge Cálix and supported by the Nationalists and Liberals. Even apart from this political crisis, January reminded of the previous twelve years. Three human rights defenders were murdered, Pablo Isabel Hernández, Selvin Geovany Mejía and Thalía Rodríguez. The Guapinol case continued before court with the water defenders still behind bars. And then there is also the Omicron-wave hitting a down-trodden public health system. The challenges for the new administration are real and many. But at the same time, the moment on January 27, when Xiomara Castro became the first female president of Honduras, left many with hope. It meant a break with the coup d'état and its legacy and showed a way forward. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

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Abbreviations

ASJ	Association for a More Just Society
ATIC	Technical Bureau for Criminal Investigation
BID	Inter-American Development Bank
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CDM	Center for Women's Rights
CIPRODEH	Center for Human Rights Research and Promotion
CMH	Medical Association Honduras
CNA	National Anti-Corruption Council
COFADEH	Committee of Families of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras
COIPRODEN	Coordination of Private Institutions for Children's Rights
CONADEH	National Human Rights Commission
COPINH	Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras
FEPRODDHH	Special Public Prosecutor Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators
FOSDEH	Social Forum on the External Debt of Honduras
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IACtHR	Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ILO	International Labor Organization
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights
MACCIH	Support Mission against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras
MADJ	Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice
MP	Attorney General's Office
OACNUDH	UN Human Rights Office in Honduras
TSC	Supreme Audit Court
UFERCO	Special Prosecuting Unit against Corruption Networks
UNAH	National Autonomous University of Honduras
ZEDE	Zone for Employment and Economic Development

The New Xiomara Castro Administration

Xiomara's Government Plans

On January 7, the transition commission of the new government met with various sectors active on land and territory issues. "The movement against the ZEDEs asks the new government to suspend the military treaty with the US & remove foreign troops".¹ COPINH presented six proposals for the respect of the territorial rights of indigenous and campesino communities.² They also presented 8 minimum criteria for the respect of the rights and territories of the indigenous peoples of the country.³ Xiomara's transition commission also met with OFRANEH which presented 13 proposals to the incoming administration among them the derogation of all the harmful laws implemented since the coup d'état.⁴ On January 15, human rights organizations made proposals for the National Plan on Human Rights.⁵

Social movements organized in the Permanent Assembly of People Power (APPP) wrote an open letter to president-elect Xiomara Castro. "We are also interested that your administration is clear that the APPP understands the fact that your government is and must be for all Hondurans and that it is integrated by a coalition of political forces and part of them represent economic structures historically and currently antagonistic to the interests and rights of the Honduran people, particularly the popular movement. In this sense, we trust that your administration will prioritize a management in favor of the people, but we also trust that you and your administration understand that in the APPP you will find popular support for that management, as long as it promotes and defends the great desires of the Honduran people and not the national or international economic sectors that have filled our people with shame, plunder and corruption."⁶

On January 8 the transition team met with youth movements.⁷ "Among the demands of the National Youth Board are the abolition of the National Youth Institute and the creation of the National Secretary of Youth (Senaju) for the next four years."⁸ Another day later, Xiomara's transition commission met with the agriculture sector.⁹ "The representative of the peasant movement and former congressman Rafael Alegría assured that the government of President Xiomara Castro contemplates the rescue and strengthening of agrarian institutions. Among the entities to be restructured, according to the peasant leader, are the National Agrarian Institute, the Honduran Bank for Production and Housing (Banhprovi), the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) and the National Bank for Agricultural Development (Banadesa)."¹⁰

On January 10, Xiomara Castro's transition team met with women rights and feminist organization to discuss 18 proposals to improve the lives of women in Honduras.¹¹ "Women have been at the

1 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1479503298155581440>

2 <https://copinh.org/2022/01/propuestas-del-copinh-para-los-pueblos-indigenas-de-honduras/>

3 <https://copinh.org/2022/01/propuestas-del-copinh-para-un-gobierno-de-justicia-y-vida-para-los-pueblos-indigenas-de-honduras/>

4 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1482810323409190913>

5 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/organizaciones-de-ddhh-realizan-propuestas-para-el-plan-de-gobierno-de-xiomara-castro/>

6 <https://madj.org/2022/01/12/carta-de-la-asamblea-permanente-del-popular-a-la-presidenta-electa-de-honduras/>

7 <https://copinh.org/2022/01/propuesta-juventud-del-copinh-rebeldias-construyendo-el-presente/>

8 <https://proceso.hn/jovenes-proponen-a-nuevo-gobierno-crear-secretaria-de-la-juventud-y-ampliar-presupuesto-a-la-unah/>

9 <https://confidencialhn.com/una-agricultura-solidaria-solicitan-productores-solicitan-a-presidenta-electa-xiomara-castro/>

10 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/07/gobierno-busca-rescatar-banca-estatal-para-fortalecer-produccion-nacional/>

11 <https://confidencialhn.com/mujeres-piden-al-gobierno-que-nombre-al-frente-del-instituto-nacional-de-la-mujer-personas-comprometidas-y-no-activistas-politicos/>

forefront of struggle in Honduras throughout its history, from fighting dictatorships to challenging political corruption to seeking civil improvements such as gender parity in politics and education. The recent presidential election of Xiomara Castro Sarmiento Zelaya of the Libertad and Refundación (Libre) party has exhilarated women from various sectors and in the diaspora. In a country battered by 12 years of impunity, corruption, and aggressive neoliberalism in the wake of the 2009 U.S.-backed coup, Castro's victory—and her pledge to convene a National Constituent Assembly to rewrite the constitution—is at once a vindication and ray of hope for women's rights and other hard-fought social struggles."¹² Journalist Jeff Ernst reported on the role she could play in improving the lives of Honduran women. "Activists are optimistic that Castro, of the center-left Libre party, will not only take actions that help improve conditions for women in the immediate, but also accelerate broader changes in the country's culture. "This small break in the patriarchy that her win represents can become bigger and bigger, in the sense that it can open even more spaces for participation in government and political participation in general for women in the country," said Carmen Haydée, a human rights lawyer and representative of the feminist group Luchemos. Among the first order of business, Castro is expected to undo a prohibition against emergency contraceptives enacted in the wake of the coup. Honduras is the only country in Latin America with absolute bans on both abortion and emergency contraceptives. (...) Since emergency contraceptives were outlawed by decree, Castro will be able to act unilaterally to undo the ban. When it comes to abortion, however, the situation is much more complex. (...) Castro's proposal – the first such proposal from a president in Honduras – is nonetheless significant. "I do believe that Xiomara's openness to that possibility does allow us to generate spaces for dialogue, reflection, awareness and discussion," said Fonseca."¹³

The incoming administration also met with the IMF¹⁴ and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The latter's country director stated that \$600 million are planned for Honduras in the next four years.¹⁵ The outgoing JOH regime has created in the last eight years various additional state entities, in the form of three secretariats, four under-secretariats and one directorate. This leaves a heavy financial burden on the incoming administration.¹⁶ Marcio Sierra, a member of the transition commission, announced that the new government will get rid of some institutions and merger others.¹⁷ At the same time, the transition commission denounced that "the outgoing government is not being transparent regarding the number of posts it has been granting, nor is it providing financial statements of the country (...). Marcio Sierra, member of this commission, explained that Luis Matta, who serves as Minister of Finance, has not provided the information they need to know how they will receive the nation."¹⁸

12 <https://nacla.org/news/2022/01/10/honduras-xiomara-castro-women>

13 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jan/26/honduras-first-female-president-xiomara-castro-women>

14 <https://confidencialhn.com/fmi-listo-para-trabajar-con-nueva-administracion-asegura-su-representante/>

15 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/bid-dispone-600-millones-gobierno-xiomara-castro-honduras-YI4921661>

16 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/elheraldodata/1509509-528/administracion-juan-orlando-herandez-gran-burocracia-honduras>

17 <https://confidencialhn.com/varias-instituciones-seran-suprimidas-y-otras-fusionadas-en-nuevo-gobierno-marcio-sierra/>

18 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/tomadeposesion/1509611-537/gobierno-saliente-rendicion-cuentas-juan-orlando-herandez-nuevo-mandato-honduras-xiomara-castro>

The Fight About Congress

Throughout the month, to be exact, since the elections, there was a vivid debate inside the winning opposition alliance regarding the presidency of Congress. There was a deal between Libre and PSH to vote for someone supported by Nasralla who then presented PSH congressman Luis Redondo. But some inside Libre wanted to break with the deal.¹⁹ Honduras Now explained: "Among those that want to be next Prez of Congress is ambitious LIBRE Congress rep, Jorge Calix. It's believed that wealthy Atala family is behind gathering support for Calix, who legally represents Atala family & Ficohsa bank. Calix is part of a more conservative sector of LIBRE. Jorge Calix is cousin to José Mario Calix (alias Cubeta), indicted by U.S. on drug trafficking charges & is distantly related to JOH's sister through marriage."²⁰ Baker Street Herald links Jorge Cáliz, the Libre splinter candidate for Congress backed by the National Party, to ZEDEs through him being supported by the bank FICOSAH.²¹

On January 20, Libre coordinator Manuel Zelaya called for a meeting with the elected Libre members of Congress to discuss the presidency of the legislative power.²² But things did not turn out as planned and 20 Libre members did not show up to the meeting. Xiomara called it a treacherous act.²³ ²⁴ In a press release, Libre denounced the act of the 20 elected members of Congress and stayed firm on the will to have Luis Redondo become the next president of Congress.²⁵ We witnessed the successful Nationalist strategy at play, divide and conquer.²⁶

The next day, the conflict about the new leadership of Congress went from bad to worse.²⁷ What had been feared became true, 21 Libre members of Congress broke the deal between Libre and the PSH which led the opposition to victory in November. Instead of supporting the joint candidate Luis Redondo, they made a deal with the National Party and the Liberal Party and had their own leadership of Congress²⁸ elected with Jorge Cáliz its president. Under protest by the Xiomara wing of Libre, they were elected with 85 votes²⁹ - by the way, the first time Congress met in person for a long time and to celebrate the occasion, a fight broke out.³⁰ JOH's Ministry of Government, Justice and Decentralization confirmed the provisional vote, which had to be confirmed two days later.³¹ Libre went on to expel 18 members (three backtracked and withdrew their support for Cáliz).³²

The same evening, Xiomara Castro called for a vigil outside Congress to stop a hostile take over of Congress the next day.³³ ³⁴ She also ordered the police to remove the wired fences around Congress which had been installed by the National Party.³⁵ In the meantime, the only DC representative in Congress, Carlos Raudales, had announced to withdraw his support of Cáliz and he would instead

19 <https://criterio.hn/diputados-de-libre-que-no-respalden-a-luis-redondo-estarian-violentando-estatutos-del-partido/>
20 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1483887093365551111?ctx=HHwWjsC57eHc6ZcpAAAA>
21 <https://twitter.com/bakerstherald/status/1484760811725799425>
22 <https://confidencialhn.com/mel-zelaya-se-reunira-con-diputados-de-libre-para-definir-la-titularidad-del-cn/>
23 https://twitter.com/All_Things_HND/status/1484400448761180161?ctx=HHwWgsC5z2V05kpAAAA
24 https://twitter.com/All_Things_HND/status/1484415628740018179?ctx=HHwWhoCyoemJ2pkpAAAA
25 <https://twitter.com/PartidoLibre/status/1484404851949854720>
26 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1484373128222425089?ctx=HHwWgoCq3dxfxpkpAAAA>
27 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/21/fractura-en-libre-genera-primer-conflicto-en-el-poder-legislativo/>
28 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1509937-466/junta-directiva-provisional-congreso-nacional-2022-2026-honduras-zafarrancho>
29 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/eleccion-del-presidente-del-legislativo-desata-crisis-institucional-en-honduras/>
30 <https://confidencialhn.com/en-medio-del-rechazo-y-agresiones-juramentan-a-jorge-calix-como-presidente-del-congreso-nacional/>
31 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1484588880804388864?ctx=HHwWglC53ZxuUopAAAA>
32 <https://confidencialhn.com/libre-expulsa-de-forma-definitiva-a-18-diputados-disidentes/>
33 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1485081969075449856?ctx=HHwWgMCj0deLiZwpAAAA>
34 <https://criterio.hn/multiples-sectores-se-unen-a-xiomara-castro-en-vigilia-para-recuperar-el-congreso-nacional/>
35 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1510099-466/polici%C3%ADa-levanta-portones-resguardaban-congreso-nacional-solicitud-xiomara-castro>

support Xiomara's candidate Luis Redondo.³⁶ A much discussed question was the role of the Liberal Party. With the 22 Liberal votes plus the remaining 32 Libre votes, 10 PSH votes and the one DC vote, one gets to 65 votes, exactly what would be needed for the election of the new congressional leadership.³⁷

The next day, winning coalition of the election met at Congress for the election of the congressional leadership.³⁸ Xiomara followers had taken already to Congress the night before to protect the will of the people. Then in the morning, "a second call was put out for a session outside Tegucigalpa at 8:20 am, which began minutes later. Legislators who planned to vote for Luis Redondo were trapped in Tegucigalpa. Legislators who planned to vote for Calix, including dissident Libre, National Party & Liberal Yanistas appeared at the secret location & proceeded to vote, electing Calix. Those stuck in Tegucigalpa then held vote & elected Redondo, but were far short of a majority."³⁹ Honduras Now then reported that Cáliz may have received 79 votes and Redondo 49, but they caution that the numbers were unconfirmed. "It seems like Redondo doesn't have enough votes whereas others are calling the session in Zambrano illegal."⁴⁰ Cáliz's election had to be printed in La Gaceta to be official. Union workers of the National Company of Graphic Art (ENAG) then went on to protect their building and stop the printing.⁴¹ Xiomara, meanwhile, recognized Luis Redondo as the president of Congress.⁴² Journalist Jeff Ernst highlighted: "This is important because she can assign the legislature's budget to that group & refuse to sign into law any bills passed by the Calix group. The Redondo legislature's strength lies in that support from Castro as well as from the people, but any bills it passes could be subject to legal challenges. Thus, so long as the crisis continues, neither legislature can function with certainty."⁴³

The National Party, in a press release, called for the respect of the rule of law and invited the dissident Libre representatives to join their party. OFRANEH's Miriam Miranda found the right words for this. "This is a joke, or we live in the country of the absurd. The narco-dictatorship, which plunged the country into the worst crisis in its history for 12 years, which gave a technical coup to the Supreme Court of Justice on 12.12.12, now proclaims itself the guarantor of democracy and governability."⁴⁴ Cáliz's Congress published a press release with an agenda for the first 30 days highlighting five points. The derogation of the ZEDEs and the Secrecy Law, to revise the Penal Code, and to approve the Extradition Law and the Efficient Collaboration Law.⁴⁵

The next day, in the newest edition of La Gaceta, Luis Redondo was named as the president of Congress.⁴⁶ Redondo's support also grew as Libre congressman Sergio Castellanos, who was named a vice-president of Congress under Cáliz, announced to change sides. Later, congresswoman Melbi Ortiz did the same.⁴⁷ The same day, both Congresses started their first legislative period yesterday.

36 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1510078-466/diputado-carlos-raudales-retira-apoyo-jorge-calix>
37 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/22/pueden-los-liberales-revivir-la-aspiracion-de-luis-redondo-de-presidir-el-congreso/>
38 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/23/honduras-entra-en-una-nueva-crisis-tras-instalacion-de-la-junta-directiva-del-congreso-nacional/>
39 <https://twitter.com/jeffernst/status/1485275134009167872?ctx=HHwWgMCyxa734JwpAAAA>
40 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1485283796991692806?ctx=HHwWjMCq5c7v5JwpAAAA>
41 <https://tiempo.hn/sindicato-trabajadores-toma-instalaciones-enag/>
42 <https://twitter.com/XiomaraCastroZ/status/1485287469092376580?ctx=HHwWiMC4ia7F5pwpAAAA>
43 <https://twitter.com/jeffernst/status/1486015711193575427?ctx=HHwWhsC9xdDasZ8pAAAA>
44 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1485270676458156036?ctx=HHwWiMC9mfPz3pwpAAAA>
45 <https://tiempo.hn/primeras-acciones-legislativas-junta-directiva-en-cn/>
46 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/la-gaceta-confirma-a-luis-redondo-presidente-legislativo/>
47 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/24/dos-diputados-de-libre-retiran-su-apoyo-al-presidente-del-congreso-nacional-jorge-calix/>

The Redondo Congress inside Congress, the Cáliz Congress on Zoom.⁴⁸ JOH participated on the Zoom session which for many observers and Hondurans further undermines the legitimacy of the Cáliz Congress.⁴⁹ Luis Redondo promised the creation of a Citizen Commission against Corruption and the repeal of all the harmful laws approved in the last 12 years.⁵⁰ The Cáliz Congress announced that they have repealed the disputed Secrecy Law.⁵¹ They also claimed that a first step to repeal the ZEDEs had been taken.⁵² Cáliz himself, in what is portrayed as a mistake by not muting his microphone, made a comment expressing annoyance about questions regarding the extradition, presumably of JOH. It is unclear what his position is and some fear that he wants to stop the extradition of drug traffickers.⁵³

CESPAD director Gustavo Irías offers three reasons for the political crisis. "First, the difficulties of LIBRE to build internal consensus. This is a politically very diverse party; it is a fact that the dissident deputies were not in favor of the opposition Coalition that added the PSH and much less with the inter-party agreement on the distribution of power quotas, in case they won the electoral contest. The LIBRE leadership did not ensure the internal debate nor the construction of a unique and shared approach on how to assume the reconstruction of the country. This is a more fundamental issue, it has to do with internal political formation processes, collective and shared readings on the complex reality of the country, as well as with the alternative model of the country to be built. The second, the conspiracy of the right wing against the elected government, with its main weapon: the number of votes in the National Congress (the sum of the National Party and the Liberal Party represents 51.5% of the total number of legislators). There is no doubt that the dissident sector was seduced by the easy access to the Congress board, without this implying sharing this power with the PSH. In addition, a hard fact is that the sum of the representatives of LIBRE and PSH did not reach the simple majority to have access to these directive positions. With this, the right wing has tried to divide the opposition Coalition and create a crisis of governance, and has made some progress in this direction. But the basic question is, what did the right wing negotiate with the dissidents to hand over the leadership of Congress so easily? Third, the participation of other powerful actors such as organized crime and sectors of big national capital, who feel threatened by the program of changes committed by the Coalition (revision of contracts, repeal of laws and issuance of new legal frameworks). It is likely that money from these sectors has circulated to buy consciences, we have no proof of this, but in Honduras corruption in the political system is so deeply rooted that it has been a recurrent practice in this type of elections."⁵⁴

Criterio talked to several experts and most coincide that it was mostly a political and not solely a legal problem, with no clear way out.⁵⁵ Some commentators called for a political pact to resolve the crisis as Honduras does not offer the conditions for a judicial resolution.⁵⁶ CESPAD presented Xiomara Castro as up for the task to overcome the institutional crisis, but highlighted that the

48 <https://criterio.hn/instalacion-de-dos-congresos-paralelos-agudiza-crisis-politica-en-honduras/>

49 <https://criterio.hn/con-el-saludo-joh-jorge-calix-instala-congreso-desde-la-virtualidad/>

50 <https://criterio.hn/luis-redondo-promete-derogacion-de-leyes-nocivas-e-instalacion-de-comision-ciudadana-anticorruptcion/>

51 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/25/congreso-nacional-presidido-por-jorge-calix-anuncia-derogacion-de-ley-de-secretos/>

52 <https://proceso.hn/se-ha-dado-el-primer-paso-que-honduras-esperaba-para-derogar-zedes-asegura-mauricio-villeda/>

53 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1510405-466/jorge-calix-video-extradicion-honduras-primera-legislatura>

54 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/01/23/se-abre-crisis-constitucional-en-honduras-con-dos-directivas-paralelas-del-congreso-nacional/>

55 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-sumergida-en-una-nueva-crisis-politica-como-se-saldrá-de-ella/>

56 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/24/crisis-del-legislativo-debe-resolverse-a-traves-de-un-pacto-politico-afirman-expertos/>

support of the international community was needed. "For this reason, those who analyze the country's crisis consider that international accompaniment in a dignified and transparent manner is fundamental to find a solution not only to this crisis, but to the entire crisis that the country has been dragging along and that has not been resolved, unfortunately, for more than a decade."⁵⁷

During this time, there were many calls for dialogue to resolve the crisis, maybe forgetting that Hondurans had a bad memory of such dialogues thinking back to 2017 after JOH's violent illegal reelection. The doubts about a dialogue grew further, when Cáliz's side announced on January 24 that the two parties would meet with the help of an international mediator which later was found out to be the US embassy.^{58 59 60 61} Criterio reported on the possible role of the US during the Xiomara presidency.⁶²

On January 26, a day before Xiomara's inauguration, The first Nationalist congressman, Rolando Barahona, changed sides from Cáliz to Redondo.⁶³ Additionally, Xiomara met with Cáliz and offered him the post of Cabinet Coordinator.⁶⁴ He thanked her for the invitation - "It would be a great honor to be part of the government of resistance and national reconciliation" - and offered an answer soon.⁶⁵ But by the end of the month, there was still no answer. By then, Cáliz's own alternate deputy, Grimaldi Josué Paz Sos, withdrew his support to join the Redondo Congress.⁶⁶ and those loyal to JOH seemed not to give up as easily. "In the midst of the current crisis, the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), presided by Rolando Argueta Pérez, through a writ ordered "special disqualification" for the deputies of Libertad y Refundación (Libre), Rassel Tomé and Edgardo Casaña, generating suspicion for taking it as a repressive measure for supporting and conforming the Board of Directors presided by Luis Redondo."⁶⁷ The situation further worsened as the National Party presented a constitutional challenge against Luis Redondo, accusing him of four crimes, including falsifying documents and illegal usurpation of a public function.⁶⁸ According to Honduras Now, "[t]his is further evidence of how much support ex-LIBRE Congress representative Jorge Calix has from Nat't party, dictatorship & the economic elite. He's using their institutions to legitimize his Congressional leadership & maintain status quo of the corrupt & the elite".⁶⁹

The US, meanwhile, continued to call for dialogue^{70 71} which was met with criticism as a general call for dialogue misses the point. "This is disgusting both sides-ism, and a reminder of disastrous U.S. policy. The only "acts of intimidation" will be committed by the outgoing narco president and his thugs, who the @StateDept supported for years."⁷² "One side being narco-golpistas (coup plotters) and the other side the representatives of the democratic will of the people."⁷³

57 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/01/25/una-crisis-institucional-que-muestra-a-xiomara-castro-sin-miedo-a-tomar-decisiones/>

58 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1485800571663646720?ctx=HHwWgICske7vz54pAAAA>

59 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/24/urgente-luis-y-jorge-esta-tarde-a-cita-con-embajada-de-eeuu/>

60 <https://confidencialhn.com/el-presidente-del-congreso-nacional-luis-redondo-confirma-reunion-con-la-embajada-americana/>

61 <https://criterio.hn/presidenta-de-honduras-aparenta-contar-con-el-respaldo-de-ee-uu-pese-a-conspiracion-en-su-contra/>

62 <https://criterio.hn/presidenta-de-honduras-aparenta-contar-con-el-respaldo-de-ee-uu-pese-a-conspiracion-en-su-contra/>

63 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1510536-466/partido-nacional-diputado-luis-redondo-honduras>

64 <https://twitter.com/XiomaraCastroZ/status/1486480432606683136?ctx=HHwWgIC58fyEhaEpAAAA>

65 <https://twitter.com/JorgeCalixHN/status/1486519661634199555?ctx=HHwWhoC59bPwlgEpAAAA>

66 <https://criterio.hn/diputado-suplente-de-calix-lo-abandona-pero-crisis-por-presidir-el-congreso-nacional-continua/>

67 <https://criterio.hn/repesalias-en-medio-de-crisis-poder-judicial-inhabilita-a-diputados-rasel-tome-y-edgardo-casana/>

68 <https://criterio.hn/pugna-por-presidencia-del-congreso-nacional-se-traslada-a-corte-suprema-acrecentando-la-crisis/>

69 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1487281093820755974?ctx=HHwWjMC55cuR8aMpAAAA>

70 <https://twitter.com/WHAAssSecty/status/1487430794117267460>

71 <https://proceso.hn/eeuu-pide-a-politicos-que-participen-en-un-dialogo-pacifico-que-resuelva-conflicto-del-congreso/>

72 <https://twitter.com/jamesnorth7/status/1487443778747121665?ctx=HHwWgoCy-YvPu6QpAAAA>

73 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1487449468362543105?ctx=HHwWgsC-8aPavaQpAAAA>

At the end of the month, with the crisis of the two Congresses unresolved, the dissident Libre members of the Cáliz Congress announced to contemplate self-exile.⁷⁴ Libre declared that there exists no persecution of them in Honduras and called on the dissidents to return to the Redondo Congress.⁷⁵ "In view of this situation, Congressman Jari Dixon said that it is crazy for his colleagues to consider that they are in danger and that they should leave the country. Likewise, he said that it is time for them to put an end to it and return to the party's bases."⁷⁶

The Inauguration

On January 27, Xiomara Castro became the next, and first female, president of Honduras.⁷⁷ She again promised to start the refounding of Honduras.⁷⁸ Xiomara called for the freedom of the Guapinol defenders during her inauguration.⁷⁹ This could materialize as part of a planned amnesty law.⁸⁰ As part of the inauguration ceremony, COPINH presented the Vara Alta Lenca to Xiomara.⁸¹ At least 57 international delegations were present.⁸² US vice-president Kamala Harris and other high US officials attended.⁸³ Xiomara met with Harris.⁸⁴ "Our relationship with Honduras is an important one. Today I met with President Xiomara Castro to discuss deepening our cooperation across a broad range of issues, including addressing the root causes of migration, combating corruption, and expanding economic opportunity."⁸⁵

On the day of the inauguration, Xiomara presented her cabinet picks to the public. Among them is Rixi Moncada, who played a key role at the National Electoral Council (CNE) and will be the new Secretary of Finance, and Ramon Sabillon as the new Minister of Security.⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ Jeff Ernst and David C. Adams published an article on the later. "Five years after he fled Honduras under threat, former national police chief Ramón Sabillon was nominated Thursday as the country's new Minister of Security by President-elect Xiomara Castro. The nomination comes hours before Castro is due to be sworn in as Honduras' first female president and only a few weeks after Sabillon returned from exile in the United States, kneeling down to symbolically touch the ground outside the San Pedro Sula airport where he received a hero's welcome. (...) During his time as national police chief, Sabillon made a name for himself by capturing several of the country's biggest drug traffickers – results that he says got him fired by President Juan Orlando Hernández."⁸⁸ In total, out of the 40 cabinet members, only 10 were women which led to some criticism.⁸⁹

74 <https://proceso.hn/congreso-de-calix-contempla-exilio-redondo-convoca-a-sesion-hoy/>

75 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/31/defensor-de-disidentes-de-libre-si-no-se-resuelve-el-problema-pediran-asilo-en-costa-rica/>

76 <https://tiempo.hn/jari-diputados-piden-asilo-dejen-locura/>

77 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPPug4g3H8E>

78 <https://criterio.hn/xiomara-castro-asume-la-presidencia-de-honduras-con-la-promesa-de-refundar-una-nacion-en-quebra/>

79 <https://criterio.hn/libertad-para-guapinol-piden-en-toma-de-posesion-de-la-presidenta-xiomara-castro-en-honduras/>

80 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3336-las-primeras-acciones-de-xiomara-castro-ley-de-amnistia-para-presos-politicos-y-retorno-de-exiliados>

81 <https://copinh.org/2022/01/la-vara-alta-lenca/>

82 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/honduras-57-delegaciones-de-gobiernos-acompanaron-a-xiomara-castro/>

83 <https://hn.usembassy.gov/president-biden-announces-presidential-delegation-to-the-republic-of-honduras-to-attend-the-inauguration-of-her-excellency-xiomara-castro/>

84 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/27/readout-of-vice-president-harris-meeting-with-president-castro-of-honduras/>

85 <https://twitter.com/VP/status/1486869847887818755>

86 <https://twitter.com/XiomaraCastroZ/status/1486704421149065216>

87 <https://confidencialhn.com/presidenta-xiomara-castro-confirma-su-gabinete-de-gobierno/>

88 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/a-top-cop-feared-by-drug-traffickers-gen-sabillon-to-be-honduras-new-security-minister>

89 <https://criterio.hn/sigue-brecha-de-igualdad-de-genero-10-mujeres-y-30-hombres-integran-primeras-designaciones-del-gabinete-de-xiomara-castro/>

Human Rights and Their Defenders

Human Rights Watch published its annual report. On Honduras, they write: "Violent organized crime continues to disrupt Honduran society and push many people to leave the country. Journalists; environmental activists; human rights defenders; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals; and people with disabilities are among the groups targeted for violence. Impunity remains the norm. Efforts to reform public security institutions have stalled. Marred by corruption and abuse, the judiciary and police remain largely ineffective. Support and resources from a four-year Organization of American States (OAS) mission to strengthen the fight against corruption and impunity, concluded in January 2020, have not produced lasting reforms. Anti-corruption prosecutors have been left defenseless."⁹⁰

Assassinations

"Pablo Isabel Hernández, member of the Network of Human Rights Defenders organized and accompanied by the Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras (COFADEH), was murdered this morning on his way to church from his home in Tierra Colorada, San Marcos de Caiquín, Lempira where he lived with his wife and three young children. This Sunday, January 9, 2022, unknown actors shot him three times in the back with a firearm at approximately 800 meters from his home, according to preliminary reports. Pablo Hernandez was a well known Lenca leader, social communicator and opposition political leader since the 2009 coup. He was a constant target of persecution and threats."⁹¹ Pablo Isabel Hernández was also the director of the community radio Radio Tenán.⁹² His murder was widely condemned, among others by US Representatives Meeks⁹³ and García⁹⁴, the US embassy⁹⁵ and OACNUDH⁹⁶. COFADEH denounced that the MP fails to investigate attacks against human rights defenders. In the case of Pablo Isabel, COFADEH had denounced before his death that the MP had failed to act regarding the threats Hernández was receiving. The MP then said they could not react appropriately because they only count with one agent to cover all these cases.⁹⁷ Two weeks later, ContraCorriente published an article on his murder with more background information. "Hernández constantly denounced acts of corruption by the municipality's authorities, including the sale of ancestral territories and the complicity of other indigenous leaders in this, according to confidential sources. The relevant authorities have not yet made any progress in the investigation of the criminal and intellectual authors of his murder."⁹⁸

On January 22, MADJ denounced the murder of indigenous defender Selvin Geovany Mejía of the La Candelaria tribe in Morazán, Yoro.⁹⁹ OACNUDH condemned the murder.¹⁰⁰

90 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/honduras>

91 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-asesinan-a-defensor-y-comunicador-social-de-la-red-de-lempira-cofadeh/>

92 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1427-asesinan-a-director-de-la-radio-comunitaria-tenan-en-lempira>

93 <https://twitter.com/houseforeign/status/1480597063922556936>

94 <https://twitter.com/RepChuyGarcia/status/1480652808001138693>

95 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1480624162116931590>

96 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-de-pablo-isabel-hernandez-defensor-de-derechos-humanos-y-comunicador-social/>

97 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/el-ministerio-publico-demuestra-su-inoperancia-e-incompetencia-ante-denuncias-presentadas-por-ataques-a-defensores-de-ddhh-en-honduras/>

98 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/28/pablo-hernandez-lider-indigena-asesinado-denunciaba-redes-de-corrupcion-en-el-occidente-de-honduras/>

99 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1484982759277879296?cxt=HHwWgICzhfX825spAAA>

100 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-de-melvin-geovany-mejia-defensor-indigena-tolupan/>

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

On January 9, COFADEH warned: "Next Monday, January 10, an eviction could take place that will affect 52 families of the peasant company "Horizontes del Ayotal" in the community of El Carrizo, Marcovia, Choluteca, according to a court order supported by the Departmental Police Unit (UDEP #6) and the Military Police of Public Order (PMOP)."¹⁰¹

On January 13, OFRANEH's Miriam Miranda denounced the arrest of two Garífuna land defenders from Trujillo, Colón. She denounced that they were being tortured by the police.^{102 103 104 105} The next day already, the two defenders, Leonard Brown and Luis Gutierrez, were sent to court.¹⁰⁶ Leonard Brown was released the same day awaiting trial on January 26.¹⁰⁷ It started as scheduled.¹⁰⁸ OFRANEH tweeted: "Garifunas in front of the court of Trujillo accompanying Leonard Brown, who with more than thirty people are being prosecuted for the recovery of a land that was illegally given by the municipality to foreigners. Enough of persecution of mother earth defenders."¹⁰⁹ The next day, after the hearing concluded, he was conditionally released.¹¹⁰

7 defenders of ARCAH from Loarque, Choluteca, are being criminalized for defending the Choluteca river. Their trial started this month.¹¹¹

Guapinol

On January 13, the trial against the Guapinol defenders continued¹¹² after the challenges against the three judges was dismissed and the Supreme Court failed to rule on the Habeas Corpus action filed one month earlier to put an end to the arbitrary detentions of the defenders.¹¹³ Pasos de Animal Grande explained why the ongoing pre-trial detention of the Guapinol defenders is illegal.¹¹⁴ Honduras Now published a summary of the court case in the Guapinol case. On Day 5¹¹⁵, there were "discussions and debates about new evidence presented by the prosecutors. The defense asked for access to the contents of a USB memory; and objected to the 'protected' status of a protected witness. The defense also presents seven documents and three testimonies as new evidence. The prosecutors object to all the documents presented. The defense argues that the above documents show the real reason why a large group of people are protesting the project and were present on September 7, 2018, the day of the incidents in question. They were exercising their legitimate right to protest, a constitutionally protected right, and the documents show that the motives behind the protests were to protect the environment and local water supply. They also demonstrate that the project is based on corrupt acts."¹¹⁶

101 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-orden-de-desalojo-amenaza-a-familias-campesinas-en-marcovia/>

102 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1481796703409688579?ctx=HHwWhsCigYeQs5ApAAAA>

103 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1482096381703725057?ctx=HHwWgoC9pdCzu5EpAAAA>

104 https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1482106447186046976?ctx=HHwWgMC5_cH9v5EpAAAA

105 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-tortura-contra-dos-defensores-garifunas-tras-detencion-policial/>

106 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1482088827560751105?ctx=HHwWgsCrxFX7t5EpAAAA>

107 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1482132797242298369?ctx=HHwWgsCqmaX7y5EpAAAA>

108 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1486390675914387458?ctx=HHwWhMCjtbm3KApAAAA>

109 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1486449786421133314?ctx=HHwWhCygZGN96ApAAAA>

110 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1487286881708650496?ctx=HHwWgMC99b7186MpAAAA>

111 https://twitter.com/Arcah_hn/status/1487872209137942531?ctx=HHwWhoC-jYT5_aUpAAAA

112 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/nuevas-pruebas-propuestas-por-defensa-demuestra-ilegalidad-de-proyecto-minero-en-tooca>

113 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/guapinol-trial-will-resume-thursday-while-supreme-court-fails-to-rule-on-arbitrary-detention>

114 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/guapinol/las-cortes/item/3328-como-puede-la-corte-justificar-la-detencion-de-los-defensores-de-guapinol-no-puede>

115 Day 1-4 took place last year

116 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-five-the-trial-resumes/>

Day 6: "The trial began today with a ruling by the judges that the defense will be allowed to review the contents of a new USB memory stick presented by the prosecutors. The defense had asked to review it before commenting on whether they formed a legal opinion about whether it should be allowed or not in trial. After reviewing the videos on the USB memory, the defense objected to it being used in trial because it had been edited and therefore, its authenticity could not be guaranteed." The judges then ruled on the admissibility of various items of evidence.¹¹⁷

Day 7: "The day begins with the judge asking the eight water defenders if they would like to make use of their right to declare before the court. All decline. The part of the trial where evidence is presented, examined, and debated by all parties officially started today. Several documents and testimonies were heard and debated. In the morning, the defense objected to two documents admitted as evidence. The documents are two internal reports written by and for Inversiones Los Pinares' Head of Physical Security, Miguel Izaguirre and include written reports and photos of the incident on September 7, 2018. The defense argues that the reports violate the legal regulations established in the "Private Security Service Regulations," which prohibits private individuals and security forces to carry out intelligence gathering and monitoring without a license. Security guards cannot substitute the work of police or state investigators and carrying out such monitoring is a violation of the fundamental rights of individuals that were present that day. Prosecutors refute the defense's arguments saying that it's not the correct procedural moment for the defense to object and that the evidence has been admitted. The defense asks the judges not to allow these two documents."¹¹⁸

Day 8: "Today, the prosecution's star witness Santos Hernandez Correa, a contracted security supervisor for Los Pinares, testified before the court. Hernandez Correa is the allegedly victim of an unjust detention by the accused. Hernandez Correa first gave his testimony, was questioned by all parties and finished on the stand. (...) The defense established that Santos Hernandez Correa holds an active contract with Inversiones Los Pinares. This might suggest that he has a vested interest in the mining company's position and stance against the Guapinol water defenders."¹¹⁹

Day 9: "The prosecution's second witness Miguel Rafael Izaguirre Padilla, the head of physical security for Inversiones Los Pinares, takes the stand and describes the events of September 7, 2018. In various occasions, Izaguirre inadvertently outlines different facts that help to expose lies described yesterday by Santos Hernandez, the prosecution's star witness. For example, Izaguirre admitted that Hernandez was never detained by community members and had access to his cellphones, as Hernandez was calling Izaguirre to ask him to pick him up because the mining company's employees had left him behind at the company's plant. This contradicts Hernandez and the prosecution's accusation that Hernandez had been detained by community members and his cell phones stolen. Izaguirre also testified that accused water defender, Orbin Hernandez, maintained a friendly and helpful demeanor towards him the day of the incidents. Izaguirre described the tension and conflict created by the mining company Inversiones Los Pinares' presence in Tocoa and

117 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-six-judges-admit-important-evidence-presented-by-defense/>

118 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-seven-evidence-begins-to-be-debated-and-examined/>

119 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-eight-mining-company-security-guard-and-prosecutions-star-witness-testifies/>

divisions it creates for local people. A medical forensic doctor testified about the lesions found on Santos Hernandez's body when he was examined on September 8, 2018. The doctor said there was no bleeding or serious wounds or injuries but he found some bruises and a mark made by an unidentified object on Hernandez's back."¹²⁰

On Day 10, the witnesses of the prosecution continued to get entangled in contradictions.¹²¹ "The general coordinator of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (Copinh), Bertha Zúniga Cáceres, highlighted the parallels of the use of private security companies for the profiling of leaders in communities that oppose extractive projects, as occurred in Río Blanco and was repeated in Guapinol. Bertha Zúniga pointed out that it is clear that the military knowledge of those who come out of institutions such as the Armed Forces is used by security companies to create profiles that are used in the development of attacks against community leaders."¹²² On Day 11 of the Guapinol trial, two more witnesses testified for the prosecution. "None of the witnesses identified any of the accused Guapinol water defenders at the scene or witnessed their participation."¹²³

Honduras Now summarized Day 13 of the Guapinol trial. "The trial started with a serious concern raised by the defense. The attorneys representing the water defenders asked the prosecution to clarify why armed men in civilian clothes were standing outside the court room. They expressed fear and denounced that the armed men were intimidating them, the water defenders and the family members gathered outside the courthouse. The defense threatened to leave the courthouse if the judges did not take control of the situation emphasizing the role that private security and retired military and police have played in the trial and the conflict on behalf of Inversiones Los Pinares. The prosecution told the court that the men were police and then said they are private security. After the defense insisting several times, the judges finally ordered the men to leave the courthouse and the defense notified the national protection mechanism that they felt intimidated by the attitude and actions of the armed men, the prosecutors and the lawyers representing Inversiones Los Pinares. (...) Another DPI agent, Lester Yalil Martinez, took the stand to ratify a diagram that he had drawn of the area near the mining company's plant that describes the location of the car and the containers that were burned on September 7, 2018. The defense argued that the prosecution was presenting a document that reconstructed the events of the crime scene, which is its elaboration, by law, require the presence of the defense. The document was also different from what the prosecution had originally told the court it was and there was no judicial control to ensure its authenticity. Despite several arguments to not admit the expert testimony, the judges decided to allow it. Later, a protected witness took the stand testifying that he had been present the day of the incidents. His testimony contradicted previous witnesses including details about alleged threats against and injuries suffered by Santos Hernandez and descriptive information about the person that was shot that day. The witness repeated the same defamatory message used by many linked to Inversiones Los Pinares, that the water defenders are accusing the company of shooting someone that day in

120 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-nine-prosecutions-witness-exposes-lies-of-star-witness-santos-hermandez/>

121 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-ten-more-witness-contradictions/>

122 <https://criterio.hn/desa-y-los-pinares-emplean-empresas-de-seguridad-para-vigilar-a-lideres-comunitarios-bertha-zuniga/>

123 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-eleven-two-more-witnesses-for-prosecution/>

order to receive money from human rights organizations.”¹²⁴ The same day, IM-Defensoras denounced the surveillance, harassment and threats against the Guapinol defenders.¹²⁵ Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, expressed concerns.¹²⁶

Day 14: "Important video evidence presented by the prosecution and the defense was shown today in court. An expert forensic witness described eight videos that were submitted by the prosecution and also, played five videos presented by the defense attorneys. The prosecution's video evidence contradicted witness testimony, showing that the car and the two containers were not lit on fire or damaged at the same time, and that none of the accused were seen as committing any criminal acts. In addition, the videos showed that the community members were not armed, again, directly contradicting the prosecution's witnesses. The defense's video evidence consisting of a recorded live broadcast and follow-up interviews by a local media outlet that was present the day of the incident. In the videos, the local journalist said several times as did the individuals interviewed, that the only people armed that day, were individuals working with or related to Inversiones Los Pinares. The videos were very touching and powerful. Through the interviews of young and old, It almost felt like the entire community of Guapinol was testifying in court about the importance of defending their water, the reasons they were present and maintaining an encampment on and before September 7, 2018, and the intentions of the mining company to provoke violence, division, conflict, and destruction.”¹²⁷

Day 15: "The trial started today with an expert testimony from a forensic psychologist based in the Public Prosecutor's office in San Pedro Sula. Oscar Aguilar examined the alleged victim and security manager for Inversiones Los Pinares, Santos Hernandez Corea, a few years after the incident on September 7, 2018. Aguilar gave testimony that Hernandez had difficulty recalling memories and appeared to have signs of trauma and depression. The defense made it clear that the results are not scientific and heavily rely on the opinion of the expert that examined him. The report did not involve or mention the accused in the crimes in any way. At least three witnesses presented by the prosecution were unable to attend the trial, but in their absence an investigative police report and two testimonies of a witness were read or played (audio) in court. Upon request from the defense, two testimonies of Akbar Reyes Lagos, Inversiones Los Pinares logistics manager and member of the Board of Directors were heard in court. Reyes had previously participated in other hearings. Again, the testimonies contradicted the other witnesses, as well as the two separate versions that Reyes had given in court. Reyes is seen as having a direct interest in criminalizing the water defenders and the community that are resisting the mine and mentioned several of the accused as being present that day on September 7, 2018.”¹²⁸ During the duration of the trial, Inversiones Los Pinares went on the offensive further attacking the Guapinol defenders in a press release.¹²⁹

Day 16. "Today, the defense presented a witness, Juana Esquivel, a human rights defender and the director of the Fundación San Alonso. Esquivel testified about the struggle to protect the Guapinol

124 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-thirteen-armed-men-intimidate-defense-inside-courthouse/>

125 <https://im-defensoras.org/2022/01/alerta-urgente-honduras-vigilancia-hostigamiento-y-amenazas-contras-las-defensoras-y-defensores-de-guapinol/>

126 <https://twitter.com/MaryLawlorhrds/status/1486020903469293573?ctx=HHwWioC9ge6tJ8pAAAA>

127 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-fourteen-important-video-evidence-tells-the-real-story-of-the-guapinol-struggle/>

128 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-fifteen-the-prosecution-rests/>

129 <https://confidencialhn.com/inversiones-los-pinares-evidencia-contras-acusados-en-caso-guapinol-es-contundente/>

and San Pedro rivers, the purpose of the peaceful encampment, and the environmental damage and violence that Inversiones Los Pinares was creating in the communities. She talked about the violent groups created by the mining company that threatened community members and created a conflictive environment, particularly for individuals speaking out against the mine. Esquivel also testified extensively about all the actions taken by the affected communities and organizations to denounce the environmental damage, demand an investigation, organize a town hall consultation about the project, and the selective and corrupt manner that the justice system and prosecutor's office have operated. The defense also presented six documents related to the illegality of the mining concession and environmental license granted to Inversiones Los Pinares. Some were official documents from Honduran institutions in charge of protecting the national park indicating that the mining operation is not feasible inside a protected area; that mining would impact the flora and fauna; that the environmental license for the project should be rejected based on the damage the mine could cause; and that the boundaries of the national park were modified to permit illegal mining operations."¹³⁰ The trial then went on a break to resume on February 1.

At the end of the month, OACNUDH met with family members and legal representatives of the criminalized Guapinol defenders together with the new Human Rights Minister Natalie Roque and head of CONADEH Blanca Izaguirre.¹³¹

Indigenous Peoples

"The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) presents its thematic report "Right to Self-Determination of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples" in which it recognizes the current demands of indigenous and tribal peoples, analyzes international standards, and makes recommendations to States with the aim of contributing to efforts to recognize and implement the right to self-determination. This report is part of the strategic plan of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which seeks to make visible practices, experiences, and challenges that these peoples face in the recognition and exercise of this right."¹³²

The Case of Berta Cáceres

"The Public Prosecutor's Office informed that the resolution on the number of evidence to be admitted by the Sentencing Court in the criminal case against a policeman and a former member of the police force in the case of the crime of environmentalist Berta Cáceres is scheduled for January 19. According to the file, the two accused were initially assigned to the investigation of the crime of the environmentalist, however, they tried to adulterate the material investigations."^{133 134}

130 <https://www.hondurasnow.org/day-sixteen-the-defense-presents-their-evidence/>

131 https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1488335222001307653?cxt=HHwWisC44fa_0KcpAAAA

132 https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2021/355.asp

133 <https://proceso.hn/el-19-de-enero-sera-resolucion-de-audiencia-de-medios-probatorios-contra-dos-imputados-en-caso-de-berta-caceres/>

134 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/proximo-19-de-enero-tribunal-resolvera-sobre-admision-de-pruebas-para-juicio-contra-policias-que-pretendian-desviar-investigacion-del-crimen-de-berta-caceres/>

LGBTQ

Assassination

Sexual diversity defender and trans woman Thalía Rodríguez was murdered in her home in Tegucigalpa.^{135 136} The murder was widely condemned, among others by OACNUDH¹³⁷, IACHR¹³⁸, US¹³⁹ and European embassies¹⁴⁰, and USAID's Samantha Power.¹⁴¹

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

Six armed bodyguards of Congressman Jorge Cálix physically and verbally attacked journalist Karen Mejía (33) of TV Azteca and other journalists who were trying to interview him in after the in-promptu election of the congressional leadership in Bosques de Zambrano.¹⁴²

Assassinations

Pablo Isabel Hernández, Lenca leader and director of the community radio Radio Tenán, was murdered this month (see above).¹⁴³

Violence against Women

At least 322 women were murdered last year in Honduras, 44 more than the previous year according to the Center for Women's Studies (CDM).¹⁴⁴ In the first days of 2022, already six women were murdered in Honduras.¹⁴⁵

Proceso Digital interviewed Margarita Bueso Fiallos, coordinator of UN Women in Honduras. "We are indeed concerned because Honduran women are in a multi-crisis, ranging from poverty, which increased due to the effects of storms Eta and Iota, as well as the pandemic. (...) On the other hand, the enormous violence that has been unleashed, which increased with the confinement by COVID, directed towards women and which has not only immediate consequences, but also in the medium and long term."¹⁴⁶

Honduras commemorated the Day of the Honduran Woman on January 25. There were a lot of mobilizations and a combative mood was in the air.^{147 148} "Every January 25, the patriarchal culture tries to hide the true historical and political character of this day, with flowers, gifts and phrases that refer to the sacrifice and unconditional love of women. We, who carry the memory in the soles of our feet and in the names of those who walked before, the organization and the struggle for the

135 <https://im-defensoras.org/2022/01/alerta-defensoras-honduras-transfemicidio-de-defensora-thalia-rodriguez-parte-de-la-red-lesbica-catracha/>

136 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3330-defensoras-trans-enfrentan-serios-riesgos-por-su-labor-en-favor-de-los-derechos-lgbt>

137 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-de-thalia-rodriguez-defensora-trans-de-derechos-humanos/>

138 <https://twitter.com/CIDH/status/1481656946591612930?ct=HHwWhCqyZHJ848pAAAA>

139 https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1480910079364849666?ct=HHwWhCzjd_3n40pAAAA

140 <https://twitter.com/EmbEspHonduras/status/1481320592464875525>

141 <https://twitter.com/PowerUSAID/status/1481038933404397576>

142 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1429-guardaspaldas-de-jorge-calix-agreden-a-periodista-karen-mejia>

143 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1427-asesinan-a-director-de-la-radio-comunitaria-tenan-en-lempira>

144 <https://proceso.hn/violencia-contra-la-mujer-otro-ano-en-numeros-rojos/>

145 <https://proceso.hn/imparables-crime-contras-mujeres-en-primeros-dias-de-2022/>

146 <https://proceso.hn/es-inaceptable-que-en-honduras-mueran-mas-mujeres-que-en-los-paises-en-guerra-margarita-bueso/>

147 <https://criterio.hn/mujeres-de-honduras-conmemoran-su-dia-en-la-antesala-de-la-asuncion-de-la-primera-mujer-presidenta/>

148 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/35-mujeres/1956-en-el-dia-de-la-mujer-las-hondurenas-condenan-violencia-politica-de-genero>

dignity of women and their peoples, know that in the daily life of this country and its transformation processes, we women are building today other possible realities."¹⁴⁹

Extractive Industries

Mining

The indigenous Maya Chortí community in Azacualpa continue to struggle in defense of their cemetery which is being destroyed by a mining company. This month, they occupied a street leading to the cemetery.^{150 151} The next day, the inhabitants of Azacualpa denounced a military deployment in the area as well as shots being fired in the air.¹⁵² On January 20, Police agents hit and detained a community leader from the indigenous Maya Chortí community of Azacualpa, Nicolás Rodríguez. Hours later, there was still no information on his whereabouts.^{153 154} The next day, he reappeared with signs of having suffered violent treatment.^{155 156 157}

ZEDES

The people behind the Próspera ZEDE used a US congressman to threaten the incoming administration with millions in damage payments if they dare to repeal the ZEDES law.^{158 159}

"Despite strong opposition to Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE) in the country, the "Startup City Mariposa" announced on its Facebook account that its investors plan to visit in July some of the potential sites that could host their future ZEDE in Honduras."¹⁶⁰

Hydroelectricity

Contra Corriente published a long article on the struggle by the Arizona community to protect their Jilamito river. "Honduran businessman Emin Abufele Marcos has a concession on the Jilamito River. A river that starts in the community of Arizona, in northwestern Honduras, and is seen as the last source of water for human consumption in the area. This businessman has received millionaire contracts with the State and his business goes beyond the Honduran borders with offshore companies for the generation of energy. Now he is facing a socio-environmental conflict in which four residents and a mayor have already been criminalized, a divided community and various irregularities that could have a negative impact on a protected area."¹⁶¹

149 <https://im-defensoras.org/2022/01/pronunciamento-red-nacional-de-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos-en-honduras/>

150 https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/148168355642328321?cxt=HHwWgC5oYTW_4BpAAAA

151 <https://criterio.hn/piden-a-la-csj-cumplir-resolucion-que-ordena-cese-de-exhumaciones-en-cementerio-de-azacualpa-copan/>

152 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1482557207698935811>

153 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1484200415751290882?cxt=HHwWhIC-xcOa-IgpAAAA>

154 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-desaparicion-de-lider-comunitario-en-azacualpa-copan-tras-ser-golpeado-y-detenido/>

155 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1484555454126727168?cxt=HHwWgIC9yb3UmZopAAAA>

156 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1484693349902790656?cxt=HHwWgMC5lYmv2JopAAAA>

157 <https://criterio.hn/por-querer-entrar-al-cementerio-fue-que-me-golpearon-dice-lider-comunitario-que-fue-detenido-y-agredido-por-la-policia-en-azacualpa-copan/>

158 https://twitter.com/All_Things_HND/status/1486698356655144965?cxt=HHwWioCyemRGKEpAAAA

159 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/preocupa-a-congresista-de-ee-uu-posible-derogacion-de-las-zede-XC5242145>

160 <https://criterio.hn/inversionistas-vendran-a-honduras-en-julio-a-explorar-territorios-para-instalar-nueva-zede-mariposa/>

161 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/21/conflicto-en-jilamito-un-empresario-y-una-comunidad-se-disputan-el-ultimo-rio/>

Corruption and Its Enemies

The newest Corruption Perceptions Index was published by Transparency International. Honduras reached a historic low.^{162 163}

The incoming administration announced to send a request to the UN to form a UN-backed anti-corruption mission already in the beginning of February.¹⁶⁴ "The CCINOC welcomes the determination of the new government to reinstall a commission to fight corruption and impunity. This determination can be seen as an example to be followed by other countries in the North of Central America. We are encouraged by the firm stance of the president-elect to fight against corruption and impunity in Honduras and by the popular indignation that gave life to the MACCIH and that continues to be latent."¹⁶⁵

According to the head of UFERCO, Luis Santos, they are working on over 100 lines of investigations into corruption cases.¹⁶⁶ They presented a new case against a corruption network inside the Property Institute for illegally granting land inside a national park.^{167 168} 18 properties were seized. UFERCO's Luis Santos demanded that the titles of property be annulled.¹⁶⁹ The initial hearing was scheduled for January 19.¹⁷⁰ The accused were allowed to await trial outside prison.¹⁷¹ El Tiempo reported that during the time of the alleged crimes, the head of IP was no other than JOH ally and failed congressional candidate Ebal Díaz.¹⁷² Just two days later, more bad news followed for him. The Special Prosecutor's Office for Transparency and Combating Public Corruption (FETCCOP) and the Technical Agency for Criminal Investigation (ATIC) inspect this Thursday the 200 containers purchased by the Secretariat of the Presidency, led by Ebal Diaz, at a cost of 1.2 billion lempiras, for the victims of hurricanes Eta and Iota. The failed project denounced by the daily EL HERALDO was erected in residencial Morazán and Lomas del Diamante where the goal was that the metal boxes should be installed and inhabited by the affected families since February 2021, to date the project did not materialize."¹⁷³ A day later, El Pulso reported that Díaz had left Honduras.¹⁷⁴

The MP investigated a possible 7 million embezzlement case at the National Penitentiary Institute (INP).¹⁷⁵ The National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) filed a complaint regarding nepotism at the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF).¹⁷⁶

InSight Crime published an article on the MS13 gang and its businesses. "This chapter looks at how the MS13 has taken over aspects of the trash recycling sector in Honduras and connections between the gang and the highest rungs of Honduran politics and business."¹⁷⁷

162 <https://www.transparency.org/en/press/2021-corruption-perceptions-index-press-release-regional-america>

163 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/25/transparencia-internacional-honduras-lidera-lista-de-naciones-mas-corruptas-del-mundo/>

164 <https://confidencialhn.com/la-proxima-semana-gobierno-hondureno-enviara-solicitud-oficial-a-la-onu-para-instalacion-de-una-cicih/>

165 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/pronunciamento-del-centro-contrala-corupcion-e-impunidad-en-el-norte-de-centroamerica-ccinoc-sobre-la-instalacion-de-mision-internacional-anticorupcion-en-el-marco-de-la-toma-de-posesion-de-la-p/>

166 <https://confidencialhn.com/trabajamos-en-mas-de-100-lineas-de-investigacion-tenemos-aseguradas-las-pruebas-jefe-de-la-uferco/>

167 <https://twitter.com/UFERCO1/status/1480675980024987650>

168 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/uferco-presenta-requerimiento-fiscal-por-fraude-y-falsificacion-de-documentos-por-la-venta-de-zona-nucleo-del-parque-nacional-blanca-jeannette-kawas/>

169 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1480980305271996416?cxt=HHwWgICy8bbv40pAAAA

170 https://twitter.com/MP_Honduras/status/1481115758138638342?cxt=HHwWjCysem7_YOpAAAA

171 <https://proceso.hn/en-libertad-se-defenderan-imputados-por-fraude-y-falsificacion-de-documentos-en-caso-parque-jeanette-kawas/>

172 <https://tiempo.hn/ebal-diaz-terrenos-jeanette-kawas/f>

173 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1509234-466/atic-fetccop-inspeccionan-contenedores-damnificados-eta-iota>

174 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/15/jurista-asegura-que-ebal-diaz-salio-del-pais-como-las-ratas-cuando-se-esta-hundiendo-el-barco/>

175 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-investiga-desvio-de-mas-de-siete-millones-de-lempiras-del-inp-dinero-para-indemnizacion-por-incendio-en-penal-de-sps/>

176 <https://criterio.hn/cna-denuncia-familion-de-icf-ante-el-ministerio-publico/>

177 <https://insightcrime.org/news/honduras-how-ms13-became-lords-trash-dump/>

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

The head of the investigation unit at the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA), Odir Fernández, called for a purge of the MP and the Supreme Court as a prerequisite to fight corruption in Honduras.¹⁷⁸ UFERCO's Luis Santos highlighted key laws that need to be repealed or reformed to fight corruption in Honduras.¹⁷⁹ ¹⁸⁰ CESPAD outlines how impunity in corruption cases is maintained and what has to be done to overcome it.¹⁸¹ The incoming administration announced to eliminate and reform over 200 laws to allow for its anti-corruption agenda to work.¹⁸²

The charges for money laundering were dropped against the former police commissioner Ambrosio Maradiaga Ordóñez.¹⁸³ The MP denounced that the recent changes to the Money Laundering Act by the Nationalist in Congress (see October monitor) made this possible.¹⁸⁴ ¹⁸⁵ At the same time, a court approved that 21 goods be seized from him, among them buildings and bank accounts.¹⁸⁶ On January 6, the MP presented a legal challenges to the changes made by Congress in October to the money laundering status undermining its investigation.¹⁸⁷

Mobile Hospitals

The trial against three people (one of them still on the run) involved in the mobile hospital corruption case is started on January 19.¹⁸⁸ "On Wednesday, the Public Prosecutor's Office formally charged Marco Bográn and Alex Moraes, both former officials of Inversión Estratégica de Honduras (Invest-H), with two counts of fraud and two counts of violation of the duties of public servants in the case of the Mobile Hospitals."¹⁸⁹ The MP presented over 70 pieces of evidence.¹⁹⁰ On day 2, the MP presented additional proof.¹⁹¹ The next day, the trial was suspended as the defense team did not show up in court.¹⁹² It restarted again the following week.¹⁹³ There, the MP presented the money trail behind the purchase.¹⁹⁴ On January 31, the former Invest-H director Marco Bográn took to the stand yesterday on the concluding day of the mobile hospital corruption trial. He continues to defend his actions.¹⁹⁵ ¹⁹⁶ "The investigation of the case of the mobile hospitals must go further after the conclusions of the trial of Marco Bográn and Alex Moraes, it must not stop there, it must be exhaustive until all the "big fish" involved in the case are brought down, said analyst Jorge Illescas on Monday."¹⁹⁷

"In the trial of Marco Bográn and Alex Moraes, for the overpriced purchase of seven mobile hospitals, the names of Juan Orlando Hernández and Mauricio Oliva have come to light, as parties

178 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1508002-466/odir-fernandez-depuracion-poder-judicial-ministerio-publico-congreso-nacional>

179 <https://twitter.com/radioamericahn/status/1478811141392547846>

180 <https://criterio.hn/instan-al-nuevo-congreso-nacional-derogar-las-leyes-que-impiden-combatir-la-corupcion/>

181 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/01/19/los-blindajes-de-las-elites-politicas-implicadas-en-corupcion-es-posible-el-desmontaje-del-muro-de-la-impunidad-en-honduras/>

182 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/19/revelan-que-nuevo-gobierno-buscara-eliminar-o-modificar-mas-de-200-leyes-y-decretos/>

183 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1508278-466/libertad-sobreseimiento-definitivo-excomisionado-ambrosio-maradiaga-ordonez-lavado-activos-honduras>

184 <https://proceso.hn/mp-condena-que-reformas-a-la-ley-de-lavado-de-activos-sobreyeran-a-ambrosio-maradiaga-ordonez/>

185 <https://criterio.hn/continua-la-impunidad-en-casos-emblematicos-por-lavado-de-activos/>

186 <https://proceso.hn/confirman-aseguramiento-de-21-bienes-del-exfuncionario-policia-ambrosio-maradiaga/>

187 <https://proceso.hn/mp-interpone-inconstitucionalidad-a-decreto-aprobado-por-el-cn-sobre-el-lavado-de-activos/>

188 <https://proceso.hn/hospitales-moviles-un-juicio-tres-imputados-muchos-responsables-y-miles-de-preguntas/>

189 <https://proceso.hn/mp-formaliza-acusacion-de-fraude-y-violacion-de-los-deberes-de-los-funcionarios-por-caso-de-hospitales-moviles/>

190 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-aportara-mas-de-70-medios-de-prueba-en-el-juicio-hospitales-moviles-el-acto-de-corupcion-mas-bochornoso-durante-la-pandemia-covid-19/>

191 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/20/fiscalia-presentara-seis-nuevos-medios-de-prueba-por-mega fraude-en-hospitales-moviles/>

192 <https://www.elpais.hn/2022/01/21/el-juicio-por-la-compra-de-hospitales-moviles-se-suspende-por-la-falta-de-defensa/>

193 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/con-pericia-forense-y-cruce-de-correos-electronicos-se-retoma-juicio-por-mega fraude-en-la-adquisicion-de-hospitales-moviles/>

194 <https://proceso.hn/revelan-la-insolita-ruta-del-dinero-en-juicio-sobre-compra-de-hospitales-moviles/>

195 <https://proceso.hn/bogran-defiende-proceso-de-compra-de-hospitales-moviles/>

196 <https://proceso.hn/a-conclusiones-este-lunes-juicio-oral-en-caso-de-compra-de-hospitales-moviles/>

197 <https://proceso.hn/investigacion-en-caso-de-hospitales-moviles-debe-ser-exhaustiva-hasta-que-caigan-peces-gordos-sugiere-analista/>

involved in this notorious case of corruption registered at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. "These names are part of the telephone dump that was carried out both to the WhatsApp chats that were found in the phone of both Mr. Alex Moraes and Mr. Marco Bográn, specifying that information was requested about the purchase orders, how the shipments from Europe would be made, by air, in the first instance or by sea in the second instance," said the spokesman of the Judiciary, Carlos Silva."¹⁹⁸

IHSS

"With 29 pieces of evidence admitted, the National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF) will go to trial against the businesswoman and lawyer Jenny Carolina Andrade Lemus, accused of having committed money laundering in the notorious case of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS). (...) The case against Andrade Lemus, which was worked on in conjunction with the Technical Agency of Criminal Investigation (ATIC), also links the former Deputy Administrative and Financial Manager of the IHSS, José Ramón Bertetty Osorio, for the crime of improper passive bribery and money laundering, and his former Deputy Manager of Supplies, Materials and Purchases, José Alberto Zelaya Guevara (fugitive) for the crime of violation of the duties of public servants."¹⁹⁹

Narcopolitics

UFERCO denounced mistakes had been made by the Supreme Court of Justice in the Narcopolitics corruption case benefiting the accused.^{200 201}

State Security Forces

The Xiomara administration nominated Héctor Gustavo Sánchez Velásquez as the new head of the National Police Force.²⁰² Journalist Jeff Ernst commented: "Sánchez holds a doctorate in sociology, wrote his dissertation on gangs & has a stellar reputation as an honest cop."²⁰³

Penitentiary System

"A riot left 4 prisoners dead and several wounded inside the prison of El Porvenir, Atlantida."²⁰⁴ OACNUDH expressed concern.²⁰⁵

198 <https://criterio.hn/en-pericias-del-mp-sale-a-relucir-joh-y-mauricio-oliva-en-caso-hospitales-moviles/>

199 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/en-abril-ira-a-juicio-empresaria-implicada-en-el-saqueo-del-ihss/>

200 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1486169238972862468?cxt=HHwWiMC40Y_D958pAAAA

201 <https://criterio.hn/fiscal-anticorruccion-denuncia-que-sentencia-de-la-csj-beneficiaria-a-implicados-en-caso-narcopolitica/>

202 <https://confidencialhn.com/hector-gustavo-sanchez-es-nombrado-como-nuevo-director-de-la-policia-nacional/>

203 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1488275158766800898?cxt=HHwWhMCq5eSxtacpAAAA>

204 <https://confidencialhn.com/amotinamiento-en-carcel-de-el-porvenir-deja-preliminarmente-4-privados-de-libertad-fallecidos-y-varios-heridos/>

205 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1487186345147650050?cxt=HHwWhMCyIb-GxqMpAAAA>

Militarization

Both Migdonia Ayestas, director of UNAH's Violence Observatory, and criminologist Gonzalo Sánchez, asked for the withdrawal of the Armed Forces from public security tasks, i.e. an end to the Military Police.²⁰⁶

International Community

"Mexico informed President Xiomara Castro yesterday that Honduras will benefit from a social program that includes an investment of some 630 million dollars (15.12 billion lempiras) to promote employment and curb the migratory caravans."²⁰⁷

US

Brian A. Nichols, Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the US State Department commented on his planned attendance of Xiomara's inauguration. "Honduras is an important partner and we look forward to working with the new government to bring greater prosperity & security to the region."²⁰⁸ US Senator Bob Menéndez, a Democrat with a conservative line on Latin America, promised US support if they advance towards democracy and respect of human rights.²⁰⁹ Honduras Now expressed concern: "It's becoming quite clear that Xiomara's gov't will be sandwiched between the powerful interests of private sector backed by US, & the Honduran social movement."²¹⁰

The Guardian covers the Honduran garment industry and the role of the US and its corporations. "The story of Honduras's emergence as a garment exporter began in the 80s, when Ronald Reagan moved to confront what he saw as a rising threat to US interests – a communist drift in the Caribbean Basin. His two-pronged strategy was to consolidate US military hegemony over the region, and to encourage the growth of export processing. He launched the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), which granted military aid and one-way duty-free access to the US market for a designated range of products. (...) In 1984, the year the CBI first went into effect, US textile corporations, apparel firms, importers and retailers began lobbying to loosen import quotas and reduce tariffs in the Caribbean Basin. They added an important caveat: if US markets were to be thrown open to clothing sewn in the Caribbean Basin, they had to be made with US cloth. The result of these lobbying efforts was the 1986 Special Access Program (SAP), which allowed clothes made of US fabric and sewn in the Caribbean Basin to enter the US with low or no tariffs. (...) Although the CBI was intended to spur economic growth, in practice, apparel brands used the Caribbean as a source of cheap labor while scrupulously curtailing any independent production that might benefit local competition. US companies brought little technology, and low-skill and low-wage work. At the same time, quotas made it almost impossible for local companies to develop their own export products for the American market."²¹¹

206 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/honduras-el-77-que-es-victima-de-un-delito-no-lo-denuncia-NI4596791>

207 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1510831-466/estados-unidos-mexico-empleos-honduras-xiomara-castro>

208 <https://twitter.com/WHAAstSecy/status/1484149964481703940?ctx=HHwWiMC5pfCh4ZgpAAAA>

209 <https://proceso.hn/si-honduras-da-paso-a-democracia-tendra-apoyo-de-eeuu-dice-senador-democrata/>

210 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1484228888209199105?ctx=HHwWgsCo8euThZkpAAAA>

211 <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jan/25/behind-the-label-how-the-us-stitched-up-the-honduras-garment-industry>

USAID announced additional funding, \$500'000, to combat the pandemic in Honduras as well as a \$1.35 million program for "infrastructure revitalization".²¹²

Drug Trafficking

"Fredy Donaldo Marmol Vallejo, 40, will enter his guilty plea in federal court in Miami, Florida on January 27 at 10:15 a.m. ET after being extradited from Honduras. The indictment by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Florida charges Marmol with conspiring to traffic narcotics internationally, distributing narcotics internationally with the intent to import them into the United States, and laundering the proceeds of narcotics trafficking."²¹³ As announced, on January 27, he pleaded guilty.²¹⁴

According to the outgoing security minister Julián Pacheco Tinoco, there are still at least 11 pending extradition requests.²¹⁵

The sentencing of Geovanny Fuentes Ramírez in New York will take place on February 8, 2022.²¹⁶

Three members of the Armed Forces were detained with 59 bags of marijuana.²¹⁷

JOH

Reporteros de Investigación reported that "[t]he routes where most Honduran drug traffickers operated before being prosecuted coincide with the airfields inaugurated during the government of Juan Orlando Hernandez".²¹⁸

Varia

JOH

Some sectors close to JOH seem to push the forgiveness narrative, but forgiveness needs justice and accountability.²¹⁹ "Forgiveness, in any case, is subsequent to the right to truth, justice, determination of punishment, reparation and the certainty of non-repetition. Stop to the pretended impunity, disguised as reconciliation and forgiveness."²²⁰

The highly controversial security tax seems to have accumulated at least \$3 billion Lempiras in debt according to the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP). The security tax is considered a petty cash box of the JOH regime.²²¹

212 <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/new-usaid-initiatives-honduras>

213 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2022/01/14/fredy-marmol-vallejo-se-declarara-culpable-de-tener-vinculos-con-el-narcotrafico-y-actuales-diputados-del-congreso-nacional/>

214 <https://confidencialhn.com/hondureno-fredy-marmol-extraditado-a-eeuu-se-declara-culpable-de-trafico-de-cocaína/>

215 <https://proceso.hn/una-decena-de-ordenes-de-captura-para-extraditables-están-pendientes-reconoce-ministro-pacheco/>

216 <https://confidencialhn.com/sentencia-para-geovanny-fuentes-ramirez-sera-el-8-de-febrero-de-este-2022/>

217 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/atic-detiene-a-tres-miembros-de-las-ffaa-cuando-transportaban-59-sacos-con-supuesta-marihuana-en-camion-de-la-institucion/>

218 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2022/01/08/aeropuertos-en-la-ruta-de-la-droga-inaugurados-por-joh-no-reportaron-turismo/>

219 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/02/rechazan-campana-de-perdon-y-exigen-busqueda-de-justicia-en-nuevo-gobierno/>

220 <https://twitter.com/VictorFerG/status/1477701534104358912>

221 <https://proceso.hn/actualidad-tasa-de-seguridad-acumula-deuda-de-unos-1-3-mil-millones-revela-el-iaip/>

El Libertador reported on how JOH bought the loyalty of evangelical priests focusing on the case of Alberto Solózano who made headlines this week by asking for forgiveness, and nothing more, for the outgoing JOH regime.²²²

Hugo Noé Pino, member of Xiomara's transition commission denounced that the JOH regime intended to use 3 billion Lempiras of the teachers' pension fund to pay the debt of the Palmerola airport.²²³ Teachers announced a protest rally.²²⁴ ²²⁵ On the day of the protest, "an emergency meeting was called between the Transition Commission of Xiomara Castro's government and representatives of the Instituto Nacional de Previsión del Magisterio (Inprema) to analyze the issue of the investment in the Palmerola Airport with funds from the institute. TC member, Pedro Barquero, assured that the decision will fall to the new administration when the new authorities are appointed."²²⁶

Just a week later, the JOH regime announced a new plan to spend money it did not have on people who did not deserve it.²²⁷ "Juan Carlos Barrientos, a constitutional lawyer, regretted that ministers and trusted officials of the outgoing government are claiming payment of "benefits", calling it an "abuse of power and something never seen before".²²⁸ Even the former Nationalist president Pepe Lobo denounced this as illegal.²²⁹ So did the business lobby COHEP.²³⁰ Expediente Público reported: "This action has provoked indignation and repudiation in part of the Honduran population because, according to Article 3 of the Civil Service Law, social benefits are not applicable to a group of public servants, among them trusted officials such as the Chancellor."²³¹ The incoming administration announced to not pay the bonuses.²³² On January 18, Congressman Jari Dixon Herrera and attorney Mario Sorto presented an appeal at the Supreme Court against the decree.²³³

Not impressed by this, more spending was admitted by the Nationalist-controlled Congress. "With the dispensation of two debates, the National Congress of Honduras approved on Saturday a reform to the Organic Law of the Legislative Power which establishes that all 128 alternate deputies will be incorporated and remunerated with 60% of the salary of the regular deputies, plus other rights and benefits."²³⁴ Just days later, the outgoing Nationalist-controlled Congress continued to show no shame. Even El Herald found clear words. "The deputies of the National Congress (NC) are preparing to approve today a series of contracts for the same holding company, ranging from multimillionaire businesses in the electricity sector to port businesses. This same economic group already concentrates other businesses in the country that have been questioned for their transparency and, in addition, because in some of them the contribution of the State has been very important. This is described by experts as a greedy and abusive concentration of power that the NC and the current government have granted to the economic group".²³⁵ The group in question is no

222 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/08/investigacion-pastor-solorzano-en-la-mira-por-millonaria-ofrenda-de-la-dictadura/>

223 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/07/maestros-se-resisten-a-pagar-multimillonaria-deuda-de-palmerola/>

224 <https://confidencialhn.com/maestros-convoacan-a-un-planton-este-lunes-en-contra-de-intencion-de-extraer-fondos-del-inprema-para-palmerola/>

225 <https://confidencialhn.com/maestros-rechazan-que-fondos-del-inprema-se-destinen-a-cubrir-deudas-de-aeropuerto-internacional-palmerola-de-comayagua/>

226 <https://confidencialhn.com/pedro-barquero-asegura-que-inversion-en-palmerola-con-fondos-de-inprema-se-discutira-en-el-nuevo-gobierno/>

227 <https://criterio.hn/pago-de-prestaciones-a-secretarios-de-estado-del-gobierno-de-juan-orlando-hernandez-es-abusivo-e-ilegal/>

228 <https://confidencialhn.com/es-un-abuso-de-poder-y-algo-nunca-antes-visto-el-pago-de-prestaciones-a-ministros-abogado-constitucionalista-juan-carlos-barrientos/>

229 <https://proceso.hn/expresidente-lobo-rechaza-pago-de-prestaciones-a-altos-funcionarios-legalmente-no-tienen-derecho-dice/>

230 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/12/pago-de-prestaciones-a-funcionarios-es-excusa-para-seguir-saqueando/>

231 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/funcionarios-del-gobierno-de-joh-en-honduras-por-prestaciones-ilegales-e-inmunidad-parlamentaria/>

232 <https://proceso.hn/pedro-barquero-asegura-que-nuevo-gobierno-reparara-pago-de-prestaciones-a-altos-funcionarios/>

233 <https://confidencialhn.com/presentan-recurso-ante-la-csj-en-contra-del-decreto-que-aprueba-el-pago-de-prestaciones-a-altos-funcionarios/>

234 <https://criterio.hn/diputados-suplentes-de-honduras-gozaran-de-jugoso-salario-con-reforma-a-la-ley-organica-del-congreso/>

235 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1509734-466/congreso-aprobara-millonarios-contratos-mismo-grupo-empresarial>

other than Grupo EMCO, belonging to Lenir Pérez who is linked to the Guapinol case and is also behind the new Palmerola airport. One of the contracts that would benefit Grupo Emco would go to its subsidiary Puente Alto Energy for coal-fired electricity production.²³⁶ The business lobby COHEP also denounced the plan by Congress even calling it illegal.²³⁷

The next day, the Nationalist-controlled Congress concluded after having been illegally prolonged for three months. Especially since the election and the win of the opposition, Congress has not held back in distributing money and granting impunity to themselves and their allies. The last day in session was no different.²³⁸ They prolonged one of the many impunity pacts in place. It gives immunity to the outgoing administration as long as an audit by the Supreme Audit Court (TSC) is going on. The audit has already lasted three years with no results and now was prolonged for four more years.²³⁹ ²⁴⁰ ²⁴¹ They approved the contract for the supply of one million electronic passport books and twenty thousand cards for foreigners residing in Honduras.²⁴² The company benefiting from this is linked to Marco Tulio Gutiérrez, father of former Nationalist congresswoman Lena Gutiérrez who herself was linked to corruption.²⁴³ They also nominated three members of Congress, Oswaldo Ramos Soto, Carlos Alfredo Lara Watson and Óscar Nájera, as members for life.²⁴⁴ They all failed to get reelected and Expediente Público writes that it is a form to protect those close to JOH.²⁴⁵ Nájera is further known as "a friend of drug lords".²⁴⁶

On January 24, the outgoing JOH regime presented another "gift" for the Xiomara Castro administration. They confirmed the disputed Miriam Guzmán, the former head of the Revenue Administration Service (SAR) as the new head of the Central Bank.²⁴⁷ ²⁴⁸ She would earn up to 5 million Lempiras per year.²⁴⁹ Xiomara then went on to nominated Rebeca Santos for the same position and it remains to be seen what will happen.²⁵⁰

JOH himself assisted Ortega's inauguration in Nicaragua which some consider more evidence of a possible exile for JOH in the neighboring country.²⁵¹ ²⁵² On January 28, Jeff Ernst reported for The Guardian on the end of the term of JOH. "Hernández is widely expected to be indicted by US prosecutors on drug trafficking conspiracy charges upon leaving office. It would mark a spectacular fall from grace for a president who was once considered one of Washington's top allies in the region."²⁵³ ²⁵⁴ The same day, US representative Norma Torres called on the US Department of Justice "to immediately indict and request the extradition of President Juan Orlando Hernandez for his role in protecting and assisting drug traffickers to move their materials through Honduras and to

236 <https://proceso.hn/rechazan-que-congreso-apruebe-contrato-de-energia-a-base-de-carbon/>
237 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/19/cohep-acusa-de-ilegal-concesion-a-grupo-de-lenir-y-ana-facusse/>
238 <https://criterio.hn/concluye-mandato-del-considerado-peor-congreso-nacional-en-la-historia-democratica-de-hondu/>
239 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1484349253996531712?cxt=HHwWgMci8Ybyu5kpAAAA
240 https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1484351491645214722?cxt=HHwWgMci8Ybyu5kpAAAA
241 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/20/en-este-momento-amplian-por-4-anos-mas-pacto-de-impunidad/>
242 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-autoriza-aprobar-contrato-de-suministro-de-un-millon-de-libretas-para-pasaportes-electronicos/>
243 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/20/otorgarian-contrato-de-pasaportes-electronicos-a-empresa-que-pertenecio-a-familia-gutierrez/>
244 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-nacional-nombra-como-diputados-vitalicios-a-oswaldo-ramos-soto-carlos-lara-watson-y-oscar-najera/>
245 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/gobierno-saliente-de-honduras-protecte-con-diputacion-vitalicia-a-fieles-a-juan-orlando-herandez/>
246 <https://elfaro.net/en/202112/centroamerica/25897/In-Honduras-a-Friend-of-Drug-Lords-Loses-His-Seat-in-Congress.htm>
247 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/24/abuso-cargan-a-nuevo-gobierno-dos-activistas-de-joh-miriam-y-madero/>
248 <https://confidencialhn.com/antietico-los-nombramientos-de-miriam-guzman-en-bch-y-carlos-madero-en-fosede-asegura-hugo-noe-pino/>
249 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1510490-466/250-mil-mensuales-ganara-miriam-guzman-bch>
250 <https://tiempo.hn/nueva-directora-del-bch-nombramiento-de-miriam-guzman/>
251 <https://confidencialhn.com/mandatario-herandez-busca-refugio-en-nicaragua-ante-posible-extradicion-asegura-eugenio-sosa/>
252 <https://criterio.hn/catalogan-como-un-final-patetico-y-un-refugio-la-asistencia-de-joh-a-toma-de-daniel-ortega/>
253 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/26/honduras-juan-orlando-herandez-president>
254 <https://criterio.hn/las-mentiras-disfrazadas-de-joh-en-sus-ocho-anos-de-gobierno/>

the United States".²⁵⁵ ²⁵⁶ JOH himself started a long Twitter thread once again presenting himself as a victim.²⁵⁷ ²⁵⁸ He also went on the attack against Torres.²⁵⁹ At the same time, he did not lose a second before coming sworn in as a member of the Central American Parliament (Parlacen). "The former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández - strongly accused of having direct links with drug trafficking - was sworn in Thursday as deputy to Parlacen, thus obtaining prerogative, privilege and immunity. Hernandez was sworn in today by the president of Parlacen through a session held via zoom. This week U.S. Congresswoman Norma Torres recommended to the U.S. Justice Department to extradite the former president for drug trafficking."²⁶⁰ Meanwhile in Honduras, Libre congressman Ramón Barrios presented a bill for Honduras to withdraw from the Parlacen.²⁶¹

At the end of the month, The Intercept reported: "Honduras's defense minister quietly requested asylum from the U.S. government after the country elected a new leader in November, The Intercept has learned. (...) Now the Biden administration is faced with the decision of whether to grant Díaz asylum before possible corruption charges, given that in his role as defense minister, he was at the helm of the Honduran military. The question will serve as a test of how serious the current U.S. government is about respecting the autonomy of governments in the region. A senior Democratic congressional aide, who was not authorized to speak publicly, told The Intercept: "If the Biden administration wants to make good on its commitment to democracy and human rights, this should be an easy call."²⁶²

Elections

The Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE) started on December 3 the process of the jurisdictional recount of the polling stations. By that point, they had received 85 appeals, mainly from the municipal and deputy levels.²⁶³ ²⁶⁴ On January 8, it ordered a vote-by-vote recount of 9 ballots in Masaguara, Intibucá.²⁶⁵ There were also new arrest warrants sent out this month related to electoral crimes.²⁶⁶ ²⁶⁷ By mid-January, there were still at least 63 appeals pending.²⁶⁸

The CNE ordered the repeat of two municipal elections, in Duyure, Choluteca in one voting center in Krausirpi, Gracias a Dios. In both races, a Nationalist one before a Libre candidate. And in both cases, the winning party appealed the repeat and the Supreme Court admitted the appeals²⁶⁹ ²⁷⁰ This led news outlets close to the opposition question the role of the Supreme Court.²⁷¹ ²⁷² The people in Duyure, Choluteca demanded in a protest that their election should be repeated.²⁷³

255 <https://twitter.com/NormaTorres/status/1486733263326617600?cxt=HHwWglC5xdSB-KEpAAAA>

256 <https://torres.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congresswoman-norma-j-torres-calls-us-department-justice-indict-and>

257 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1486799300600471557?cxt=HHwWioC5ycSF1qIpAAAA>

258 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1487195919019880454?cxt=HHwWjMC5ieKzyqMpAAAA>

259 <https://tiempo.hn/joh-tweets-norma-torres/>

260 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/27/juan-orlando-herandez-jura-como-diputado-del-parlacen-en-medio-de-acusaciones-de-narcotrafico/>

261 <https://confidencialhn.com/presentaran-ante-el-legislativo-una-mocion-para-que-honduras-se- retire-del-parlacen/>

262 <https://theintercept.com/2022/01/31/honduras-defense-minister-asylum-biden-xiomara-castro/>

263 <https://proceso.hn/tje-inicia-recuento-jurisdiccional-de-juntas-receptoras-de-votos/>

264 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/03/justicia-electoral-inicia-el-primer-recuento-jurisdiccional-de-las-elecciones-generales/>

265 <https://proceso.hn/recuentan-votos-en-nueve-urnas-en-el-municipio-de-masaguara-intibuca/>

266 <https://eliberador.hn/2022/01/10/fiscalia-emite-mas-ordenes-de-captura-para-electores-del-crimen/>

267 <https://confidencialhn.com/cinco-personas-mas-son-acusadas-por-falsificar-documentos-electorales-tras-proceso-de-elecciones-generales-llevado-a-cabo-en-el-pais/>

268 <https://criterio.hn/tribunal-de-justicia-electoral- contra-el-tiempo-para-resolver-recursos-de-apelaciones-a-votaciones/>

269 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/repeticion-elecciones-suspension-ser-admitidos-amparos-honduras-IF4575381>

270 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/07/cuestionan-recursos-que-impiden-repetir-elecciones-en-dos-municipios/>

271 <https://criterio.hn/determinacion-de-la-csj-debilita-organismos-electorales-en-honduras/>

272 <https://eliberador.hn/2022/01/08/corte-avala-crimen-electoral-en-choluteca-y-gracias-a-dios/>

273 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/14/pobladores-de-duyure-exigen-a-la-justicia-que-se-repitan-elecciones-municipales/>

On December 4, the former Libre mayoral candidate in Brus Laguna, Gracias a Dios, Erick Esterbrook Valladares, was murdered.²⁷⁴ A week later, Dagoberto Montalván, former Liberal Party alternate congressional candidate, was murdered in the municipality of San Francisco de La Paz, Olancho.²⁷⁵

By mid-January, 10 people had been accused of electoral crimes and some had even been arrested.²⁷⁶ Libertador wondered if the MP would ever go after the politicians who benefited from their crimes.²⁷⁷ Nancy Marina Avilez Santos, daughter of the mayor of Talanga, Roosevelt Eduardo Avilez Lópe (who himself is in custody for corruption and drug trafficking), was also arrested.²⁷⁸ In another case, a candidate may lose his post due to being a relative of a public officials. The CNE explains that it is "complex" to find out about the relationships of 4000 candidates.²⁷⁹ "The National Electoral Council of Honduras (CNE) could disqualify two deputies of the conservative National Party, elected in the last general elections, for being relatives of high state officials when the Constitution itself prevents it. (...) In this case, the reelected deputy for the department of Copán, Roy Dagoberto Cruz Pérez, is a cousin of the president of the CSJ, Rolando Argueta Pérez, a situation which violates constitutional regulations, and therefore should be disqualified. However, there is a precedent with Perez after the electoral process of 2017 when he managed to win the deputation for the period from January 2018 to 2022, since the then and now extinct, Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), under the command of David Matamoros Batson, member of the National Party, validated his election even though the supreme norm of the State of Honduras was violated. (...) Another congressman who runs the risk of being disqualified is Erasmo Portillo, who admitted being the son-in-law of the presidential appointee Ricardo Álvarez."²⁸⁰ The CNE later disqualified him after verifying his kinship with the vice-president, Ricardo Álvarez.²⁸¹ Or maybe not, just hours later, the CNE published a second press release saying that it was not up to them to decide this and referred to the TJE.²⁸²

On January 18, the TJE admitted a challenge demanding to annul the election of congresswoman Kritza Pérez.²⁸³ The Liberal Party is divided and one wing in the form of Luis Zelaya called it a persecution of those who did not want the Liberal Party to follow the National Party anymore.²⁸⁴ A few days later, the TJE reversed a decision by the CNE to cancel the election of Nationalist congressman Roy Dagoberto Cruz Pérez, a relative of the president of the Supreme Court Rolando Argueta Pérez.²⁸⁵

Proceso Digital reports on electoral spending by candidates. Almost 140 million Lempiras were, officially, spent on the presidential races. But there is a general lack of transparency on electoral spending, only 400 out of the over 3000 candidates have rendered accounts to the Clean Politics

274 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1508311-466/asesinan-candidato-alcalde-brus-laguna-violencia-honduras>

275 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1508850-466/asesinan-excandidato-liberal-dagoberto-montalvan-olancho>

276 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/fiscales-del-mp-y-dpi-logran-cuarta-captura-por-la-supuesta-comision-de-delitos-electorales/>

277 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/01/12/cuatro-electores-del-crimen-arrestados-politicos-cuando/>

278 <https://criterio.hn/captura-de-hija-de-un-alcalde-y-posible-inhabilitacion-de-diputado-son-nuevas-acciones-por-fraude-electoral/>

279 <https://confidencialhn.com/es-complejo-determinar-parentescos-en-mas-de-4-mil-candidatos-titular-del-cne/>

280 <https://criterio.hn/primo-del-presidente-de-la-csj-y-verno-de-designado-podrian-ser-inhabilitados-como-diputados/>

281 <https://confidencialhn.com/por-parentesco-de-afinidad-con-el-designado-presidencial-ricardo-alvarez-cne-inhabilita-a-erasmo-portillo/>

282 <https://tiempo.hn/cne-desautoriza-comunicado-inhabilitacion-erasmo-portillo/>

283 <https://confidencialhn.com/me-sometere-al-proceso-senala-kritza-perez-luego-de-reclamo-para-anular-su-diputacion-ante-el-tje/>

284 <https://proceso.hn/como-una-persecucion-califica-luis-zelaya-pretension-de-anular-diputacion-de-kritza-perez/>

285 <https://proceso.hn/tje-desestima-resolucion-del-cne-sobre-inhabilitacion-del-diputado-roy-cruz-perez-pariente-del-presidente-de-la-csj/>

Unit.²⁸⁶ Criterio reported on the need to depoliticize electoral bodies such as the CNE and the TJE.²⁸⁷

COVID-19

The Funeral Home Association has documented almost 22'000 COVID-19 deaths in Honduras during the pandemic, double the official number.²⁸⁸

COVID-19 cases in need of artificial respiration dramatically increased at the University Hospital in the run-up to the new year.²⁸⁹ The positivity rate of corona tests in triage centers is on the increase again, ConfidencialHN reported of 15-20% positive tests at the beginning of the month.²⁹⁰ The Secretary of Health warned of "an alarming increase in COVID-19 cases".²⁹¹ "The president of the Association of Doctors of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS) of San Pedro Sula, Carlos Umaña, warned of a collapse in the coming days of hospitals and triage centers due to the new Covid-19 Omicron variant."²⁹² "The National Cardiopulmonary Institute better known as "El Tórax" Hospital reports this Tuesday an increase in hospital occupancy of 79.4 % and already has only seven slots available for COVID-19 patients."²⁹³ On January 17, Radio Progreso reported on how the newest Omicron-wave is collapsing the Honduran health care system.²⁹⁴ By the end of the month, the positivity rate reached over 30% again.²⁹⁵

While the corona situation worsened again²⁹⁶, the outgoing JOH regime did nothing to improve the situation. "The president of the Association of Auxiliary Nurses of Honduras (ANEEAH), Josué Orellana, said Tuesday that his union is sad, anguished, dissatisfied and upset with the Ministry of Health (SESAL) for the "lies" when it comes to providing them with some positions."²⁹⁷ They had been calling for months for permanent employment for health workers who stepped up during the pandemic, but expect from empty promises by the JOH regime, nothing materialized. "The employees of the Mario Mendoza Psychiatric Hospital in Tegucigalpa complied with their warning to begin the year with a work stoppage as a pressure measure and to demand payment of their salaries."²⁹⁸ On January 14, health workers protested outside the Secretary of Health demanding permanent contracts.²⁹⁹ In the following days, several more protests followed.^{300 301}

The JOH regime reacted with the promise to create almost 9000 places for front line workers.^{302 303} "The president of Sitramedhys expressed that these positions are not enough because there are more than 7,300 workers who are under the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) fund and others

286 <https://proceso.hn/las-campanas-politicas-caras-intensas-y-sin-mayor-fiscalizacion-publica/>

287 <https://criterio.hn/despolitizar-los-organismos-electorales-seria-una-solucion-para-evitar-imposiciones-de-fraudes/>

288 <https://proceso.hn/funerarias-cifran-en-21-mil-730-los-muertos-por-covid-en-honduras/>

289 <https://proceso.hn/pacientes-covid-19-se-han-triplicado-en-ultimas-semanas-en-el-hospital-escuela/>

290 <https://confidencialhn.com/positividad-de-covid-19-en-triajes-del-districto-central-es-del-15-y-20/>

291 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-enfrenta-2022-con-creciente-positividad-del-covid-19/>

292 <https://confidencialhn.com/advierten-colapso-en-hospitales-de-san-pedro-sula-por-nueva-variante-omicron/>

293 <https://confidencialhn.com/el-torax-reporta-incremento-del-79-4-en-la-ocupacion-hospitalaria-solo-quedan-siete-cupos/>

294 <https://radioprogressohn.net/portada/omicron-colapsa-sistema-de-salud-en-honduras/>

295 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-tiene-un-35-positividad-de-casos-de-covid-19-segun-microbiologa/>

296 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-comienza-a-desbordarse-por-covid-y-sus-variantes/>

297 <https://tiempo.hn/masacre-laboral-gremio-enfermeros/>

298 <https://confidencialhn.com/personal-del-hospital-mario-mendoza-paralizan-consulta-externa/>

299 <https://proceso.hn/personal-sanitario-realiza-planton-frente-a-salud-en-su-lucha-por-asignacion-de-plazas/>

300 <https://confidencialhn.com/personal-sanitario-intensifica-protestas-a-nivel-nacional-exigiendo-plazas-permanentes/>

301 <https://criterio.hn/colegio-medico-exige-al-gobierno-permanencia-de-mas-de-4-mil-profesionales-de-la-salud/>

302 <https://proceso.hn/finanzas-certifica-creacion-de-mas-de-8-mil-plazas-para-personal-de-primera-linea/>

303 <https://confidencialhn.com/gobierno-ratifica-la-contratacion-de-mas-de-8-mil-trabajadores-sanitarios/>

under the Social Security funds, without counting those who are under a decentralized modality."³⁰⁴
³⁰⁵ ContraCorriente also reported on this. "In 2020, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a US\$50 million loan for the containment and response to Covid-19 cases in Honduras. This fund was used to hire medical personnel to combat the virus on the front line. However, from September to November 2021, more than 5,000 health workers were dismissed, even though there is a decree for their permanent appointment."³⁰⁶ On January 25, "[t]he president of the National Association of Nurses and Auxiliary Nurses of Honduras (Anneah), Josué Orellana, announced that they will go on indefinite national strike as of this day, due to the non-compliance with the Executive Decree on hiring."³⁰⁷ In support of the colleagues demanding fixed contracts, health workers at various health centers protested after the day of the inauguration. The incoming Minister of Health, José Manuel Matheu, called for some time to get an overview of the situation.³⁰⁸ At the end of the month, he denounced that the legacy of the JOH was the missing of over 600 million Lempiras to buy oxygen this year, another 100 million were missing to conduct PCR tests, and more.³⁰⁹

By the beginning of the year, 4.1 million Honduras had been fully vaccinated, i.e. 43.7% of the population. Almost half a million had received a booster shot.³¹⁰ This means that Honduras still has one of the lowest vaccination rate in the region.³¹¹ On January 19, Honduras received over 200'000 more vaccine doses purchased by the IHSS.³¹² A week later, another batch arrived, this time meant for children.³¹³

Debt

Debt restructuring for Honduras may be on the agenda. "The Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development of Honduras (Fosdeh) and the Honduran College of Economists (CHE) consider that the new government of Xiomara Castro, in addition to renegotiating with international organizations, should not pay the "odious debt" contracted by previous administrations."³¹⁴ A day later, the following was reported: "After 12 years of dictatorship the amount of internal debt increased from 20 billion lempiras (USD \$810 million) to 179 billion lempiras (USD \$7.3 billion)," Castro said in her inauguration speech. "With these figures it is clear that the state does not have the capacity to sustain the outrageous and shameful debt that we are inheriting," the new Honduran president added. "It is practically impossible to meet the debt requirements."³¹⁵

³⁰⁴ <https://confidencialhn.com/ocho-mil-822-plazas-no-son-suficientes-para-salud-sitramedhys/>
³⁰⁵ <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/18/solicitan-ampliar-presupuesto-para-cubrir-totalidad-de-plazas-del-personal-sanitario/>
³⁰⁶ <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/22/heroes-desempleados-personal-de-primera-linea-contral-covid-19-se-queda-sin-trabajo/>
³⁰⁷ <https://confidencialhn.com/paro-indefinido-de-profesionales-de-la-enfermeria-por-falta-de-nombramiento-de-plazas-anuncia-la-aneeah/>
³⁰⁸ <https://confidencialhn.com/personal-de-salud-mantiene-toma-en-diferentes-sectores-del-pais-titular-de-salud-pide-retornar-a-sus-labores/>
³⁰⁹ <https://confidencialhn.com/informe-sobre-presupuesto-refleja-deficit-asegura-ministro-de-salud/>
³¹⁰ <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-suma-mas-de-41-millones-de-personas-vacunadas-con-las-dos-dosis-contral-covid-19/>
³¹¹ <https://www.expedientepublico.org/honduras-rezago-en-vacunacion-contral-covid-19-mientras-enfrenta-nueva-ola-de-contagio/>
³¹² <https://confidencialhn.com/llegan-216620-dosis-de-vacunas-contral-covid-19-adquiridas-por-el-ihss/>
³¹³ <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-recibe-el-primer-lote-de-vacunas-pediatricas-contral-covid-19/>
³¹⁴ <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/deuda-odiosa-nuevo-gobierno-honduras-xiomara-castro-EB5322633>
³¹⁵ <https://multipolarista.com/2022/01/31/coup-honduras-unpayable-odious-debt/>

Climate Crisis

"Humanitarian organization Care International has published its annual report of the 10 countries that had the least attention in online articles in five languages around the world in 2021, despite each having at least 1 million people affected by conflict or climate disasters." Honduras is among those countries.³¹⁶

Migration

44.8% more Hondurans were deported to Honduras last year than in 2020, 52'968 in total.³¹⁷ Already in the first five days of 2022, another 60 minors had been deported to Honduras.³¹⁸ "Children and adolescents (NNA) from Honduras were the main applicants for refugee status in Mexico in 2021, the head of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid, Andrés Ramírez, reported this week. Of a total of 31,688 accompanied and unaccompanied children and adolescents seeking refuge, at least 10,945 were of Honduran nationality in 2021, which translates into approximately 34.5% of all children seeking refuge."³¹⁹ By the end of January, Over 1100 Hondurans had been deported.³²⁰

At the beginning of the month, some media outlets reported on the formation of a new migrant caravan.^{321 322} By mid-month, people started to gather in San Pedro Sula.^{323 324} On January 15, between 400³²⁵ and 800 people departed in direction of the US.³²⁶ El Heraldo reported that the group dispersed once reaching the Guatemalan border.³²⁷ There, it also came to a confrontation leaving at several people injured.^{328 329}

"Senate Democrats in Washington on Monday asked the Biden administration to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) be extended to migrants of four Central American countries from where most are migrating to the U.S. Southwest border. The request was made to re-designate TPS for migrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. And for the first time, they are asking that Guatemalan migrants also be granted TPS."³³⁰ While good news, another US policy could have devastating impacts. "Reported kidnappings have decreased significantly in Mexico, but in recent years, at least one out of every 10 kidnapping victims has been a migrant trying to reach the United States, a situation that could deteriorate further to the benefit of organized crime groups with the relaunch of a controversial US immigration policy."³³¹

316 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jan/14/worlds-poorest-bear-brunt-of-climate-crisis-10-underreported-emergencies>

317 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/honduras-recibio-52968-deportados-en-2021-un-448-mas-que-en-2020-FG4558513>

318 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-ha-recibido-casi-60-menores-deportados-en-primeros-dias-de-2022/>

319 <https://criterio.hn/el-34-5-de-ninez-solicitante-de-refugio-en-mexico-en-2021-es-hondurena/>

320 <https://proceso.hn/un-promedio-de-50-hondurenos-son-deportados-a-diario-en-enero/>

321 <https://tiempo.hn/caravana-de-migrantes-hondurenos-en-2022/>

322 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/01/03/alrededor-de-dos-mil-hondurenos-podrian-migrar-hacia-ee-uu-en-los-proximos-dias/>

323 <https://www.tunota.com/migracion/articulo/caravana-migrante-amenaza-con-salir-de-honduras-el-proximo-sabado>

324 <https://www.hispantv.com/noticias/honduras/535811/migracion-honduras-eeuu-guatemala>

325 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/sale-pequena-caravana-de-hondurenos-y-hondurenas-para-estados-unidos/>

326 <https://proceso.hn/unos-800-inmigrantes-dejaron-honduras-y-cruzaron-a-guatemala-en-ruta-a-eeuu/>

327 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/mundo/1509412-466/caravana-migrante-disipa-guatemala>

328 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/mundo/1509425-466/enfrentamientos-caravana-migrantes-autoridades-guatemala>

329 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/15-personas-heridas-enfrentamiento-migrantes-hondurenos-autoridades-guatemala-HF4979283>

330 <https://www.borderreport.com/hot-topics/immigration/democrats-request-temporary-protected-status-for-migrants-from-4-central-american-countries/>

331 <https://insightcrime.org/news/us-policy-mexico-crime-groups-opportunity-migrants/>

Poverty

According to the consumers' protection organization ADECABA, the minimum salary in Honduras only covers 37% of the cost of basic goods.³³² "Some 3.3 million people in Honduras are expected to face a situation of acute food insecurity that will worsen from February to May 2022, according to projections by the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)."³³³

On January 31, President Xiomara presented a decree to Congress to reform the General Law of the Electric Industry to allow to subsidize energy prices for over 1.3 million poor Honduran families.³³⁴ "According to economist Martín Barahona, the subsidies promised by President Xiomara Castro should be temporary (...) "The Castro Sarmiento administration, it must be recognized, receives the public finances and the economy in general, in a very complicated situation. They have to be very clear and very committed to that solutions, and this will involve a review of economic policies because you can not continue applying the same economic policies of Juan Orlando Hernandez, you have to give a change of direction, "said Barahona. He said that there must be much clarity about the subsidy to the poorest and be very careful that those benefits in the end affect the poorest."³³⁵

Education

UNHCR reports on the challenges faced by teachers in Honduras.³³⁶

"It has been almost two years since the Ministry of Education suspended academic activities after confirming the first cases of Covid-19 in March 2020. The pandemic forced the educational system to develop virtually in a country with alarming rates of poverty and technological stagnation; Honduras is currently the only country in Latin America that has not yet returned to face-to-face classes."³³⁷ "Hugo Noé Pino, member of the President-elect's transition commission, stated that "there is an intense work to be able to resume classes in some parts, those that have the possibilities and biosafety already established to start; with this we are working with different organizations. We are also talking with the United States Cooperation Agency in relation to vaccines because in order to return to classes it is required that both children and teachers are vaccinated; yes, there is an intense work in the planning so that we can return even partially to the classroom", he said."³³⁸ According to the transition commission, close to 75% of the school infrastructure is in poor condition in Honduras.³³⁹

"Arnaldo Bueso, Minister of Education, announced that this coming February 1, school enrollment will begin nationwide. Bueso anticipated that for this year they expect an enrollment of two million students, at the same time he commented that approximately 500 thousand dropped out of school in 2021."³⁴⁰ The new Minister of Education, Daniel Esponda, seemed to agree on the date but also

332 <https://confidencialhn.com/salario-minimo-promedio-solo-cubre-el-37-de-las-necesidades-basicas-en-honduras-asegura-adalid-irias/>

333 <https://criterio.hn/35-de-la-poblacion-en-honduras-seria-afectada-por-agudizacion-de-inseguridad-alimentaria-entre-febrero-y-mayo/>

334 <https://twitter.com/manuelzr/status/1488144793121214466?cxt=HHwWhMCyhcHz-aYpAAAA>

335 <https://criterio.hn/xiomara-castro-impulsa-en-el-congreso-un-proyecto-de-energia-gratis-para-los-pobres/>

336 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2022/1/61eaf864/schoolteachers-honduras-face-threats-inside-classroom.html>

337 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/01/16/honduras-iniciara-ano-lectivo-en-febrero-como-el-mas-rezagado-de-america-latina/>

338 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/clases-presenciales-seran-realidad-este-ano-en-honduras-CG4549765>

339 <https://confidencialhn.com/al-menos-el-75-de-infraestructura-escolar-se-encuentra-en-mal-estado-en-honduras/>

340 <https://confidencialhn.com/matricula-escolar-dara-inicio-el-1-de-febrero-a-nivel-nacional-anuncia-educacion/>

raised caution regarding the pandemic situation.³⁴¹ He also met with teachers' union to discuss the reopening of schools.³⁴² Later, he said that a return to classes will happen in the first 100 days of the new government.³⁴³

Israel

At the beginning of the month, JOH gave an interview to The Times of Israel on the Honduran-Israeli relationship.³⁴⁴ "Shortly before he leaves office, Juan Orlando Hernández, a close ally of Israel, says his left-wing successor will face resistance if she tries to move Jerusalem embassy".³⁴⁵

China

"The new Foreign Minister of Honduras, Eduardo Enrique Reina, said today that for the moment, for the government of President Xiomara Castro, international relations with China are not a priority. However, he made it clear that Taiwan is an important partner due to the historical connection that has been maintained between the two nations. "We will remain in the field that all these relations are of benefit to the people. That reflects the national interest we have as a State and we will maintain an open relationship that can be fruitful for the country".³⁴⁶

And Light at the End of a Month

Jeff Ernst reported on a "Honduran sanctuary for female rights defenders". "Inaugurated earlier this year, the 10-day retreat at La Sigüata is part of a tiny but growing movement led by the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders, which funds this and another centre in Oaxaca, Mexico, addressing the mental health issues that come with working in one of the world's most dangerous regions for activists and women. "We realized that there was lots of burnout and also strong impacts on women defenders as a result of structural violence, as well as patriarchal violence that was very invisible and normalized," says Ana María Hernández of Casa La Serena healing centre in Oaxaca, Mexico, which opened in 2016 and has since welcomed hundreds of women from across the region."³⁴⁷

341 <https://confidencialhn.com/daniel-esponda-nuevo-ministro-de-educacion-anuncia-el-inicio-de-clases-para-el-primer-de-febrero/>

342 <https://confidencialhn.com/ministro-de-educacion-daniel-esponda-y-dirigentes-magisteriales-definen-ruta-de-trabajo-para-reactivar-el-sistema-educativo/>

343 <https://criterio.hn/plan-de-retorno-a-clases-se-ejecutara-en-primeros-100-dias-de-gobierno-dice-ministro-de-educacion/>

344 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1477005657039683584>

345 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/outgoing-honduras-president-christians-parliament-will-protect-strong-israel-ties/>

346 <https://tiempo.hn/canciller-relaciones-de-honduras-con-china/>

347 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jan/03/house-of-healing-the-honduran-sanctuary-for-female-rights-defenders>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

Past Activities:

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Upcoming Activities:

-

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