

# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – March 2022

At the end of March, JOH had run out of almost all legal options and his extradition to the US seems imminent. The MP even requested the seizure of his properties. In a re-trial, the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo was found guilty again. And more corrupt actions will likely come to light thanks to the repeal of the JOH-era Secrecy Law. In February we celebrated the freedom of the Guapinol defenders, but one month later, while in freedom, the judges still deny to drop the charges against them. On a more positive note, several political prisoners had the charges dropped against them, among them a student leader who was able to return to Honduras after four years of exile. The situation in Azacualpa remained tense throughout the month as the mining company MINOSA continued to ignore court rulings to stop their operations. The US was very present again in March in Honduras. The US Senate confirmed Laura Farnsworth Dogu as the new ambassador to Honduras and three members of Congress visited the country and met with President Xiomara Castro. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

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# Abbreviations

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

## Human Rights and Their Defenders

OACNUDH presented its yearly report on the human rights situation in Honduras.<sup>1 2 3</sup> The report includes 17 recommendations for the State of Honduras.<sup>4</sup>

### Assassinations

"The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (OHCHR) condemns the murder of human rights defender Francisco Ruiz, who suffered a gun attack on March 8 in the village of La Brea, in the municipality of Trujillo, department of Colón, and died the following day while undergoing surgery. Francisco Ruiz was recognized by the Plataforma Agraria Regional del Valle del Aguán and the Coordinadora de Organizaciones Populares del Aguán (COPA) as a human rights defender for his support to the subsistence economic activities of the peasants of the El Remolino cooperative."<sup>5</sup> The Guardian reported on the situation of human rights defenders in Honduras. So far this year, the UN documented three murders of defenders, in 2021, they documented 302 attacks among them 10 murders.<sup>6</sup> The Association for Participative Citizenship (ACI Participa) documented 11 assassinations of defenders in 2021.<sup>7</sup>

### Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

Last month, the Guapinol defenders were finally released from their illegal, over 900-days, pre-trial detention (see last Monitor). But by mid-March, the defenders had still not received their letters of release denouncing negligence by the Judiciary.<sup>8 9</sup> On March 22, Criterio reported: "Although the Supreme Court of Justice annulled the trial against the Guapinol defenders, the Trujillo Court denied the definitive dismissal of the eight environmentalists who spent 914 days in illegal detainment. Juana Zúniga, member of the Municipal Committee in Defense of the Common and Public Goods of Tocoa and partner of one of the eight defenders prosecuted, told Criterio.hn that contrary to the final ruling they were expecting regarding the letters of release, they were informed that they were provisionally granted."<sup>10 11</sup>

"Tonight March 16 in Tegucigalpa, members and sympathizers of the National Party cause riots outside the Supreme Court of Justice and set fire to the Viva Berta Feminist Camp. The violent reaction against the symbol of feminist and popular justice, took place after the judge authorized the extradition of Juan Orlando Hernandez to the United States at the request of that country."<sup>12</sup>

"The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (OACNUDH) joins the expression of concern of the UN independent experts [1] who sent a letter

1 <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/informe-del-alto-comisionado-de-las-naciones-unidas-para-los-derechos-humanos-1>  
2 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1501253620800663554>  
3 <https://confidencialhn.com/pobreza-desigualdad-discriminacion-violencia-e-impunidad-caracterizaron-la-situacion-de-ddhh-durante-el-2021-en-honduras-oacnudh/>  
4 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/la-oacnudh-hace-17-recomendaciones-al-estado-de-honduras/>  
5 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-del-defensor-de-derechos-humanos-francisco-ruiz/>  
6 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/22/two-murders-in-a-week-honduran-activists-risk-death-to-defend-rights>  
7 <https://proceso.hn/socializan-en-honduras-informe-sobre-situacion-de-defensores-de-ddhh/>  
8 <https://twitter.com/guapinolre/status/1504158576234881026>  
9 <https://criterio.hn/tribunal-de-trujillo-sigue-sin-entregar-cartas-de-libertad-a-defensores-de-guapinol/>  
10 <https://criterio.hn/tribunal-de-trujillo-niega-sobreseimiento-definitivo-a-defensores-de-guapinol/>  
11 <https://criterio.hn/caso-contra-los-defensores-de-guapinol-podria-reactivarse/>  
12 <https://im-defensoras.org/2022/03/alerta-urgente-honduras-miembros-y-simpatizantes-del-partido-nacional-prenden-fuego-al-campamento-feminista-viva-bera/>

of allegations [2] to the State of Honduras for the possible misuse of criminal law against human rights defender Fabio Almendarez Pereira, in the context of reforms to the Penal Code approved on October 7, 2021. (...) Mr. Fabio Almendarez was charged for allegedly committing the crime of usurpation against Sociedad Mercantil Inversiones Kiel SA de CV (KIELSA) in 2009, however, the proceeding was provisionally dismissed. In 2016 the case was reopened and Mr. Almendarez was convicted, but the ordered eviction was not carried out. Recently, on November 5, 2021, the defendant was again charged with the crime of usurpation".<sup>13</sup>

COFADEH denounced the arbitrary detention of the indigenous leader and forest defender, Ovidio Enamorado Guillén. He was detained by the police even though he was granted alternative measures to imprisonment as part of the political persecution he faces.<sup>14</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

President Xiomara Castro met with the UN representative for indigenous peoples Calí Tzay. She reiterated her commitment to support Honduras' indigenous peoples.<sup>15</sup>

The Lenca community of Tierras del Padre presented an injunction against eviction orders for their community on March 8.<sup>16</sup> They were threatened with eviction last month.

"The Garífuna community of Tornabé, located in Tela, Atlántida, is part of the Blanca Jeannette Kawas National Park, and its residents are concerned about the rapid advance of African palm plantations."<sup>17</sup>

The indigenous Tolupán tribe from San Francisco de Locomapa together with human rights organizations denounced the indifference of the municipal officials of the department of Yoro, in the face of the lethargy for the reopening of the Tolupán Medical Clinic.<sup>18</sup>

"Last Thursday afternoon, March 24, on the program "Doble Vía" broadcast on the Radio América network, directed by journalist Rodolfo Colindres, evangelical pastor Roy Santos was a guest on the program; he referred in a derogatory, discriminatory and racist manner to the indigenous peoples of Honduras and specifically to COPINH."<sup>19</sup>

## The Case of Berta Cáceres

At the beginning of the month, on March 2, her family, COPINH, Honduras and the world commemorated Berta Cáceres.<sup>20 21 22</sup> The Xiomara administration commemorated Berta Cáceres with a bust which will be installed at the Plaza de las Etnias of the Government Civic Center.<sup>23</sup>

13 <https://oacnudh.hn/expertos-y-expertas-independientes-de-la-onu-expresan-su-preocupacion-frente-a-la-criminalizacion-contra-el-defensor-del-medio-ambiente-fabio-almendarez-pereira/>

14 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-persecucion-arbitraria-contra-lider-indigena-que-invoco-ammistia/>

15 <https://tiempo.hn/presidenta-xiomara-promete-ayudar-pueblos-indigenas/>

16 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1501064896200466433>

17 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/comunidad-garifuna-de-tornabe-amenazada-por-siembra-descontrolada-de-palma-africana/>

18 <https://criterio.hn/pueblo-tolupan-exige-reapertura-de-clinica-medica-municipal-de-locomapa/>

19 <https://copinh.org/2022/03/press-release-copinh-denounces-racist-statements-by-pastor-roy-santos-towards-the-indigenous-peoples-of-honduras/>

20 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/149915450438992456>

21 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDHHN/status/1499174574210039811>

22 <https://copinh.org/2022/03/el-legado-de-berta-la-articulacion-como-estrategia/>

23 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/homenaje-berta-caceres-gobierno-honduras-GY6256989>

COPINH published an alert that the defense of David Castillo would be trying to use the Amnesty Law to benefit their defendant.<sup>24 25</sup> "The Sentencing Court has convened a hearing for Wednesday, March 16 at 9 am for the discussion of this request. The time and day coincided with the extradition hearing of Juan Orlando Hernández and the ruling in the case against former first lady Rosa Bonilla."<sup>26</sup> The hearing was later postponed to March 18.<sup>27</sup> And then it was postponed again.<sup>28</sup>

Cockade's Bertha Oliva commented on the this: "[T]he decree is for the non-repetition of the facts, it is for those persecuted during the dictatorship, for the politically persecuted who condemned the coup d'état and the illegal presidential reelection (of Juan Orlando Hernández) and the electoral fraud of 2017". Oliva said that the amnesty constitutes the beginning of the application of justice for the victims. "Let it be clear to the victimizers, that the decree is not for them, it is for the victims."<sup>29</sup> OACNUDH also expressed concern about the announcement by Castillo's defense team.<sup>30</sup> On March 16, COPINH denounced that the former head of the National Electric Energy Company (ENEE), Roberto Martínez, also requested to have the Amnesty Law applied to his case.<sup>31</sup> On March 31, the hearing finally took place, but the result is only expected for April.<sup>32</sup>

David Castillo had already been found guilty and his sentencing hearing was scheduled for April 4. But this month, this was also postponed to May 18.<sup>33</sup>

On March 25, the IACHR held "a private working meeting to review the risk situation faced by the communities of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), as well as the representatives of the legal team and family members of indigenous leader and human rights defender Berta Cáceres. The IACHR (..) also review[ed] the State of Honduras' compliance with the precautionary protection measures granted since March 2016 and subsequently extended in favor of the legal team."<sup>34</sup> "During the space, the beneficiaries, together with the Committee of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ) and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), denounced that 6 years after the assassination of Berta Cáceres, the State of Honduras has not taken the necessary actions to address the problems that gave rise to the risk in the Lenca communities and that continue to endanger the life and integrity of those who defend rights, as Berta Cáceres did."<sup>35</sup>

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24 <https://criterio.hn/alertan-que-david-castillo-busca-beneficiarse-con-decreto-de-amnistia/>  
25 <https://copinh.org/2022/03/press-release-david-castillo-seeks-impunity-through-amnesty-decree/>  
26 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1502353096344842246>  
27 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1504236559347986440>  
28 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1504849372135272451>  
29 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/bertha-oliva-que-quede-claro-a-los-victimarios-que-el-decreto-no-es-para-ellos-es-para-las-victimas/>  
30 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1503912795573788675>  
31 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1504264181704503299>  
32 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1509597387211255809>  
33 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1508879578751803393>  
34 <https://copinh.org/2022/03/press-release-iachr-to-review-protection-measures-granted-to-copinh-legal-team-and-family-of-bertha-caceres/>  
35 <https://copinh.org/2022/03/a-6-anos-del-asesinato-de-bertha-caceres-el-riesgo-permanece-para-su-familia-el-copinh-y-el-equipo-legal-de-su-causa/>

## LGBTQ

"An armed man riding a motorcycle threatened lawyer Roger Mariano Silva Carbajal, of the LGTBI organization SOMOS-CDC, with a gun in his hand and took a computer with information from him, according to a public document denounced by the above mentioned institution on March 29, 2022."<sup>36</sup>

The LGTBIQ community in Honduras demanded the approval of a gender identity law and compliance with a ruling issued in 2021 by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in which it condemned the State for the death of a transgender woman and defender.<sup>37</sup>

## Freedom of Expression and Journalists

At least five shots were fired against the Radio Globo building in Tegucigalpa on March 7. This occurred when the Program "Interpreting the News" was on the air.<sup>38</sup>

## Violence against Women

61 women have been murdered in 2022 so far<sup>39</sup> and 95% of femicides remain unpunished. Most victims, one third, are between 10 and 29 years old.<sup>40</sup> Julissa Villanueva, vice-minister of Security, confirmed that they reopened the femicide case of nursing student Keyla Martínez who had been murdered inside a police station.<sup>41</sup>

According to the Center for Women's Rights (CDM), every three hours a woman in Honduras is being raped. 900 girls younger than 14 become pregnant after being raped. The CDM calls for an end to impunity in such cases as well as the approval of laws with a victims-centered approach such as the Law for the Prevention of Violence against Women.<sup>42</sup>

"On International Women's Day, different feminist organizations demanded the recognition of the rights of Honduran women. This was joined by President Xiomara Castro, who presented before the Legislative - led that day by female deputies - the Integral Law Against Gender Violence. However, the Emergency Contraceptive Pill (PAE) and the decriminalization of abortion on three grounds are issues still not addressed by the present administration; nor by the National Congress, a governmental body dominated by men."<sup>43</sup> A week later, "Honduras pledged (..) to prevent and end violence against women and girls in the country, where 318 were murdered in 2021, a phenomenon that has become "naturalized" due to machismo and patriarchy, and that requires more political will. The commitment was embodied in a public document signed in Tegucigalpa by the President of Honduras, Xiomara Castro, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in the country, Alice Shackelford."<sup>44</sup>

36 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/denuncias/item/3350-desconocido-con-arma-de-fuego-despoja-de-computadora-a-integrante-de-la-organizacion-lgtbi-somos-cdc>

37 <https://proceso.hn/comunidad-lgtbiq-en-honduras-pide-aprobar-una-ley-de-identidad-de-genero/>

38 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/03/07/alerta-periodistas-siguen-en-riesgo-mortal-balacean-la-globo/>

39 <https://criterio.hn/en-el-dia-internacional-de-la-mujer-honduras-reporta-al-menos-61-muertes-violentas/>

40 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/elheraldoplus/data/femicidios-honduras-dia-mujer-EA6310600>

41 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/reabren-caso-de-estudiante-de-enfermeria-keyla-martinez-KF6340815>

42 <https://tiempo.hn/mujeres-violadas-en-honduras/>

43 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/03/17/la-pae-y-la-despenalizacion-del-aborto-en-honduras-fueron-temas-ignorados-el-dia-de-la-mujer/>

44 <https://confidencialhn.com/honduras-se-compromete-a-prevenir-y-ponerle-fin-a-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres/>

## Protection Mechanism

"The Minister of the Secretariat of Human Rights, SEDH, told pasosdeanimalgrande.com that she would be making the corresponding steps to redefine the institutional responses of the National Protection Mechanism, taking as main input the proposals of human rights defenders who have demanded effective responses from this state entity."<sup>45</sup>

## Political Prisoners

Raul Alvarez, who spent 1.5 year locked up as a political prisoner, faced trial again this month from charges going back to the 2017 post-electoral crisis.<sup>46</sup> During the trial, the company representing Burger King desisted charges against him and now it is likely that all charges be dropped at the next hearing scheduled for May 13th.<sup>47 48</sup>

COFADEH succeeded in the application of the Amnesty Law to Eduardo Urbina who suffered four years of political persecution and lived in exile.<sup>49</sup> On March 15, the law was also applied to 11 political prisoners from Pimienta, Cortés. Their criminalization went back to the post-electoral protests in 2017.<sup>50</sup>

At the end of the month, another political prisoner from the JOH-era, Jhony Andrés Salgado, had the charges dropped against him.<sup>51</sup>

## Extractive Industries

MADJ welcomed the newest announcement by the Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, the Environment and Mining (MiAmbiente) to declare the defense and protection of the environment as a state priority.<sup>52</sup> On March 21, the Xiomara administration declared a "environmental emergency" in Honduras and presented a rescue plan for natural areas.<sup>53</sup> This included actions to protect the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve.<sup>54</sup> But there are still various challenges.<sup>55</sup> "Víctor Fernández, a lawyer with the human rights law firm Estudios para la Dignidad, told Criterio.hn that as a defender and fighter, given the ambivalence of the new government on issues of land and environmental defense, he feels more exposed to attacks. (...) The hullabaloo following the declaration of a Honduras free of open-pit mining dissipated, leaving behind a duality of discourse that only gives the impression of change without changing anything. There is no clearer example of this reality than the case of the Azacualpa cemetery in La Unión, Copán, in western Honduras. Despite two firm sentences to stop the exhumations, the company Minerales de Occidente S.A. de C.V. (Minosa), a subsidiary of the transnational company Aura Minerals, has continued with the destruction of the cemetery."

45 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/es-co/contexto/item/3349-ministra-de-la-sedh-anuncia-que-inicia-pasos-para-redefinir-respuestas-institucionales-del-mecanismo-de-proteccion>

46 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1500997468976205833>

47 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1501402892670214149>

48 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/burger-king-desiste-de-accion-penal-contr-el-pres-o-politico-raul-alvarez/>

49 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/cofadeh-logra-aplicacion-de-ampnestia-para-eduardo-urbina/>

50 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/tribunal-de-sentencia-aplica-decreto-de-ampnestia-a-once-pres-os-politicos-de-pimienta-cortes/>

51 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/victima-del-regimen-de-joh-logra-extincion-de-la-pena/>

52 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1500177840066764808>

53 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-de-honduras-declara-emergencia-ambiental-por-devastacion-del-medio-ambiente/>

54 <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/03/21/alerta-gobierno-castro-cierra-carretera-legal-en-rio-platano/>

55 <https://criterio.hn/doble-discurso-de-nuevo-gobierno-eleva-riesgo-a-defensores-del-territorio-y-ambiente-en-honduras/>



"Several appointments of Xiomara Castro's government are strongly questioned, but very few have aroused as much unease as that of the former mayor of Tocoa, Adán Fúnez, as governor of the department of Colón. The member of the Libertad y Refundación (Libre) Party won the elections for mayor of Tocoa, period 2022-2026, and subsequently resigned from the post after his designation as departmental governor. Why the uneasiness of his designation? Throughout his eight years as mayor of Tocoa, he has openly expressed his support for extractive projects such as those that threaten the Guapinol and San Pedro rivers and the Carlos Escaleras National Park."<sup>56</sup> On March 15, the government and justice building was occupied in Colón to protest Fúnez' appointment.<sup>57</sup>

## Mining

CESPAD published an analysis on what should follow the declaration of a Honduras free of open pit mining. "The elements outlined in the previous section should be presented in proposals for post-extractivist transitions mentioned above: moving from a predatory mining extractivism to a sensible one. In this sense, this transition requires the implementation of environmental controls, state subsidies for the reconversion of the community economy, the creation of regional economic blocks and social regulation, with greater participation of society in the creation of public policies. It is a strategic bet on sustainable and self-centered territorial development, in the midst of an institutional political change. In conclusion, to declare a country free of open-pit mining is to respond, strategically, with alternative forms of development promoted by the mining extractivism that has operated in Honduras to date. The challenge includes building our own models of environmental justice and self-centered sustainable territorial development, taking into account current public policies, the experience of socio-environmental movements and their realities."<sup>58</sup>

"The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (OHCHR) expresses concern about the situation of the communities affected by mining in La Unión, Copán, and urges the State to take measures to guarantee their rights to a healthy environment, health and education. The OHCHR Representative in Honduras, Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, and her team carried out a mission to La Unión to follow up on complaints about the environmental and social impact of mining in the area. During the mission, the Office was able to observe that this exploitation has generated conflict and disruption of the social fabric, displacement of communities, criminalization of territorial defenders, limitation of the free transit of communities along the road controlled by the company, and a process of exhumation of corpses in the Azacualpa cemetery in breach of international standards and the resolutions of the Administrative Court of Appeals of San Pedro Sula, the Constitutional Chamber and the Court of Appeals of Santa Rosa de Copán, which since 2018 have ordered a halt to exhumation activities."<sup>59</sup>

56 <https://criterio.hn/distintos-sectores-rechazan-nombramiento-de-adan-funez-como-gobernador-de-colon/>

57 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1503940032293392391>

58 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/03/20/honduras-libre-de-mineria-a-cielo-abierto-y-ahora-que/>

59 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-expresa-preocupacion-por-la-situacion-de-las-comunidades-afectadas-por-la-mineria-en-la-union-copan-e-insta-al-estado-a-tomar-las-medidas-para-garantizar-sus-derechos-a-un-medio-ambiente-san/>

On March 26, OACNUDH once again felt urged to comment again on the situation. "OACNUDH regrets the social conflict generated today with the entry of heavy machinery into the Azacualpa cemetery hill, in La Unión, Copán, despite the existence of judicial resolutions that order to stop exhumations in the cemetery, ensuring its integrity."<sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup> A day later, MINOSA started using explosives on the mountain where the indigenous Maya Chortí cemetery lies.<sup>62</sup> MINOSA also threatened human rights lawyers accompanying the Azacualpa community in defense of their cemetery. They told them not to go there otherwise they would be attacked.<sup>63</sup>

The Human Rights Secretariat expressed concern about the situation highlighting human rights violations committed "in the context of the mining activity" and demanding a stop to the hostility as well as the compliance of a court ruling which demanded a stop to the exhumation of the cemetery.<sup>64</sup> The human rights law firm Estudios para la Dignidad demanded concrete actions by the State of Honduras to stop the exhumations.<sup>65</sup> On March 30, the State of Honduras ordered the mining company MINOSA to stop its operations.<sup>66</sup>

## **ZEDES**

"PBI recently accompanied ASODEBICOQ during an open town hall and during a meeting on the community development of Regadillos. In the open town hall, Quimistán was declared free of ZEDES and ratified free of mining and hydroelectric plants."<sup>67</sup> Criterio, meanwhile, reported on a charm offensive by the Próspera ZEDE in Roatán.<sup>68</sup>

## **Bajo Aguán**

"With the inauguration of President Xiomara Castro, hopes for the reduction of socio-environmental and agrarian conflicts in Honduras resurfaced. In fact, at the national level, various organizations have repeatedly called for the need to intervene in historic conflicts such as the one in the Bajo Aguán Valley, department of Colón, which has resulted in hundreds of peasants killed, families confronted and communities impoverished. It is public knowledge that in the last two weeks, the government's council of ministers, composed of the Minister of Security, Ramón Sabillón, the Minister and Vice-Minister of the National Agrarian Institute (INA), Francisco Fúnez and Rafael Alegría, respectively, as well as the head of the Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion (SEDIS), José Carlos Cardona, have visited the area to seek a solution to the conflict in the Aguán Valley. Hence the importance of this analysis which, in the first part, briefly presents historical aspects to understand the conflict in the Aguán Valley; the second section outlines the moments of the worsening of the crisis in the last 2 years, which coincide with the end of the regime of Juan Orlando Hernández. The third section highlights some aspects that can contribute to the democratic management of the agrarian conflict and, finally, identifies a series of strategic challenges for the

60 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1507917377975029764>

61 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-que-minosa-ingresa-maquinaria-a-cementerio-de-azacualpa-con-apoyo-de-la-policia/>

62 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1508227564694876163>

63 <https://twitter.com/VictorFerG/status/1508506399181000707>

64 <https://proceso.hn/sedh-denuncia-violaciones-de-ddhh-en-una-mina-en-la-union-copan/>

65 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1508484130136367111>

66 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/1509175310004195330>

67 <https://pbicanada.org/2022/03/17/pbi-honduras-acompana-asodebicoq-at-town-hall-meeting-that-declares-quimistan-free-of-mining-dams-and-zedes/>

68 <https://criterio.hn/ze-de-prospera-roatan-se-disfrazo-para-ganarse-la-simpatia-de-los-pobladores/>

peasant movement in the current political context, in the effort to move towards a democratic solution to the conflict."<sup>69</sup>

CESPAD looked at the situation of women peasant farmers and their hopes for the Xiomara administration.<sup>70</sup> "The new manager of the National Bank for Agricultural Development (Banadesa), Erlin Mejía, said that the institution will once again be the support arm of the agricultural sector in Honduras."<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the new Minister of Agriculture, Laura Suazo, announced to invest more than 400 million Lempiras in the sector this year.<sup>72</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

Last month, the Xiomara administration sent an official request to the UN for the installation of an international anti-corruption body in Honduras. According to the foreign minister Eduardo Enrique Reina the UN responded and will send "an exploratory commission to define the mechanisms and its subsequent establishment".<sup>73</sup> On March 24, Foreign Minister Enrique Reina spoke with the EU about corruption and possible EU support for such a body.<sup>74</sup>

The CNA presented a report on their findings of corrupt acts at the Health Secretariat during the JOH regime.<sup>75</sup> They presented an official complaint against the former Minister of Health, Alba Consuelo Flores, for abuse of authority.<sup>76</sup> Later, another report followed on corruption during the previous administration at the Secretariat of Economic Development (SEDIS).<sup>77</sup> "The National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) denounced that the Secretariat of Economic Development disbursed 61 million lempiras for the payment of salaries of three officials during the administration of former President Juan Orlando Hernández. The director of the CNA, Gabriela Castellanos, detailed the expenditure that took place in the State during the government period 2018 - 2022, to pay three permanent representatives to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Switzerland."<sup>78</sup> A third report focused on a corruption case involving container housing set up after hurricanes Eta and Iota.<sup>79</sup> The case involves JOH-ally Ebal Díaz.<sup>80</sup> "According to the President Commissioner of the Institute of Access to Public Information (IAIP) Ivonne Lizeth Ardón, heads of state institutions have stated that the authorities of the previous administration "did not leave them documentation". Regarding the case, the official emphasized that it is a crime to steal documents that belong to the State of Honduras."<sup>81</sup>

"Gerardo Aguilar, labor leader in the transportation sector, denounced in Cuarto Poder that the outgoing authorities of the Honduran Institute of Land Transportation (IHTT) stole 13 million lempiras for the payment of their benefits."<sup>82</sup> UFERCO's Luis Santos informed that they were

69 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/03/03/coyuntura-desde-los-territorios-reflexiones-sobre-como-gestionar-el-conflicto-agrario-en-el-bajo-aguan/>

70 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/03/09/a-que-le-apuestan-las-mujeres-campesinas-en-el-gobierno-de-castro/>

71 <https://confidencialhn.com/banadesa-sera-nuevamente-un-apoyo-para-los-productores-del-pais-afirma-nuevo-gerente/>

72 <https://confidencialhn.com/sag-asegura-que-invertira-mil-400-millones-de-lempiras-para-el-desarrollo-agricola-durante-el-2022/>

73 <https://criterio.hn/onu-enviara-comitiva-exploratoria-para-definir-instauracion-de-la-cicil/>

74 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/honduras-y-la-union-europea-dialogan-sobre-migracion-y-el-combate-a-la-corrupcion-YH6797652>

75 <https://www.cna.hn/informe-secretaria-de-salud/>

76 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/01/cna-denuncia-a-exsecretaria-de-salud-por-abuso-de-autoridad-y-mal-manejo-de-fondos/>

77 <https://www.cna.hn/informe-secretaria-desarrollo/>

78 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/04/cna-denuncia-que-una-entidad-erogo-61-millones-en-pagos-a-funcionarios/>

79 <https://www.cna.hn/las-viviendas-contenedores-el-rotundo-fracaso-del-proyecto-piloto-de-vivienda-de-reasentamiento-en-edificios-multifamiliares/>

80 <https://criterio.hn/ebal-diaz-sindicado-como-el-hombre-de-atras-del-fallido-proyecto-casas-contenedores/>

81 <https://confidencialhn.com/titulares-de-instituciones-han-denunciado-hurto-de-documentacion-segun-la-comisionada-del-iaip/>

82 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/03/comisionados-salientes-sustrajeron-13-millones-del-ihtt-asegura-transportista/>

investigating the golden parachutes given to former high ranking officials of the JOH regime (see last month).<sup>83</sup>

An investigation by El Pulso showed how JOH's convicted brother Tony Hernández had his wife employed by the National Electric Energy Company (ENEE) earning over 1 million Lempiras every year.<sup>84</sup> It also came to light that another JOH ally, his former Foreign Minister Lisandro Rosales, had been investigated since 2021. The MP was looking into his Panamanian bank accounts.<sup>85</sup> Rosales, as other JOH allies, left Honduras after JOH lost power.

"The previous National Congress (2018-2022) paid around 14 million lempiras per month to some 700 contract employees who did not have fixed assignments, this was revealed in a report presented by the current president of the Legislative, Luis Redondo."<sup>86</sup> The congressional Anti-Corruption Commission is also investigating laws approved under the previous Congress which did not meet the requirements to be approved, for example by not having the right amount of members voting for them.<sup>87</sup>

But there were also some hopeful signs this month. "The confidential item of at least five billion Lempiras assigned to the Casa Presidencial would be eliminated according to the Liberal Party (PL) congressman, Mauricio Villeda. The congressman detailed that President Xiomara Castro would be eliminating the item amounting to 5 billion Lempiras, when she sends to the National Congress the project of the reformulation of the General Budget of the Republic for 2022."<sup>88</sup>

## The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

The month started with a hopeful sign regarding the fight against corruption. Congress repealed the Secrecy Law.<sup>89 90 91</sup> OACNUDH welcomed this while requesting the approval of a "Archives Law to preserve institutional information as a public good at the service of the public".<sup>92</sup> The importance of this was shown just days later. UFERCO's Luis Javier Santos denounced that the JOH regime destroyed key documents and information, probably expecting that the Secrecy Law would be repealed and further acts of corruption would come to light.<sup>93</sup> Something similar also happened at the local level as the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) informed<sup>94</sup> as well as at Congress.<sup>95</sup> The new Congress, meanwhile, went on to aim at reforming the new Penal Code which includes a lot of problematic articles shielding powerful groups from corruption investigations.<sup>96</sup>

Libre congressman Jari Dixon presented an initiative to reform the Organic Law of the National Congress, with the objective of eliminating the immunity of Honduran members of Congress.<sup>97</sup> On

83 <https://confidencialhn.com/uferco-investiga-fiesta-de-bonificaciones-que-cobran-exfuncionarios-de-joh/>

84 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/10/tony-herandez-y-jesus-meja-colocaron-a-sus-cuadros-de-confianza-en-la-enee/>

85 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/desde-ano-pasado-investigarian-cuentas-lisandro-rosales-panama-canciller-lavado-activos-honduras-HE6622845>

86 <https://confidencialhn.com/congreso-anterior-pagaba-14-millones-de-lempiras-mensuales-a-casi-700-empleados/>

87 <https://criterio.hn/comision-del-congreso-de-honduras-investiga-aprobacion-arbitraria-de-leyes-en-administracion-anterior/>

88 <https://confidencialhn.com/poder-ejecutivo-estaria-eliminando-partida-confidencial-de-5-mil-millones-de-lempiras/>

89 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-nacional-de-honduras-deroga-la-ley-de-secretos/>

90 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/03/15/con-la-derogacion-de-la-ley-de-secretos-se-debe-publicar-la-informacion-clasificada-por-el-gobierno-anterior/>

91 <https://confidencialhn.com/publicada-en-el-diario-oficial-la-gaceta-derogacion-de-la-nefasta-ley-de-secretos/>

92 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1498826147815206912>

93 <https://confidencialhn.com/toda-la-informacion-de-casa-presidencial-fue-destruida-fiscal-luis-javier-santos/>

94 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/02/el-iaip-denuncia-sustraccion-de->

95 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/02/redondo-denuncia-extraccion-de-documentos-del-congreso-nacional/documentos-en-alcaldias-hondurenas/>

96 <https://proceso.hn/prepararse-para-volver-al-anterior-codigo-penal-pide-luis-redondo/>

97 <https://confidencialhn.com/jari-dixon-herrera-presenta-iniciativa-para-reformar-la-ley-organica-del-congreso-nacional-a-fin-de-eliminar-la-inmunidad-de-los-diputados/>

March 17, another important step followed.<sup>98</sup> "The National Congress approved the return of investigative powers to the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and ordered the Superior Court of Accounts (TSC) to forward all files on corruption cases to the Public Prosecutor's Office within 15 days."<sup>99 100</sup>

The Ethics and Transparency Commission, chaired by Congressman Carlos Umaña, and the Anti-Corruption Commission, headed by Congresswoman Fátima Mena, met with representatives of the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) to sign an agreement to combat corruption.<sup>101</sup>

## Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo

The re-trial of the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo was meant to conclude on March 16.<sup>102</sup> It was then postponed by one day, probably not to coincide with the ruling in the extradition trial of JOH.<sup>103</sup> The next day, she was convicted against for corruption as in the first instance of the trial.<sup>104 105 106</sup> Pepe Lobo announced to appeal the conviction of his wife.<sup>107</sup> The MP demands a 16-year prison sentence for her.<sup>108</sup>

## Congressional Networks

After four years, a judge reactivated the MACCIH-era corruption case Congressional Networks.<sup>109</sup>  
110

## Mobile Hospitals

On March 14, the Constitutional Chamber dismissed an appeal by Marco Bográn in the corruption case regarding the mobile hospitals.<sup>111</sup> This freed the court to sentence him.<sup>112</sup> "Ramón Barrios, member of the deputies' commission that investigates extraditions and other issues in the justice system, said that the Attorney General of the Republic, Óscar Fernando Chinchilla, revealed to them that the money for the purchase of the mobile hospitals ended up deposited in tax havens."<sup>113</sup> "Political actors questioned the work of Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla for revealing before the legislative committee that there are six ex-officials implicated in the mobile hospital case, but that they do not have a prosecutorial requirement."<sup>114</sup>

On March 24, the Police Investigation Bureau (DPI) confirmed that the Guatemalan businessman Axel López was being searched by Interpol and all member countries are meant to extradite him if

98 <https://twitter.com/jeffgemst/status/1504579628773609475>

99 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/17/congreso-aprueba-devolver-facultades-investigativas-al-mp/>

100 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/17/congreso-nacional-aprueba-reforma-a-la-ley-organica-del-tsc/>

101 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/16/congreso-nacional-y-cna-suscriben-convenio-anticorruptcion/>

102 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/03/14/ex-primera-dama-de-honduras-me-acusan-de-fraude-y-creo-que-la-defraudada-fui-yo/>

103 <https://proceso.hn/reprograman-para-el-jueves-lectura-de-sentencia-en-repeticion-de-juicio-oral-a-rosa-elena-bonilla/>

104 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-logra-declaratoria-de-culpabilidad-en-el-caso-caja-chica-de-la-dama/>

105 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/culpable-ex-primera-dama-rosa-elena-bonilla-vuelve-a-la-carcel/>

106 <https://cespad.org.hn/2022/03/25/que-valor-el-tribunal-para-declarar-culpable-por-segunda-vez-a-ex-primera-dama-de-honduras/>

107 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/18/expresidente-lobo-asegura-que-apelara-el-fallo-en-contra-de-la-exprimera-dama/>

108 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/28/fiscalia-de-honduras-pide-16-anos-de-prision-para-exprimera-dama-por-corrupcion/>

109 [https://twitter.com/Luis\\_Santos\\_C/status/1503574049665990657](https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1503574049665990657)

110 <https://criterio.hn/justicia-reactiva-caso-red-de-diputados-con-el-que-la-macch-inicio-lucha-anticorruptcion/>

111 <https://confidencial.hn.com/sala-de-lo-constitucional-falla-en-contra-de-marco-bogran-en-el-caso-de-hospitales-moviles/>

112 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/tribunal-luz-verde-sentenciar-marco-bogran-compra-hospitales-moviles-KL6490158>

113 <https://proceso.hn/el-25-de-dinero-de-hospitales-moviles-queda-a-axel-lopez-el-resto-en-paraisos-fiscales-revelo-a-diputados-el-fiscal-general/>

114 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/22/cuestionan-al-fiscal-general-por-no-perseguir-a-implicados-en-hospitales-moviles/>

they arrest him. López showed himself in the US in the recent past and Honduras criticized that he was not arrested there.<sup>115</sup> The MP stated that they were expecting an answer by the US regarding a petition for judicial assistance in the case.<sup>116</sup>

## State Security Forces

President Xiomara announced the creation of a Community Police.<sup>117</sup>

At the end of the month, Liberal congressman Mario Segura announced to present a bill to revise the Wiretapping Law.<sup>118</sup>

In an interview with Expediente Público, the new head of the National Police Force, commissioner Gustavo Sánchez, warned that organized crime is trying to undermine the new government. He also commented on the failed deputation process, the remilitarization of security forces and more.<sup>119 120</sup> Sánchez also held a meeting with a congressional committee together with the Minister of Security Ramón Sabillón. They discussed the Security Tax as well as the future of FUSINA.<sup>121</sup> According to Libre congressman Rafael Sarmiento, the funds of the controversial Security Tax are committed for the next seven years. At the same time, thanks to the repeal of the secrecy law, he hopes that Congress will have more clarity on what the money is being spent.<sup>122</sup>

## Repressions

COFADEH denounced that Junior Alfredo Godoy Velásquez faced trial, “three years after being a victim of torture and illegal detention by police officers assigned to the Villa Nueva and Kennedy neighborhoods in the capital. In spite of all the physical and emotional torture caused by the police officers' blows, the Public Prosecutor's Office charged him with the alleged crime of "Attempt against the State of Honduras””.<sup>123</sup>

## Assassinations

OACNUDH together with two Honduran human rights organization and an international human rights accompaniment project organized a visit to the Moskitia "to verify the attack on the community suffered in 2021 by state security forces that left people dead and wounded".<sup>124</sup>

## Penitentiary System

The Ministers of Defense and Security announced the gradual demilitarization of the Honduran penitentiary system.<sup>125</sup> It started with the maximum-security prisons.<sup>126</sup> Later, the Armed Forces

115 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/confirman-que-axel-lopez-tiene-orden-captura-en-195-paises-honduras-hospitales-moviles-interpol-KH6786783>

116 <https://proceso.hn/mp-espera-respuesta-de-eeuu-para-conocer-beneficiarios-con-cuentas-de-axel-lopez/>

117 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-anuncia-acciones-para-creacion-de-policia-comunitaria-y-redimir-la-policia-nacional/>

118 <https://confidencialhn.com/mario-segura-presentara-mocion-para-revisar-ley-de-escuchas/>

119 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/exclusiva-nuevo-director-de-la-policia-hondurena-alerta-que-el-crimen-organizado-intenta-hacer-fracasar-al-gobierno/>

120 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/director-de-la-policia-de-honduras-investigacion-captura-y-castigo-a-policias-corruptos-y-enfoque-comunitario/>

121 <https://confidencialhn.com/fondos-de-la-tasa-de-seguridad-están-comprometidos-por-los-proximos-siete-años/>

122 <https://confidencialhn.com/fondos-de-la-tasa-de-seguridad-están-comprometidos-por-los-proximos-siete-años/>

123 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/a-juicio-joven-victima-de-policias/>

124 <https://twitter.com/bufetedignidad/status/150167170721141146>

125 <https://proceso.hn/inicia-desmilitarizacion-de-los-centros-penales-secretaria-de-seguridad-asume-administracion/>

126 <https://proceso.hn/desmilitarizacion-de-centros-penales-inicia-con-carceles-de-maxima-seguridad/>

announced hand over control of Honduras' prisons to the police on March 10<sup>127</sup>, which later took place as scheduled.<sup>128</sup>

Xiomara additionally announced a general pardon to reduce prison overcrowding.<sup>129</sup> While welcoming the decision to demilitarize the Honduras prison, the president of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment (MNP-CONAPREV), Glenda Ayala, expressed concern about the decision to designate the Ministry of Security, specifically the National Police, to take over the direction of the National Penitentiary Institute (INP).<sup>130</sup> Mel Zelaya, in his function as presidential advisor, later spoke out in favor of a specialized police force administrating the penitentiary system.<sup>131</sup>

On March 9, Proceso Digital reported on a riot at the so-called maximum security prison La Tolva which led to the death of at least 5 inmates according to CONADEH.<sup>132</sup> The next day, the death toll was corrected to four inmates.<sup>133</sup>

## Militarization

According to sociologist and criminologist Leticia Salomón, there is an urgent need for a deep reform of the Armed Forces in Honduras which have been turned under the JOH regime in a armed branch of the presidency. Since 2009, their budget has increased from 2.1 billion to 9.3 billion Lempiras.<sup>134</sup> El Heraldo reports how the number of active members of the Armed Forces was boosted by the creation of the Military Police. Between 2000 and 2011 only some 300 people joined the Armed Forces every year, in 2014, the number reached 6000.<sup>135</sup>

In 2019, the JOH regime designated a 4 billion Lempiras plan for agricultural development under the control of the Armed Forces. The plan was widely criticized. It was meant to go on until 2025 and Criterio investigated about its current state. They find that money is still being assigned to the plan.<sup>136</sup>

## International Community

According to the president of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE), Dante Mossi, they have \$2.4 billion ready to finance projects in Honduras.<sup>137</sup>

Japan donated \$2 million to the Xiomara administration to build up a cold chain for COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>138</sup> Taiwan will donate to Honduras a \$700'000 voting system for Congress to make the process more transparent.<sup>139</sup>

127 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/08/ffaa-entrega-centros-penales-a-la-policia-nacional-el-10-de-marzo/>

128 <https://confidencialhn.com/policia-recibe-el-mando-de-direccion-y-administracion-de-los-centros-penales/>

129 <https://confidencialhn.com/presidenta-castro-anuncia-un-indulto-para-reducir-hacinamiento-en-carceles/>

130 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/ponada/demilitarizacion-de-centros-penales-respetando-legalidad-piden-organizaciones/>

131 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/12/zelaya-los-centros-penales-deben-tener-su-propia-policia/>

132 <https://proceso.hn/reportan-varias-muertes-en-la-carcel-de-la-tolva/>

133 <https://confidencialhn.com/reyerta-deja-cuatro-muertos-en-carcel-de-maxima-seguridad-la-tolva-en-moroceli/>

134 <https://criterio.hn/fuerzas-armadas-deben-entrar-en-un-proceso-de-reforma-tras-poderio-que-instauro-joh/>

135 <><https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/creacion-pmop-disparo-ingresos-ffaa-honduras-XB6838707>

136 <https://criterio.hn/militares-si-recibieron-millonarios-fondos-para-manejar-sector-agricola-segun-portal-de-finanzas/>

137 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-tiene-2400-millones-para-programas-y-proyectos-en-honduras/>

138 <https://confidencialhn.com/japon-dona-dos-millones-de-dolares-a-honduras-para-desarrollar-cadena-de-frio-en-la-secretaria-de-salud/>

139 <https://proceso.hn/gobierno-de-china-taiwan-donara-sistema-de-votacion-al-congreso-nacional/>

## US

The US Senate confirmed Laura Farnsworth Dogu as the new ambassador to Honduras. It has been almost five years since the US had an ambassador in Honduras.<sup>140</sup>

"A delegation of members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. solidarity organizations met with President Xiomara Castro of Honduras this weekend. The delegation, organized by SOA Watch and WFP Solidarity Collective, included Representatives Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Jesús "Chuy" García (IL-04), Cori Bush (MO-01), as well as representation from the office of Jan Schakowsky (IL-09). President Castro is Honduras' first woman president and was inaugurated in January following historic elections in which the Honduran people turned out in massive numbers to reject the U.S.-backed regimes that have devastated Honduras since the 2009 coup d'état."<sup>141</sup> US congressman Chuy García later tweeted on the visit. "It was uplifting to hear @XiomaraCastroZ commitment to uproot corruption and defend human rights. But for her administration to succeed, the U.S. must break from our history of human rights violations in the region that has driven internal displacement and migration for decades. I return home with a renewed determination to defend democratic governments like President Castro's throughout the Americas and work to protect oppressed communities in Honduras and worldwide. I was glad to join @RepCori and @Ilhan for this important visit to Central America."<sup>142</sup>

Political analyst Tomás Andino Mencía presented a proposal to the Xiomara administration to reconsider the US military presence in the country.<sup>143</sup>

"Xiomara Castro's presidency in Honduras offers the Biden administration the opportunity to work on addressing root causes of migration with a partner that now seems far more reliable than in El Salvador or Guatemala. And it offers the U.S. government a chance to begin to address the harm successive U.S. administrations did to the Honduran people by accepting the 2009 coup and embracing corrupt and abusive presidents in power for the last dozen years. Through its support for these repressive and corrupt leaders, the United States has helped to create and intensify the human rights crisis in Honduras. Now, the Biden Administration, if it chooses to do so, can begin to right this wrong."<sup>144</sup>

The US embassy met with president of Congress, Luis Redondo.<sup>145</sup> US Under Secretary of State Jose W. Fernandez traveled to Tegucigalpa "to engage with government officials, business leaders, and civil society to support regional investment objectives, health and environment programs, and pandemic relief".<sup>146</sup> Xiomara met with him. El Libertador reported that he announced possible investments by US companies in Honduras worth \$1.2 billion.<sup>147</sup> On March 23, the Xiomara administration met with representatives of the US Treasury "to address the fight against corruption, foreign debt, foreign investment and other issues".<sup>148</sup>

<sup>140</sup> <https://criterio.hn/senado-confirma-a-laura-dogu-como-nueva-embajadora-de-eeuu-en-honduras/>

<sup>141</sup> <https://soaw.org/members-of-u-s-congress-soa-watch-and-wfp-solidarity-collective-meet-with-president-xiomara-castro-of-honduras>

<sup>142</sup> <https://twitter.com/RepChuyGarcia/status/1507060544381063174>

<sup>143</sup> <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-de-xiomara-castro-debe-iniciar-la-salida-de-la-mision-militar-norteamericana-en-honduras/>

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.elfaro.net/en/2022/03/columns/26057/A-Chance-to-Right-US-Wrongs-in-Honduras.htm>

<sup>145</sup> <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1504147850489380865>

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.state.gov/under-secretary-fernandezs-travel-to-honduras-and-costa-rica/>

<sup>147</sup> <https://ellibertador.hn/2022/03/18/urgente-eeuu-anuncia-inversion-de-30-mil-millones-en-honduras/>

<sup>148</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/rescate-de-la-enee-reperfilamiento-de-deuda-corrupcion-y-transparencia-abordaron-autoridades-hondurenas-con-representantes-del-departamento-del-tesoro-de-eeuu/>



## Drug Trafficking

La Prensa published a series on the new era of drug trafficking in Honduras. According to the article, the 14 active drug cartels in Honduras traffic drugs worth \$22.5 billion.<sup>149</sup>

On March 2, the Foreign Ministry informed that the US requested the extradition of four more Hondurans. Their identity was unknown at that moment, which led to some speculation.<sup>150</sup> The next day, the Supreme Court nominated a judge for the requests.<sup>151</sup> El Heraldo later reported that the persons requested for extradition were not linked to Honduran politicians but rather a drug clan in the north of Honduras.<sup>152</sup>

On March 9, Seven members of the Armed Forces were detained accused of drug trafficking.<sup>153</sup> At the end of the month, the police captured Tokiro Rodas Ramirez who has been requested for extradition since 2014. "This capture was made almost 8 years later, due to the connections and ties of Mr. Ramírez, who is linked to members of the Pinto Cartel, who in turn have been associated with Juan Orlando Hernández."<sup>154</sup>

On March 22, the Supreme Court announced to hand over the complete list of those wanted for extradition to the special congressional commission on the topic.<sup>155</sup> A day later, the commission also received from the Supreme Court a list of the 32 pending extradition requests.<sup>156</sup> But according to the Minister of Security, Ramón Sabillón, there are 41 arrest warrants for people requested for extradition.<sup>157 158</sup>

"Congressman Ramón Barrios, president of the commission of deputies that investigates the justice operators relating extraditions, confirmed that they held a meeting with the investigation agencies of the United States. He also confirmed that the meeting was with representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)."<sup>159</sup>

El Pulso reported on how a recent arrest in the US of a previously unknown woman, Kemsy Torres, further highlights the connections between the National Party and drug trafficking. Kemsy was together with the drug lord Fredy Mármol who had been handed over to US authorities in October 2021. Mármol worked with Tony Hernández, JOH's brother, and El Pulso reports that Torres had links to the Nationalist member of Congress Yaudet Barbara as well as the Nationalist candidate for the mayor of Tegucigalpa, David Chávez.<sup>160</sup>

149 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/la-nueva-era-del-narco-carteles-traffican-millones-droga-honduras-BY6463289>

150 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/cancilleria-informa-que-cuatro-hondurenos-fueron-pedidos-extradicion-eeuu-DX6176104>

151 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/jueza-reina-hercules-conocera-peticiones-extradicion-cuatro-hondurenos-CY6212325>

152 <https://confidencialhn.com/segun-ha-trascendido-los-4-ciudadanos-pedidos-en-extradicion-pertenece-a-una-banda-criminal-dedicada-al-narcotrafico-y-no-estarian-ligados-a-politicos-hondurenos/>

153 <https://confidencialhn.com/mp-solicita-mas-de-12-anos-de-carcel-contra-siete-militares-condenados-por-trafico-de-cocaina/>

154 [https://twitter.com/Prohn\\_Honduras/status/1505003927074398215](https://twitter.com/Prohn_Honduras/status/1505003927074398215)

155 <https://proceso.hn/csj-enviara-este-miercoles-a-comision-del-cn-lista-de-ordenes-de-capturas-de-extraditables/>

156 <https://confidencialhn.com/csj-remite-al-congreso-nacional-el-listado-de-ordenes-de-capturas-pendientes-de-extraditables/>

157 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/secretaria-de-seguridad-asegura-que-existen-41-ordenes-de-captura-por-extradicion/>

158 <https://criterio.hn/informes-de-secretaria-de-seguridad-y-corte-suprema-parecen-esconder-nombres-de-extraditables/>

159 <https://confidencialhn.com/comision-del-congreso-nacional-hondureno-se-reunio-con-agentes-de-la-dea-cia-y-fbi-para-tratar-tema-de-extradiciones/>

160 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/21/arresto-de-dama-en-ee-uu-reafirma-nexos-entre-narco-marmol-y-nacionalistas/>

## JOH

The CNA published a report on the fall of JOH.<sup>161</sup>

One of JOH's co-conspirator, the former director of the Honduran Police, Juan Carlos “El Tigre” Bonilla was arrested this month.<sup>162</sup> He faces an extradition to the US. He was in hiding for two years after having been "charged in April 2020 by US prosecutors in New York with allegedly abusing his official position to protect multi-ton cocaine shipments on behalf of Hernández, and his brother Tony Hernández".<sup>163</sup> Honduras Now linked to some helpful background information on him and the charges he faces.<sup>164</sup> A day later, Bonilla had his first extradition hearing.<sup>165</sup> The second one will be held on April 8. In the meantime, he will be not in police custody, but in the hands of the Armed Forces which raised some suspicions.<sup>166</sup>

US Senator Patrick Leahy commented on the arrest. “For years I urged successive U.S. administrations to cut ties with “El Tigre,” Honduras’ feared former National Police Chief. Instead, they treated him like a legitimate partner, even though he was deeply involved in the corruption and brutality of drug trafficking. The Department of Justice, in seeking his arrest and extradition, deserves praise for reaffirming that no one is above the law. It is a message that the Honduran people have long waited to hear.”<sup>167</sup>

Criterio reported on the case of a former commander of the Armed Forces who allegedly trafficked arms to a drug trafficker allied with JOH.<sup>168</sup> Libre congressman Ramón Barrios announced to question Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla in Congress once JOH has been extradited. He demands explanations for why Chinchilla has not one after JOH during his two terms as Attorney General.<sup>169</sup> "The deputies of the National Congress do not discard the possibility of questioning the Attorney General of the Republic and the magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice, in order to submit them to impeachment for actions contrary to the interests of the population and for the multiple denunciations that exist in the performance of their duties. The vice-president of the National Congress, Fátima Mena, said in Radio Progreso that to achieve the impeachment trial 86 votes are needed, which could be obtained with the new deputies of the National Party who, so far, have shown their interest in improving the reality of the country. For political analyst Elvin Hernández, the approval of an impeachment trial against the Attorney General and magistrates of the Court, is a vital issue for the country, because it has been proven that these officials have only worked to benefit Juan Orlando Hernández and his criminal structure."<sup>170</sup>

InSight Crime reported on Bonilla's arrest and what it could mean for JOH. "Bonilla's arrest significantly raises the stakes for former president Hernández, who stands to lose the most if his former ally is extradited and decides to cooperate with US authorities."<sup>171</sup> On March 15, the

161 <https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/La-caida-de-un-expresidente-Juan-Orlando-Hernandez.pdf>

162 <https://criterio.hn/capturan-al-tigre-bonilla-supuesto-coconspirador-de-joh/>

163 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/honduran-police-chief-bonilla-arrested-drug-trafficking>

164 <https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2020/4/30/us-indictment-of-el-tigre-bonilla-just-the-tip-of-the-impunity-iceberg>

165 <https://confidencialhn.com/audiencia-de-informacion-del-exjefe-policial-el-tigre-bonilla-se-realizara-en-el-fuerte-general-cabanaz/>

166 <https://twitter.com/jeffgemst/status/1502028490081812486>

167 <https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/statement-on-the-arrest-of-former-honduran-police-chief-juan-carlos-bonilla>

168 <https://criterio.hn/excomandante-de-la-105-brigada-habria-proveido-armas-a-supuesto-narcosocio-de-joh/>

169 <https://confidencialhn.com/diputado-advierte-que-interpelara-al-fiscal-general-despues-que-joh-sea-extraditado-a-ee-uu/>

170 <https://radioprogressohn.net/aplicacion-movil/demandan-aplicar-juicio-politico-a-fiscal-general-y-a-presidente-de-la-cjs/>

171 <https://insightcrime.org/honduras-organized-crime-news/arrest-former-honduras-top-cop-raises-stakes-for-embattled-ex-president/>

congressional commission responsible for investigating extradition requests held a meeting with the president of the Supreme Court, Rolando Argueta. He informed them that there are still 32 pending extradition requests.<sup>172</sup> In the midst of this, a debate has resurfaced in Honduras if the so-called Auto Acordado for extraditions issued by the Supreme Court in 2013 is sufficient or if a real Extradition Law is needed.<sup>173</sup>

On March 16, JOH's second extradition took place and the sitting judge approved the extradition.<sup>174</sup> "Pending a possible appeal, Juan Orlando Hernández, who left office in January after eight years in power, is one step closer to being at the mercy of the US federal courts, where he is charged as part of a vast drug trafficking conspiracy. In the event of an appeal, the case would be decided by a majority of the 15-member Supreme Court in about a week."<sup>175</sup> Just after the court ruling, JOH was allowed by his close friend and president of the Supreme Court, Rolando Argueta, to record a video talking to the Honduran people about his "successful" presidency and about being framed.<sup>176</sup> This further highlighted the need to impeach Argueta. UFERCO's Luis Santos called it "REPROCHABLE, it shows the weakness of our institutions".<sup>177</sup> But it is not just Argueta. Joaquín Mejía also called out other pillars that had sustained JOH against all evidence: corporate media outlets, the business community, evangelical churches and powerful members of the Catholic church, as well as some NGOs, especially the Association of a More Just Society (ASJ).<sup>178</sup> Luis Santos addressed the members of the Security and Defense Council: "All those who were part of the DEFENSE COUNCIL, who still hold public office, for dignity should RESIGN, at that level they knew everything that was going on in the country and gave instructions. If they did not know that JOH was a drug trafficker, they were inefficient and if they knew, for hiding it."<sup>179</sup>

On March 19, JOH's defense team appealed the extradition of their client.<sup>180</sup> In their appeal, JOH's defense team claimed that there were 32 legal complaints filed against him at the MP and they further asked the Supreme Court to determine if JOH has immunity as a member of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN).<sup>181</sup> <sup>182</sup> Many informed commentators, including the head of UFERCO, had highlighted that the PARLACEN membership does not protect JOH from an extradition, lets hope the Supreme Court also sees it that way. The 32 alleged legal complaints are also interesting because a previous request filed to the MP had them saying that there were no open investigation against JOH and this is the determining factor when deciding about the extradition.

On March 25, "[t]he president of the Judicial Power, Rolando Argueta, indicated to La Tarde de HRN that, among the aspects that will be taken into account to resolve the writ, are the grievances or damages that the defense party claims were committed against Hernández in the resolution ordering his extradition, which was issued by a natural judge. Likewise, the evaluation of the legal arguments set forth in the brief and the principles and guarantees of objectivity and independence

172 <https://radioprogreso.net/aplicacion-movil/hay-32-solicitudes-de-extradicion-segun-el-poder-judicial/>

173 <https://proceso.hn/auto-acordado-o-ley-de-extradicion/>

174 <https://criterio.hn/se-va-joh-para-nueva-york-juez-concede-extradicion/>

175 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/honduran-supreme-court-extradition-ex-president-herandez>

176 <https://criterio.hn/a-un-paso-de-su-extradicion-joh-solicita-mas-privilegios-desde-la-silla-del-titular-de-la-corte-suprema/>

177 [https://twitter.com/Luis\\_Santos\\_C/status/1504649513079910417](https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1504649513079910417)

178 <https://criterio.hn/medios-empresarios-religiosos-y-ong-son-columnas-que-sostuvieron-estructura-de-joh-joaquin-mejia/>

179 [https://twitter.com/Luis\\_Santos\\_C/status/1504458237499908104](https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/1504458237499908104)

180 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/defensa-juan-orlando-herandez-interpone-apelacion-corte-suprema-justicia-JM6619784>

181 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/32-causas-abiertas-expresidente-joh-honduras-defensa-extradicion-JY6661469>

182 <https://criterio.hn/defensa-de-joh-busca-todas-las-instancias-para-evitar-extradicion/>

required to issue a ruling. As a last point and in general, the plenary will discuss "the content of the appealed decision", indicated Argueta”.

On March 28, JOH's fate was sealed. The Plenary of the Supreme Court rejected the appeal making JOH's extradition imminent.<sup>183</sup> "The decision by the court ends a six-week saga that began with the arrest of Hernández on February 15, as well as years of speculation over whether the once untouchable former president would be forced to face the accusations in a U.S. federal court. (...) Upon arriving in the United States, the former president will be presented before the same court in the Southern District of New York where his brother was convicted. If convicted by a jury, Hernández, 53, would face a mandatory-minimum sentence of 40 years in prison."<sup>184</sup> The next day, JOH's legal team presented another challenge but according to legal experts they have already used up all resources and the appeal is inadmissible.<sup>185</sup>

The National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) denounced that JOH's wife Ana García transferred some 60 million Lempiras in the name of JOH in the midst of his extradition trial.<sup>186</sup> The CNA wondered why the MP did not act as it could have seized JOH's possessions as they may be linked to drug trafficking.<sup>187</sup> Luis Redondo, president of Congress, tweeted: "I warn the banking institutions that are moving properties of drug trafficker Juan Orlando Hernandez, they incur in several crimes."<sup>188</sup> A day later, on March 30, the MP requested the seizure of JOH's properties.<sup>189</sup> The Supreme Court announced they will rule on a possible seizure of his properties.<sup>190</sup>

## Varia

### Amnesty Bill

After seven years in prison for corruption, the former Hondutel director Marcelo Chimirri was discharged by a judge.<sup>191</sup> The ruling was based on the Amnesty Law which caused an outcry.<sup>192</sup> PSH announced a reform to the bill to avoid such cases.<sup>193</sup> "In view of the case, Ligia Ramos, deputy of the Salvador Party of Honduras (PSH), issued her opinion through a publication on her official Twitter account. "Chimirri has judicial processes before the coup d'état! He is not a political prisoner!" she said. "What a thing, they deny Cofadeh amnesty for real political prisoners and on the other hand they release criminals.", she added."<sup>194</sup> Trying to undermine the work of COFADEH in freeing real political prisoners and criminalized human rights defender, journalist Renato de Jesús Álvarez accused COFADEH of having certified the amnesty request of Chimirri. "The general coordinator of Berta Oliva, at no time has she been interviewed or consulted by TN5 Estelar to address this issue, however, they issued fake news. (...) The renowned human rights defender, Berta

183 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/pleno-csj-ratifica-extradicion-juan-orlando-herandez-XI6875635>

184 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/juan-orlando-herandez-appeal-extradition-loses>

185 <https://criterio.hn/defensa-de-joh-alega-violacion-a-derechos-humanos-en-recorso-de-amparo-presentado-ante-la-corte-suprema/>

186 <https://criterio.hn/convenios-con-bancos-permitio-a-ana-garcia-trasladar-en-tiempo-record-bienes-de-joh-bajo-dacion/>

187 <https://confidencialhn.com/ana-garcia-traslado-60-millones-de-lempiras-en-concepto-de-pago-a-un-banco-hondureno-hace-siete-dias-revela-cna/>

188 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-continua-sin-asegurar-bienes-de-juan-orlando-herandez/>

189 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-pide-asegurar-bienes-de-joh-tras-acciones-atipicas-de-su-esposa/>

190 <https://tiempo.hn/incautacion-de-bienes-a-joh-honduras-csj/fdac>

191 <https://confidencialhn.com/tras-permanecer-7-anos-en-prision-queda-en-libertad-exgerente-de-hondutel-marcelo-chimirri/>

192 <https://criterio.hn/pacto-de-impunidad-disfrazado-de-amnistia-otorga-libertad-a-marcelo-chimirri>

193 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/03/bancada-del-psh-presentara-iniciativa-para-reformar-ley-de-amnistia/>

194 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/ligia-ramos-postura-marcelo-chimirri-favorecido-ley-amnistia-NI6219438>

Oliva, affirms that Mr. Marcelo Chimirri has not had any communication with COFADEH, nor has he been issued any accreditation or proof.<sup>195</sup> COFADEH denounced a smear campaign against the Amnesty Law.<sup>196</sup>

A court in San Pedro Sula denied the application of the Amnesty Law in the case of the former mayor of San Pedro Sula, Rodolfo Padilla Sunseri. His crime, embezzlement, goes back before the coup in 2009. He has been on the run since 2017.<sup>197</sup> Sunseri tried a second time, which was again denied.<sup>198</sup>

According to the deputy minister at the National Agrarian Institute (INA), Rafael Alegría, more than 7000 criminalized campesinos could benefit from the Amnesty Law.<sup>199</sup> Defensores en Línea reported on how the Amnesty Bill could benefit the criminalized defenders, over 74, from Zacate Grande.<sup>200</sup>

On March 8, judge Karla Romero who had sworn in Xiomara Castro presented a constitutional challenge against the Amnesty Law. She clarified not to be against an amnesty law, but it should be done correctly. She further said that no further request for amnesty could be treated as long as the challenge has not been resolved.<sup>201</sup> This turned out to be wrong as the law was applied in more cases, e.g. in the one from the political prisoners in Pimienta (see Political Prisoners sub-section). The law was also applied to 22 Sitraunah union members persecuted under the JOH regime.<sup>202</sup> By the end of the month, the Human Rights Secretariat informed that some 100 Hondurans had by that point benefited from the the Amnesty Law. "In this regard, the Minister of Human Rights, Natalie Roque, explained that the amnesties occurred in a context "where political persecution had various manifestations". She then let it be known that the charges were for usurpation, kidnapping, terrorism and aggravated arson, and would not have to do exactly with a political crime "per se" such as sedition.<sup>203</sup>

## Poverty

2.4 million Honduras are living in a state of food crisis according to the UN World Food Program.<sup>204</sup>

Starting this month, families consuming less than 150 kW will not have to pay for their electricity.<sup>205</sup> This is even more important as at the same time, higher fuel prices continued to worsen the situation of poverty-stricken Honduras. FOSDEH demanded a strategy from the Xiomara administration in how to tackle this.<sup>206</sup> Xiomara announced that the government would absorb 50% of the price increase while evaluating other options.<sup>207 208</sup>

195 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-emplaza-a-renato-alyvarez-a-que-muestre-el-numero-de-acreditacion-que-extendio-a-chimirri/>

196 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/existe-un-guion-y-una-campana-para-desprestigar-el-decreto-de-amnistia/>

197 <https://proceso.hn/deniegan-solicitud-de-amnistia-a-exalcalde-sampedrano-rodolfo-padilla-sunseri/>

198 <https://confidencialhn.com/por-segunda-ocasion-deniegan-solicitud-de-amnistia-a-padilla-sunseri/>

199 <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-7-mil-campesinos-seran-beneficiados-con-amnistia-politica-segun-instituto-nacional-agrario/>

200 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/amnistia-politica-favorecera-a-defensores-de-zacate-grande/>

201 <https://proceso.hn/jueza-karla-romero-interpone-recurso-de-inconstitucionalidad-en-contra-de-decreto-de-amnistia/>

202 <https://confidencialhn.com/csj-da-sobresimiento-definitivo-a-22-sindicalistas-del-sitraunah-tras-beneficiarse-de-la-amnistia-politica/>

203 <https://hondudiario.com/nacionales/secretaria-de-ddhh-ha-extendido-alrededor-de-50-constancias-de-amnistia-politica/>

204 <https://confidencialhn.com/unos-2-4-millones-de-hondurenos-en-crisis-alimentaria-por-covid-19-y-huracanes/>

205 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/este-mes-aplicaran-subsidio-de-energia-a-1340000-familias-hondurenas-XY6155909>

206 <https://confidencialhn.com/senalan-que-el-gobierno-debe-establecer-una-estrategia-por-incremento-en-costo-de-los-carburantes/>

207 <https://twitter.com/XiomaraCastroZ/status/1503372509781110786>

208 <https://criterio.hn/subsidios-en-combustibles-y-energia-son-necesarios-pero-deben-ser-focalizados/>

"The Government, through the Secretariat of Development and Social Inclusion (SEDIS), set up an intersectoral roundtable to socialize the new models of solidarity housing, in order to improve the living conditions of the poorest Honduran families and reduce the housing deficit of 1.4 million households throughout the country."<sup>209</sup>

Remittances sent to Honduras in the first two months of 2022 were 25.8% higher than in 2021.<sup>210</sup>

## Education

Out of the aprox. 17'000 schools in Honduras, 12'000 need to be completely rebuilt, according to the Minister of Education Daniel Sponda.<sup>211</sup> On a more positive note, over a million children were inscribed in the public education system in the first days of March reaching 1.2 million inscriptions.<sup>212</sup> But at the same time, according to teacher leader Eulogio Chávez, only 2% of Honduran children had returned to class.<sup>213</sup> "Every one agrees that the pandemic was no longer the main problem for the 2022 return to school, whose enrollment process was extended until March, the obstacle encompasses a whole social problem, starting with poverty, which reaches more than 70 percent of the population."<sup>214</sup>

On March 22, the Minister of Education Daniel Sponda announced to be willing to discuss the Teachers' Statute which remained inactive for a decade after a decision taken by the previous nationalist government.<sup>215</sup> Three days later, "[t]he Education Commission of the National Congress, chaired by Congressman Edgardo Casaña, met with the head of the Ministry of Education, Daniel Esponda, the rector of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH), Francisco Herrera, the rector of the National Pedagogical University (UPN), Hermes Alduvín Díaz and representatives of the teachers' unions to develop the plan for the refoundation of the Honduran educational system".<sup>216</sup>

## Migration

Hondurans held a protest in front of the White House demanding an extension of the Temporary Protection Status (TPS).<sup>217</sup>

According to human rights defender Itsmania Platero, more than 7000 Hondurans have left the country so far this year.<sup>218</sup> At the same time, "[i]n the first quarter of 2022, deportations of Hondurans exceeded the statistics of the last eight years and the transit of migrants from other nations continued to increase, complicating the already difficult situation in this Central American country, which today received nine bodies of nationals who perished on the migratory route."<sup>219</sup>

209 <https://confidencialhn.com/ante-deficit-habitacional-gobierno-presenta-nuevos-modelos-de-viviendas-solidarias/>

210 <https://proceso.hn/las-remesas-en-honduras-suben-el-25-8-entre-enero-y-febrero/>

211 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/unos-12-mil-centros-escolares-necesitan-ser-reconstruidos/>

212 <https://confidencialhn.com/a-1-2-millones-asciende-la-matricula-en-el-sistema-educativo-publico-nacional/>

213 <https://proceso.hn/ni-el-2-de-estudiantes-ha-regresado-a-clases-presenciales-en-honduras-segun-dirigencia-magisterial/>

214 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-la-pobreza-es-el-principal-impedimento-para-el-retorno-a-clases-presenciales/>

215 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/22/el-ejecutivo-anuncia-que-renegociara-con-maestros-el-estatuto-del-docente/>

216 <https://confidencialhn.com/sectores-educativos-y-comision-del-cn-buscan-desarrollar-plan-de-refundacion-del-sistema-educativo-hondureno/>

217 <https://proceso.hn/manifstantes-hondurenos-piden-extension-del-tps-frente-a-la-casa-blanca/>

218 <https://confidencialhn.com/mas-de-7-mil-hondurenos-han-salido-del-pais-rumbo-a-ee-uu-segun-un-informe-de-las-autoridades-de-mexico/>

219 <https://criterio.hn/migracion-de-hondurenos-un-reto-toral-del-gobierno-de-xiomara-castro/>

According to the situation of stranded migrants in Honduras, COFADEH speaks of a crisis in need of urgent attention.<sup>220</sup> "After the multiple complaints of migrants of different nationalities in transit through Honduras, stranded particularly in Danlí, El Paraíso, the Minister of Human Rights, Natalie Roque, confirmed that they have taken action on this issue, have confirmed the violations and filed complaints with the appropriate authorities."<sup>221</sup> According to COIPRODEN, the number of stranded migrants in the south of Honduras has reached 8000.<sup>222</sup> At the end of the month, Roque announced that they were considering declaring a state of humanitarian emergency due to the stranded migrants in the south of Honduras.<sup>223</sup>

On March 22, USAID and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) presented a joint report on migration dynamics in the Northern Triangle countries and the reintegration of deported migrants.<sup>224</sup> USAID also presented the project "Creating my future here".<sup>225</sup>

## Agriculture

"The deputy of the National Congress for the Libertad y Refundación (Libre) party, Jari Dixon, presented this Thursday a bill so that the lands in possession of the Office for the Administration of Seized Property (OABI) become the property of peasant groups in Honduras."<sup>226</sup> According to the director of the National Agrarian Institute (INA), at least 15 billion Lempiras are needed to reactivate the agricultural sector.<sup>227</sup> "An emergency must be declared in the agricultural sector due to the drought, lack of credits and high costs of inputs, said Wednesday the head of the Liberal Bancada, Mario Segura. "We do not know if there are special financing available, those that existed in Banhprovi through trusts that were obtained with the world bank, with very low interest rates and placed in the national bank", Segura expressed to journalists."<sup>228</sup>

## Elections

The EU presented its final report on the 2021 general elections. The report included 23 recommendations, among them to strengthen the National Electoral Council (CNE) as well as the fiscal unit overseeing campaign finances.<sup>229</sup> President Xiomara Castro met with the head of the Electoral Observation Mission of the EU, Željana Zovko.<sup>230</sup>

At the end of March, Congress elected the new representatives from Libre at the Electoral Justice Tribunal and the National Electoral Council.<sup>231</sup>

220 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/urge-atencion-ante-crisis-migratoria-en-el-paraiso/>

221 <https://proceso.hn/sedh-constata-y-denuncia-violaciones-de-derechos-humanos-a-migrantes-en-transito-por-honduras/>

222 <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/alrededor-de-8-mil-migrantes-esperan-zona-oriental-de-honduras/>

223 <https://confidencialhn.com/ministra-de-ddhh-senala-que-no-se-descarta-declarar-emergencia-humanitaria-ante-alto-flujo-de-migrantes-varados-en-zona-oriental-del-pais/>

224 <https://confidencialhn.com/usa-id-y-la-oim-presentan-informe-sobre-migracion-en-el-triangulo-norte-de-c-a/>

225 <https://proceso.hn/usa-id-lanza-proyecto-creando-mi-futuro-aqui-para-prevenir-la-migracion-irregular/>

226 <https://confidencialhn.com/proponen-en-el-congreso-nacional-traspasar-tierras-incautadas-a-grupos-de-campesinos/>

227 <https://confidencialhn.com/15-mil-millones-de-lempiras-requiere-honduras-para-reactivar-sector-agrario/>

228 <https://confidencialhn.com/analizan-declarar-emergencia-en-sector-agricola-ante-panorama-desolador-por-la-sequia-falta-de-creditos-y-altos-costos/>

229 <https://criterio.hn/despolitizar-y-garantizar-independencia-financiera-del-cne-entre-recomendaciones-electorales-de-la-union-europea/>

230 <https://proceso.hn/presidenta-castro-se-reune-con-jefa-de-la-moe-ue-para-conversar-sobre-el-informe-final-de-elecciones/>

231 <https://proceso.hn/cn-elige-a-ernesto-paz-como-magistrado-del-tje-y-julio-navarro-como-consejero-del-cne/>

## Debt

Honduras paid almost 14 billion Lempiras to service its debt mid-March.<sup>232</sup> This is only 25% of the debt that needs to be serviced this year alone.<sup>233</sup> According to FOSDEH, a IMF mission will come to Honduras to revise the state finances.<sup>234</sup> Economist and former aspiring presidential candidate for Libre, Nelson Ávila, denounced that the JOH regime left Honduras with a "corrupt debt" and he demanded the IMF to investigate this.<sup>235</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

This month, this is part light, part doubt and concern. "After two difficult and agitated months, the Convergence Against Continuism assumes the responsibility of pronouncing its autonomous and critical word. We continue to place our trust in the current government. (...) We positively recognize the decisions that have been taken in the process of repealing laws and decrees that supported the dictatorship (...) We are concerned that after two months, it has not been possible to establish a fluid communication between the different State agencies and the citizenry, leaving a feeling of lack of information and chaos in the decisions that are being taken. (...) We are concerned about the clientelistic environment that permeates the various State agencies, both at the central level as well as in the departments and municipalities. (...) We recognize the efforts to attack the criminal structures on which the dictatorship was based. (...) We recognize the government's openness to fostering relations with the international community, but we are concerned about the signs of an absorbing presence on the part of the United States government (...) In the weeks of transition after the electoral triumph, there was a euphoria of calls and dialogues that anticipated closeness and listening on the part of the new government. Two months later, the closeness and listening have turned into distance and inconsistent and arbitrary decisions. (...) To resume this closeness, dialogue and listening to different sectors of society, and to make important decisions based on this listening and not only based on partisan interests or according to activists' demands, is a necessity if the government really wants to continue to be a reference of hope. We need more presence and words from President Xiomara Castro, as head of the Executive, and less presence and words from delegates and advisors who in fact establish a cold wall between the citizenry and a president who represents trust, harmony and consensus among the vast majority of Honduran society."<sup>236</sup>

232 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/03/21/finanzas-realiza-pago-de-13-mil-millones-de-lempiras-en-concepto-de-deuda/>

233 <https://confidencialhn.com/13-mil-millones-de-lempiras-que-fueron-abonados-representa-el-25-de-la-deuda-a-pagar-este-ano-senala-hugo-noe-pino/>

234 <https://confidencialhn.com/fosdeh-anuncia-que-llegara-a-honduras-una-mision-del-fondo-monetario-internacional/>

235 <https://confidencialhn.com/una-deuda-corrupta-de-1-7-mil-millones-hereda-el-gobierno-de-joh-reprocha-economista-nelson-avila/>

236 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/posicionamiento-de-ccc-a-dos-meses-de-gobierno/>



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

Past Activities:

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Upcoming Activities:

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