

# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – October 2022

October was another devastating month the LGBTQI+ community in Honduras. There was an attempted murder of defender Arnaldo Díaz Bonilla and trans woman Melissa Núñez was murdered. The situation of journalist is equally worrisome. Journalist Edwin Josué Andino was murdered at home in Comayagüela together with his father. Even though their underlying law has been repealed, the ZEDEs continue to cause problems in Honduras. This month, the people behind it even received undue support by two US Senators. The US-Honduran relationship more broadly was a major topic throughout October. But there were also some more hopeful news, as for example the Supreme Court election is moving along according to plan. A key body for the government's anti-corruption plans. Welcome to another month in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

## Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	3
Human Rights and Their Defenders.....	4
Assassinations.....	4
Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment.....	4
Indigenous Peoples.....	4
The Case of Berta Cáceres.....	5
LGBTQ.....	5
Assassinations.....	5
Freedom of Expression and Journalists.....	5
Assassinations.....	6
Violence against Women.....	7
Political Prisoners.....	8
Extractive Industries.....	8
Agriculture.....	8
Mining.....	9
Hydroelectricity.....	9
ZEDEs.....	9
Corruption and Its Enemies.....	11
CICIH.....	11
The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies.....	12
IHSS.....	13
Invest-H.....	13
Palmerola.....	13
State Security Forces.....	13
Repressions.....	14
Assassinations.....	15
Penitentiary System.....	15
Militarization.....	15
International Community.....	16
US.....	16
EU.....	16
Drug Trafficking.....	17
JOH.....	17
Varia.....	18
Rains.....	18
Supreme Court Election.....	18
Penal Code.....	20
Migration.....	20
Xiomara Administration.....	21
Poverty.....	24
Education.....	24
Public Health.....	25
Economy.....	25
And Light at the End of a Month.....	25

# 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

Indigenous Tolupán defender Reinaldo Barahona was awarded the Carlos Escaleras Award.<sup>1</sup> "OACNUDH welcomes the seventh edition of the Carlos Escaleras National Human Rights Award, a recognition that honors his career and legacy. OACNUDH recognizes the work of all human rights defenders and congratulates the defenders awarded with such honorable recognition."<sup>2</sup>

## Assassinations

"The Inter-American Court of Human Rights, IACtHR, sentenced the State of Honduras for serious human rights violations in the crime against communist leader Herminio Deras García, which occurred in January 1983. The reparation measures contemplate different aspects among them a mausoleum in the name of the victim, punishment for all those responsible and pecuniary measures, according to the hearing held this October 03, 2022."<sup>3</sup>

## Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

"The Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (Ofraneh) denounced the death threat against the prosecutor of the Triunfo de la Cruz Land Defense Committee, Alfredo López Álvarez, if he does not leave the community and cease the struggle for the restitution of the rights of the Garífuna people."<sup>4 5</sup>

Christopher Castillo of ARCAH suffered harassment and death threats related to continuing fight against the ZEDEs.<sup>6</sup>

"The Lenca Indigenous Council of the community of Upa, Cerro Grande, Santa María, department of La Paz, denounced that four members of the National Police and two members of the National Army, assigned to the municipality of San Pedro de Tutule, accompanied by Roberto Díaz, police judge of that municipality, broke down the security gate installed in the center of the community."<sup>7</sup>

Human rights defender Dina Meza denounces police surveillance.<sup>8</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

"In their struggle to defend their ancestral territories, Honduras' Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous peoples have faced a near-constant cycle of assaults by the previous Honduran government, the elements of the narco-dictatorship that still exist in the Public Ministry and the Supreme Court of the Honduran government, powerful elites, and organized crime. Ongoing targets of these assaults are Grassroots International partners Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña/Black Fraternal

1 <https://criterio.hn/septima-entrega-del-premio-carlos-escaleras-reconoce-labor-de-pueblos-indigenas-en-honduras/>

2 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1585439693667188736>

3 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/pag/index.php/articulos/monitoreo/114-39-anos-despues-del-crimen-del-dirigente-comunista-herminio-deras-estado-de-honduras-fue-declarado-culpable-en-la-corteidh>

4 <https://criterio.hn/amenazan-a-muerte-a-lider-garifuna-sino-abandona-comunidad-del-triunfo-de-la-cruz/>

5 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1585843298404831232>

6 <https://twitter.com/hondurasol/status/1583232900929318913>

7 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/portada-alertas/1551-consejo-indigena-lenca-denuncia-atropello-por-parte-de-las-autoridades-de-tutule-la-paz>

8 <https://proceso.hn/defensora-dina-meza-denuncia-que-es-objeto-de-vigilancia-por-parte-de-la-policia/>

Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) and Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras/Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). In response to escalated aggression against leaders of OFRANEH and COPINH in recent months, 85 organizations from different parts of the world have signed the following open letter to Honduran authorities."<sup>9</sup>

COPINH informed about an upcoming trial against a former member of the Armed Forces, Kevin Saravia, held responsible for attempted murder of indigenous Lenca leader Alan García in 2013 in Río Blanco.<sup>10 11</sup> On October 17, the trial was suspended without giving a new date.<sup>12 13</sup>

"The Garífunas residing in the community of Punta Gorda in the insular municipality of Roatán, Bay Islands, in the Honduran Caribbean, demand the titling of their entire community territory and not just a fraction of it, as has occurred to date, said the Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (Ofraneh)." <sup>14</sup>

## **The Case of Berta Cáceres**

COPINH denounced a meeting between President Xiomara with Jacobo Nicolás Atala Zablah, one of the masterminds of Berta Caceress' murder, as appalling.<sup>15</sup>

## **LGBTIQ+**

OACNUDH condemned the attempted murder of LGBTIQ+ defender Arnaldo Díaz Bonilla on October 26 in La Ceiba.<sup>16</sup>

## **Assassinations**

Trans woman Melissa Núñez was murdered in Morocelí, El Paraíso. "According to eyewitnesses, Melissa was near her home when hooded men in a vehicle got out and shot her to death."<sup>17</sup> OACNUDH denounced the murder, the sixth trans woman murdered this year out of 33 murdered LGBTIQ+ activists.<sup>18 19</sup> A day later, the police presented worrisome possible motives for the murder of trans activist Melissa Núñez (see previous days): a crime of passion or drug trafficking...<sup>20</sup>

## **Freedom of Expression and Journalists**

"The director and representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) Cluster Office in Central America, Alexander Leicht, said that practicing journalism in Honduras is "quite dangerous". "<sup>21</sup>

9 <https://grassrootsonline.org/blog/global-solidarity-with-honduran-communities-and-movements-under-attack/>

10 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1577718223260327936>

11 <https://copinh.org/2022/10/el-pueblo-lenca-de-rio-blanco-merece-obtener-justicia-en-el-caso-allan-garcia/>

12 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1582066507877474305>

13 <https://criterio.hn/reprograman-juicio-de-militar-acusado-de-tentativa-de-homicidio-contralider-lenca/>

14 <https://criterio.hn/garifunas-de-punta-gorda-exigen-titulacion-comunitaria-de-su-territorio/>

15 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1586439367052009475>

16 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1587825852162744321>

17 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/19/asesinan-a-mujer-trans-en-moroceli-el-paraiso/>

18 <https://twitter.com/OACNUDH/status/1583095282178265089>

19 <https://criterio.hn/oacnud-pide-a-autoridades-hondurenas-pronta-investigacion-con-enfoque-de-genero-en-muerte-de-mujer-trans/>

20 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/hipotesis-investiga-dpi-asesinado-mujer-trans-moroceli-el-paraiso-AN10590819>

21 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/27/honduras-pais-bastante-peligroso-para-ejercer-el-periodismo-segun-unesco/>

ConexiHon reported on the fear of criminalization of journalists due to libel laws and the resulting self-censorship.<sup>22</sup> At the same time in Congress, there finally seemed to be the will to depenalize crimes against honor.<sup>23</sup>

Criterio reported on the approval of a controversial bill. "A controversial executive decree, under which the General Directorate of Information and Press (DGIP) is created, has been approved in Honduras. Among other aspects, under this regulation, the Government is authorized to monitor and diagnose all media, traditional or alternative, operating in the country. Executive Decree 023-2022, which consists of three articles, was approved by the Council of Ministers on September 16, 2022 and three days later, on September 19, it was published in the official newspaper La Gaceta. (...) Although the Minister of Transparency, Edmundo Orellana, assures that the decree does not pose a risk or show a "pretense of attacking freedom of the press", he does consider that "its creation seemed unnecessary".<sup>24</sup> The Minister of the Secretariat of Strategic Planning, Ricardo Salgado, denied to Contracorriente that this is the beginning of a dictatorship to control information in Honduras and joined the governmental chorus that repeats that criticism of this law is part of a destabilization campaign against the government of Xiomara Castro."<sup>25</sup>

C-Libre published a press release: "C-Libre calls on the Government of the President, Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, to immediately repeal PCM 023-2022, while demanding actions in accordance with the law for the unrestricted respect of Freedom of Expression, remembering that Freedom of Expression is not a concession of the States, but a fundamental right. Freedom of Expression is fundamental in the consolidation and development of Democracy and the protection of Human Rights and freedom of the press."<sup>26</sup> Padre Melo also commented on this. "Trying to convince critics with control laws or threats is to fuel polarization. The best way to respond to criticism and attacks is to do things well and with transparency. Opening the wide avenues of free speech and listening will give prestige to the government."<sup>27</sup> A day later, Criterio reported that there was also a great need to undo some of the attacks on press freedom from the JOH-era. Journalists call on the government to repeal decree 86-2013 more or less openly buys favorable media coverage.<sup>28</sup>

## Assassinations

Journalist Edwin Josué Andino was murdered at home in Comayagüela together with his father. According to media reports, men dressed in police uniform are responsible for the murders.<sup>29</sup> OACNUDH condemned the murders and demanded a swift and thorough investigation.<sup>30</sup> A week later, the police informed that they had found videos of the murder of Andino and his father on the cell phones of recently arrested gang members.<sup>30</sup>

22 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/2023-consolida-la-autocensura-por-la-criminalizacion-a-periodistas-en-honduras>

23 <https://criterio.hn/delitos-contr-el-honor-estan-en-vias-de-ser-despenalizados/>

24 <https://criterio.hn/advierten-que-decreto-recientemente-aprobado-podria-alentar-una-concentracion-de-la-informacion-de-honduras/>

25 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/10/15/decreto-ejecutivo-abre-polemica-sobre-libertad-de-prensa-en-honduras/>

26 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/cl/index.php/pronunciamientos/1546-direccion-general-de-informacion-y-prensa-camino-a-la-concentracion-del-discurso-publico-en-honduras>

27 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/12/leyes-de-control-de-medios-o-amenazas-es-atizar-polarizacion-padre-ismael-moreno/>

28 <https://criterio.hn/derogacion-de-ley-de-canje-publicitario-no-puede-seguir-postergandose/>

29 <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/pag/index.php/articulos/amenazas/116-periodista-y-su-padre-son-asesinados-en-colonia-capitalina-supuestamente-por-hombres-vestidos-de-policias>

30 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/dpi-video-asesinato-periodista-edwin-andino-padre-celulares-pandilleros-HN10590205>

## Violence against Women

More than 7400 women have been murdered in Honduras since 2002, on average one per day. 95% of the cases remain in impunity.<sup>31</sup> "The message of impunity in cases of femicide is that killing a woman is not so serious, that women's lives are not so important, and that there is evident collusion of the justice system."<sup>32</sup> "The Center for Women's Rights (CDM) says that 211 women were violently murdered in Honduras since Sept. 30 of this year. Although the number of femicides has gone down, the level of violence against women & girls is still alarming."<sup>33</sup>

In the recent case of nursing student Keyla Martínez, murdered inside a police station, the trial against a police agent is still stalled by an unresolved amparo request (see also last month).<sup>34</sup> The trial concluded this month, but the verdict would not be announced until the Supreme Court will have ruled on an appeal presented by the prosecutors to change the charge of homicide to femicide.<sup>35</sup> Another prominent femicide case made headlines on October 14. Public prosecutor Karen Gabriela Almendárez Herrera was murdered in May. But this month her husband was arrested for ordering her murder.<sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> He himself a public prosecutor who back in 2013 was arrested for drug trafficking but somehow got his former position as public prosecutor back.<sup>38</sup> "Violence against women is one of the many problems that has skyrocketed in recent years in Honduras, a situation for which organized groups of feminist women have requested for a couple of years the creation of shelters or centers that serve as refuge, but so far this request has not been echoed by the Honduran authorities."<sup>39</sup>

"An international committee of women's rights experts will review the progress of the State of Honduras in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)."<sup>40</sup> "The National Commissioner for Human Rights (Conadeh), Blanca Izaguirre, suggested this Monday that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recommend the elimination of the ban on the use and sale of the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)."<sup>41</sup> At the end of the month, Health Minister José Manuel Matheu announced that Honduras would finally be approving the ECP, but only in case of rape.<sup>42</sup> The Center for Women's Rights denounced this as a way of revictimization. Furthermore, President Xiomara's proposed plan of government spoke of allowing the distribution, sale and purchase of the pill.<sup>43</sup>

ContraCorriente explained how the climate crisis especially affects women. "Honduras is considered one of the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change; however, these effects do not affect the entire Honduran population to the same extent. Women are at greater risk of being victims of exploitation, human trafficking, and sexual and domestic violence during natural

31 <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-7-400-mujeres-asesinadas-en-honduras-entre-2002-y-2022-una-al-dia/>

32 <https://criterio.hn/impunidad-ante-femicidios-es-mensaje-de-un-sistema-que-minimiza-quitarle-la-vida-a-las-mujeres/>

33 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1582398809593610240>

34 <https://www.defensoresonline.com/caso-keyla-la-policia-la-justicia-el-estado/>

35 <https://www.defensoresonline.com/con-las-conclusiones-se-reanuda-juicio-oral-y-publico-en-el-caso-de-keyla-martinez/>

36 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/acusaciones-allanamientos-y-capturas-por-el-crimen-de-la-fiscal-karen-almendarez/>

37 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/14/dictan-detencion-judicial-contr-fiscal-isai-campo-viudo-de-karen-almendares/>

38 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1581030402373783553>

39 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-continua-con-la-deuda-de-la-creacion-de-casas-refugio-para-mujeres-victimas-de-violencia/>

40 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-a-revision-sobre-progreso-en-implementacion-de-la-cedaw/>

41 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/18/conadeh-sugiere-al-cedaw-que-pida-a-honduras-eliminar-prohibicion-del-uso-de-la-pae/>

42 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/secretaria-salud-aprobara-pae-exclusivamente-casos-violacion-AC10746060>

43 <https://twitter.com/CDMHonduras/status/1587227443445862401>

disasters. Both rural women in the north of the country and women living in shelters in the Central District have developed resilience as the consequences of climate change and the country's social vulnerability worsen year after year."<sup>44</sup>

## Political Prisoners

Honduras Now had some hopeful news this month. "Police finally arrest Santamaria Corrales Osorto who almost stabbed political prisoner Raúl Álvarez to death in 2020. Alvarez lost an eye & has never fully recovered. The attack was believed to be politically-motivated. Osorto will go before a judge this afternoon".<sup>45</sup>

## Extractive Industries

"Cuyamel-Omoa National Park (Panaco), in northern Honduras, which the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF) proposed as a protected area 11 years ago, has been destroyed. Its file was burned in a fire that occurred in the ICF offices. The area that should have been the most conserved is now mostly flooded with African palm crops and, to a lesser extent, king grass. A modification of the park's borders ended up benefiting businessmen who claim to be producers of clean energy at the cost of the disappearance of a site that could have been a very important water reserve for the country."<sup>46</sup>

## Agriculture

"Through an agreement signed between the Property Institute (IP) and the National Agrarian Institute (INA), the Government of President Xiomara Castro, will benefit hundreds of peasants with the delivery of land titles. The purpose of this agreement is the regularization and vindication of the agrarian struggle of the peasants to deliver as many titles as possible, as well as the delivery of access to loans for the dynamics of the agrarian sector."<sup>47</sup>

"Agribusiness companies in Honduras are allegedly behind a plan to assassinate the peasant leadership of El Aguán, in the department of Yoro, and to redouble threats against those who fight for land tenure and denounce the ongoing human rights violations. This was denounced at a press conference by members and leaders of the Agrarian Platform of El Aguán, the Coordinator of Popular Organizations of El Aguán (COPA), the Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice (MADJ) and the Law Firm Studies for Dignity, in relation to the high levels of violence in the area of El Aguán against cooperatives struggling to secure land tenure."<sup>48 49</sup>

44 <https://contracorriente.red/2022/10/17/mujeres-sobreviven-tambien-a-la-violencia-y-la-exclusion-en-medio-de-la-emergencia-climatica/>

45 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1577384861740175361>

46 <https://avispa.org/la-muerte-del-panaco-un-area-protegida-en-honduras-que-nunca-fue/>

47 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/24/el-gobierno-entregara-titulos-de-propiedad-que-beneficiara-a-campesinos-con-apoyo-del-ina-y-el-ip/>

48 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-plan-para-asesinar-dirigencia-campesina-en-el-aguan/>

49 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1585857643016781824>



## Mining

"In mid-August, and after pressure from the organized communities of Tocoa, Colón, the authorities of the Secretariat of the Environment, together with other state agencies, carried out an inspection in Carlos Escaleras National Park to verify the environmental damages caused by the mining company Inversiones Los Pinares. The authorities assured the communities that the results would be available in 8 days, but more than two months have passed and they are still waiting for the report with the findings."<sup>50</sup>

## Hydroelectricity

MADJ's Víctor Fernández informs about the state of operation of the disputed hydroelectric project Jilamito by INGELSA in Arizona, Atlántida. So far, INGELSA has been able to implement its contract with ENEE . The law stipulates that within six months of signing a contract, it could be terminated again if not implemented.<sup>51</sup>

"Through a community assembly, the inhabitants of Ceibita in Quimistán, Santa Bárbara, together with the municipal authorities, agreed to carry out a popular consultation or open town meeting to find out if the population is in favor or not of the construction of the El Tablón dam on the Chamelecón river."<sup>52</sup>

Also this month, Congress approved an \$18 million loan for the renovation of the Francisco Morazán Hydroelectric Power Plant.<sup>53</sup>

## ZEDEs

Criterio unearthed that JOH-ally on the run, Ebal Díaz, continues to be part of the oversight bodies of the ZEDEs, CAMP, and financially profits from it.<sup>54</sup>

CEPR reported on the contradictory role of the US when it comes to the ZEDEs in Honduras. "Xiomara Castro, the president of Honduras, won a major victory for democracy earlier this year when Congress repealed the country's Zonas de Empleo y Desarrollo Económico law (ZEDE, or "Economic Development and Employment Zones" in English). The legislation enabled the creation of special governance zones, which have "functional and administrative autonomy" from the national government. The zones allowed investors to create their own governance systems, regulations, and courts, providing room for experimentation with privatized government to create a "legal environment adequate ... to be competitive at the international level." This policy was highly controversial, earning the opposition of Honduran labor unions, campesinos, Indigenous organizations, and even the nation's largest business groups. As described by the US State Department, the zones "were broadly unpopular, including with much of the private sector, and viewed as a vector for corruption." When President Castro proposed abolishing the policy, the

50 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/comunidades-de-tocoa-colon-demandan-resultados-de-inspeccion-en-parque-carlos-escaleras/>

51 <https://criterio.hn/enee-niega-prorroga-a-ingelsa-para-operar-proyecto-hidroelectrico-en-arizona-atlantida/>

52 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/pobladores-de-quimistan-santa-barbara-organizan-consulta-popular-ante-construccion-de-represa-el-tablon/>

53 <https://confidencial.hn.com/blog/2022/10/28/cn-aprueba-prestamo-de-18-millones-de-dolares-para-la-renovacion-de-la-central-hidroelectrica-francisco-morazan/>

54 <https://criterio.hn/desde-nicaragua-ebal-diaz-sigue-regulando-las-zede-y-lucrandose-del-territorio-hondureno/>

Honduran legislature repealed it unanimously. The Biden administration has argued that corruption is one of the largest barriers to development in Central America. The Biden administration's "U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America" promises to "[p]rioritize an anticorruption agenda ...." But when this goal conflicts with others, like promoting US investment, which is more important? A recent report from the State Department criticizing President Castro for eliminating the ZEDE law suggests that private interests take priority over public transparency and accountability."<sup>55</sup>

The contradiction became more apparent on October 13. S Senators Ben Cardin and Bill Hagerty published a press release in support of ZEDEs in Honduras.<sup>56 57</sup> The letter was met with rejection in Honduras.<sup>58</sup> CESPAD offered an important overview of the state of affairs regarding the ZEDEs. "The repeal of the law that kept the Employment and Economic Development Zones (ZEDE) project in force culminated a full cycle of information, advocacy and citizen mobilization. However, more than 5 months after its elimination, the demands of the companies that continue to position the issue and, currently, the voices of U.S. congressmen and officials, seek to legitimize a narrative and actions that go against the will of the people."<sup>59</sup> One important open question regarding the ZEDEs remains, will Honduras be brought to court for the repeal of the law. According to deputy foreign minister Gerardo Torres, this has so far not been the case but the threats are there.<sup>60</sup>

On October 28, Sarah Lazare published a detailed article for American Prospect on the above letter. "Earlier this month, Sens. Bill Hagerty (R-TN) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) called on U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to act against the Honduran government for moving to get rid of ZEDEs. In doing so, the senators are citing the findings of an influential think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which has received direct support from a U.S.-based company that is invested in one of the ZEDEs. (...) CSIS calls itself "a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization dedicated to advancing practical ideas to address the world's greatest challenges." Yet there are signs that it may not be a neutral observer. According to its own statements, CSIS has received direct support from the U.S.-based NeWay Capital LLC, an investor in Honduras Próspera, Inc., the Delaware-based company operating a ZEDE on the Honduran island of Roatán. "NeWay Capital LLC is an affiliate of Honduras Próspera Inc. with a significant minority interest in the corporation," a spokesperson for Honduras Próspera, Inc., told Workday Magazine and the Prospect. Erick A. Brimen, the CEO and chairman of the board for Honduras Próspera, Inc., according to the company's website, is also listed as CEO and chairman of the board on the website of NeWay Capital."<sup>61</sup>

Honduran organizations continue to fight against the imposition of ZEDEs and the devastating effects they have. ARCAH just announced that they would present a new legal complaint at the Ministry of Environment against the Duna Residence project by ZEDE Próspera.<sup>62</sup> On October 17,

<sup>55</sup> <https://cepr.net/why-is-the-us-condemning-honduras-for-fighting-corruption/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/press-releases/honduras/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/senadores-istan-departamento-estado-alentar-honduras-respetar-inversion-zede-JN10483785>

<sup>58</sup> <https://criterio.hn/aumenta-presion-desde-ee-uu-para-imponer-derogadas-zede/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/ley-zede-derogada-narrativas-y-contranarrativas/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/22/vicecanciller-afirma-que-no-hay-demandas-contr-el-estado-de-honduras-por-las-zedes-pero-si-una-amenaza/>

<sup>61</sup> <https://prospect.org/world/us-presuring-new-left-wing-honduras-government-economic-zones/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://criterio.hn/arcah-denuncia-danos-extremos-al-bosque-de-roatan-por-parte-de-prospera/>

Criterio reported on threats by ZEDE Morazán investor Massimo Mazzone against ARCAH.<sup>63</sup> Criterio further denounced that the promoters continue their work abroad presenting the ZEDEs as a great investment.<sup>64</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

Community radios formed a new networks this month to fight together against corruption.<sup>65</sup> "The Public Prosecutor's Office and the Superior Court of Accounts (TSC) signed an agreement on Monday to improve the system for combating corruption, transparency and legality in the public service."<sup>66 67</sup>

"The Criminal Court in Corruption Matters issued (...) precautionary measures to the former Secretary of Health, Yolani Batres, accused of fraud and violation of the duties of public servants."<sup>68</sup> She was later sent to pre-trial detention.<sup>69</sup> "The Special Prosecutor's Office for Transparency and Combating Public Corruption (FETCCOP) was notified of the decision of the Criminal Court of Appeals of Francisco Morazán which confirmed the indictment issued on May 23 against the former Executive Director of the Administrative Office of Seized Assets (OABI), Francisco Ernesto Ruiz Nieto."<sup>70</sup> "After the Court of Appeals of the Anticorruption Circuit, on September 29th, ruled in favor of the National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF) in the sense of revoking the substitutive measures to five people involved in the millionaire irregular purchase of 474 thousand masks during the COVID-19 pandemic within Inversión Estratégica de Honduras (INVEST-H), an ad-hoc hearing has ended in which their preventive detention was ordered."<sup>71</sup>

## CICIH

While September ended with a positive outlook on the installation of a UN-backed anti-corruption body (CICIH), the beginning of October looked a bit less optimistic. "The Secretary of the Presidency Rodolfo Pastor stated that despite the fact that the negotiation process with the United Nations (UN) for the installation of the mission against corruption, it has taken longer than expected. He indicated that what is still pending is to reach an agreement on how the International Commission against Corruption in Honduras (CICIH) will be formed."<sup>72</sup> "The United Nations Organization (UN) is concerned about the misinformation that has been generated during the last few months regarding the possible installation of an International Commission against Corruption and Impunity (CICIH) in Honduras. The process, according to the international organization, is advancing normally. The UN resident coordinator in Honduras, Alice Shackelford, told Criterio.hn that there are voices trying to distort the process in question."<sup>73</sup>

63 <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-a-inversor-de-zede-morazan-por-amenazas-contra-arcah/>

64 <https://criterio.hn/pese-a-derogacion-inversionistas-de-prospera-y-ciudad-morazan-continuan-promoviendo-internacionalmente-modelo-de-las-zede/>

65 <https://cespad.org.hn/nace-la-red-de-radios-comunitarias-contra-la-corupcion-en-honduras-y-se-suma-a-la-demanda-de-la-instalacion-de-una-cicih-en-el-pais/>

66 <https://proceso.hn/mp-y-tsc-firman-convenio-para-mejorar-combate-a-la-corupcion/>

67 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/ministerio-publico-y-tribunal-superior-de-cuentas-firman-convenio-para-un-mejor-combate-a-la-corupcion/>

68 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/10/dictan-medidas-cautelares-a-exministra-yolani-batres-acusada-de-fraude-y-violacion-a-los-deberes-de-los-funcionarios/>

69 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/unaf-obtiene-auto-de-formal-procesamiento-y-prision-preventiva-contra-exministra-de-salud/>

70 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/14/corte-de-apelaciones-confirma-auto-de-formal-procesamiento-contra-exdirector-de-la-oabi/>

71 <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/preso-exadministrador-de-invest-h-por-millonario-fraude-en-compra-de-mascarillas-a-los-otros-implicados-les-libran-orden-de-captura/>

72 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/02/secretario-de-la-presidencia-reconoce-que-el-proceso-de-la-cicih-se-ha-alargado/>

73 <https://criterio.hn/a-la-onu-le-preocupa-desinformacion-en-torno-a-posible-llegada-de-la-cici-a-honduras/>

"The Secretary of Transparency, Edmundo Orellana, informed that a fourth and definitive memorandum of understanding for the installation of the International Commission against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (CICIH) is missing (...) He pointed out that there is a disqualification campaign by the opposition aimed at misinforming about the anti-corruption mission. "The danger is that it becomes a conspiracy, but I do not know if it is happening", he said. Likewise, he reiterated that the only problem that could exist would be the non-repeal of the decree that protects the deputies who embezzled the Departmental Social Fund, which the National Party bench has refused to do."<sup>74</sup> He later added that he hoped for a signature under the memorandum of understanding still this year.<sup>75</sup> Foreign Minister Enrique Reina added on October 26 that they had received a response by the UN on their counter proposal regarding the installation of a CICIH. Based on this, he also hoped that a memorandum of understanding could still be signed this year.<sup>76</sup> This became more probable just a day later. "There are commitments from the government of Honduras and the United Nations (UN) to install an international commission against corruption and impunity in the country (CICIH). This was stated this Thursday by the UN representative in Honduras, Alice Shackelford, who said that very soon there will be updates on the negotiations."<sup>77</sup>

Also this month, a congressional group in support of the CICIH was formed.<sup>78</sup> "The United States is willing to support a new international anti-corruption commission in Honduras and expects it to be independent, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the US State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Emily Mendrala said".<sup>79</sup>

## The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

UFERCO's Luis Santos called on the current administration to do more against corruption. "If high impact cases remain in IMPUNITY, including those of JOH: there would be a responsibility of the government of JOH and the current one: since, there has been enough time to repeal Decrees, approve the Budget and require the MP to allocate sufficient human resources, and this has not been done."<sup>80</sup> He also stated that some lines of investigation would go unpunished due to lack of audit personnel.<sup>81</sup> "Eight months after the installation of the current Board of Directors of the National Congress, Decree 116-2019, which has fostered impunity and has shielded several corrupt legislators in Honduras, has still not been repealed due to lack of consensus among the different benches. It has only been discussed in its first two debates and, according to pro-government deputies, the required 86 votes still need to be reached."<sup>82 83</sup>

CESPAD presented the coming discussion about the Efficient Collaboration Law, a law once called for by the now extinct MACCIH, as a litmus test for Congress.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>74</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/18/titular-de-transparencia-detalla-que-falta-un-memorando-de-entendimiento-para-la-llegada-de-la-cicih/>

<sup>75</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/21/titular-de-transparencia-espera-que-antes-de-finalizar-2022-se-firmara-el-memorandum-de-cicih/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-tiene-en-sus-manos-respuesta-de-la-onu-a-su-ultima-contrapropuesta-con-miras-a-la-cicih/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/27/existen-compromisos-entre-honduras-y-la-onu-para-que-se-instale-la-cicih-asegura-alice-shackelford/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://criterio.hn/organizan-frente-parlamentario-de-apoyo-a-la-cicih/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://proceso.hn/eeuu-dispuesto-a-apoyar-comision-anticorupcion-independiente-en-honduras/>

<sup>80</sup> [https://twitter.com/Luis\\_Santos\\_C/status/157779600663601156](https://twitter.com/Luis_Santos_C/status/157779600663601156)

<sup>81</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/08/fiscal-senala-que-falta-de-personal-en-uferco-afectaria-lineas-de-investigacion/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://criterio.hn/quienes-son-los-responsables-de-que-el-congreso-no-derogue-decretos-que-fomentan-la-impunidad/>

<sup>83</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/corupcion-clientelismo-politico-y-una-democracia-debil-el-legado-del-116-2019/>

<sup>84</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/ley-de-colaboracion-eficaz-prueba-de-fuego-para-el-congreso-nacional-de-honduras/>

## IHSS

"The exceptions and nullities raised by the defense of the 14 persons accused of alleged acts of corruption within the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS), were declared "Without Place" by the Sentencing Court with National Jurisdiction in Corruption Matters. With the resolution achieved by the National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF), the process advances towards the oral and public trial against Mario Roberto Zelaya Rojas and José Ramón Bertety Osorio, who are allegedly responsible as perpetrators of 14 crimes of violation of the duties of public officials and one crime of money laundering."<sup>85</sup> On October 26, "[t]he National Unit of Fiscal Support (UNAF) obtained (...) the guilty plea against the former administrative and financial assistant manager of the IHSS, José Ramón Bertety Osorio for continued passive bribery and money laundering and against the businesswoman and lawyer Jenny Carolina Andrade Lemus for money laundering, both prosecuted for the notorious case of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS)."<sup>86</sup>

This month brought also an update on the IHSS-subcase involving former Nationalist ex-congressman Reynaldo Geovanny Ekonomo Fúnes. An appeal was resolved and the trial could continue.<sup>87</sup>

## Invest-H

"The preliminary hearing of Marco Antonio Bográn Corrales and Alex Alberto Moraes Girón, against whom the Public Prosecutor's Office will formalize the accusation and request the opening of a trial, will be held this Thursday for their alleged responsibility in the millionaire irregular purchase of 474 thousand masks during the COVID-19 pandemic within Inversión Estratégica de Honduras (INVEST-H)."<sup>88</sup>

## Palmerola

Almost 50 days have passed since the visit of a congressional commission investigating the concession and construction of the Palmerola airport but the report is still unknown.<sup>89</sup>

## State Security Forces

89 purged members of the police were reintegrated into the force at the beginning of the month.<sup>90</sup> Two active members of the police, a purged member and a civilian were sent to pre-trial detention accused of kidnapping.<sup>91</sup>

Criterio reported on the ongoing problems with police violence and their collusion with crime. "Joaquín Mejía, a doctor in human rights, told Criterio.hn that when discussing the National Police, three issues must be highlighted. First, the whole process of building a civilian National Police

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/fiscales-con-argumentos-solidos-logran-se-declare-sin-lugar-recursos-de-la-defensa-de-14-personas-acusadas-por-mega fraude-al-ihss/>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/culpables-empresaria-y-exadministrador-del-ihss-por-corrupcion-y-lavado-de-dinero/>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/para-el-3-de-noviembre-senalan-audiencia-preliminar-contraxdiputado-acusado-de-fraude-y-lavado-de-activos-en-el-ihss/>

<sup>88</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/27/mp-formalizara-acusacion-y-pedira-auto-de-apertura-a-juicio-contramarco-bogran-y-alex-moraes/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://criterio.hn/palmerola-un-espejismo-enganoso-que-cambio-el-discurso-de-la-comision-que-lo-investiga/>

<sup>90</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/05/reintegran-a-mas-de-80-policias-depurados/>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/prision-preventiva-por-secuestro-para-dos-policias-activos-un-policia-depurado-y-un-civil/>

began in the wrong way, because when the Organic Law of the National Police of 1998 was approved, it only proceeded to remove the Police from the structures of the Armed Forces (FFAA), changing their uniforms. However, there was no change in the police culture, which still continues to be, first of all, militarized. Secondly, there have been positive changes such as a new police curriculum, in the sense of raising the requirements for those who want to enter this institution to change the curriculum through the police technical institute, which has a focus on community policing and respect for human rights. But the problem is that this is only the public curriculum, but evidently there is a hidden, secret curriculum, we could see it with the death of these aspiring police officers when they were subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, practices that are not in any curriculum for police training, being part of the hidden impositions, in which they are taught to be practically soldiers in war and that the culture of militarization is maintained. In conjunction with the perspective detailed above, it must be taken into account that it is useless to change police education when these police officers, trained in a certain way, face a hierarchical, militarized, corrupt, uneducated institutionality, linked to organized crime."<sup>92</sup> In a second article, Criterio also covers how state security forces alter crime scenes. "There are several cases in which police and military elements have disrupted crime scenes in which they have been involved, and these continue to go unpunished. Police reports rarely register an increase in crimes or similarities with previous years, but rather present achievements that highlight a job they do not perform or perform only half-heartedly. The police and paramilitary institutions have repeatedly tried to hide the events that have occurred in order not to "tarnish" their image, which according to them is intact and with the greatest prestige."<sup>93</sup>

In total seven aspiring or current members of the police and armed forces have died in less than two months during training. "A veil of mystery and uncertainty hangs over the Honduran Armed Forces and National Police after seven of their members lost their lives in strange circumstances in less than two months. 1They were of different ages and ranks, but had one characteristic in common: they died after performing physical training activities inside police and military premises."<sup>94</sup>

"The executive director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ghada Fathi Waly, expressed her support for Honduras' actions and operational plans related to security issues."<sup>95</sup>

## Repressions

"Five police officers who had been accused of the crimes of abuse of authority and harassment, to the detriment of twelve citizens of the community of Coyolito, Amapala, Valle, were acquitted by the Sentencing Court of Nacaome. Judges Mario Ortiz, Ismael González Alcántara and Orlando Álvarez unanimously absolved the five agents of criminal responsibility, considering weakness in the identification evidence presented during the oral and public trial."<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup> <https://criterio.hn/policia-de-honduras-continua-conducta-de-represion-y-colusion-con-el-crimen/>

<sup>93</sup> <https://criterio.hn/alterar-las-esenas-del-crimen-es-una-practica-sistemica-utilizada-por-los-entes-de-seguridad-del-estado/>

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/cronologia-siete-muertos-recintos-policiales-militares-menos-dos-meses-honduras-anapo-aspirantes-ffaa-cobras-entrenamientos-BE10634115>

<sup>95</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/18/directora-ejecutiva-de-onudc-respalda-a-honduras-en-temas-de-seguridad/>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/absuelven-a-policias-que-agredieron-a-defensores-de-la-tierra-durante-un-violento-desalojo/>



## Assassinations

"The Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Life (FEDCV) obtained the conviction of the artillery captain assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces (FFAA), Said Edgardo Maradiaga Andino, for the crime of murder to the detriment of Marco Tulio Medrano Lemus."<sup>97</sup>

"Prosecutor's office presents an indictment against 4 police that killed Wilson Pérez, a soccer fan who assaulted a police officer during a soccer game in May. Pérez was denounced publicly, followed to his home & killed. Police accused of cover up, torture & other crimes. [On October 17], a court in San Pedro Sula ordered pre-trial detention for sub-commissioner Carlos Roberto Escobar while he waits his initial hearing & conditionally released the other three police officers charged with fewer offenses."<sup>98</sup> A week later, they obtained the formal indictment.<sup>99</sup>

## Penitentiary System

The National Penitentiary Institute (INP) announced new plans to reduce the number of inmates.<sup>100</sup>

"The authorities of the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) were questioned by political and social actors after the escape of four inmates from the minimum security penitentiary of El Porvenir, among them, one implicated in the murder of former congresswoman Carolina Echeverría."<sup>101</sup>

## Militarization

CESPAD published an analysis on the challenge of the Xiomara administration to demilitarize Honduras. "In this sense, this document is part of the Monitoring Project of the Current Situation in the area of Security and Defense carried out by the Center for the Study of Democracy (CESPAD), in order to contribute to the informed debate, recover and advance in the struggle for democratic transformation. And as established by this think tank, in order to support the democratic reforms of the Defense and Security Sector, it is urgent to dismantle the legal and institutional frameworks in these sectors, which were essential pillars of the authoritarian regime. This document contains: the analysis of the context in which the defense sector reform and demilitarization are inserted; the actions and decisions undertaken so far by the government of Xiomara Castro on the issues of demilitarization and defense sector reform; and finally, the challenges to advance in processes that are vital for the democratic strengthening of Honduras."<sup>102</sup>

Pasos de Animal Grande denounced that the Xiomara administration maintains Jackeline Foglia at the National Investment Council (CNI). Foglia was part of the death squad 3-16 and had been nominated by JOH to her current position.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>97</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/14/condenan-a-capitan-activo-de-las-fuerzas-armadas-por-asesinato-de-joven-en-sps/>

<sup>98</sup> <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1582051395305623552>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/auto-de-formal-procesamiento-para-cuatro-policias-vinculados-a-muerte-de-aficionado-del-real-espana/>

<sup>100</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/15/inp-busca-descongestionar-los-centros-penitenciarios-en-el-pais/>

<sup>101</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/12/cuestionan-al-sistema-penitenciario-tras-espectacular-fuga-de-cuatro-reclusos/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/demilitarizacion-y-reforma-del-sector-defensa-los-desafios-de-castro-para-revertir-el-autoritarismo-y-fortalecer-la-democracia-en-honduras/>

<sup>103</sup> <https://pasosdeanimalgrande.com/pag/index.php/articulos/monitoreo/115-gobierno-de-xiomara-castro-mantiene-en-el-consejo-nacional-de-inversiones-a-jackeline-foglia-ex-integrante-del-escuadron-de-la-muerte-3-16>

## International Community

Deputy Foreign Minister Gerardo Torres represented Honduras at the general assembly of the OAS. "Today we are at this table to reclaim our space, which is the space of the people of Honduras who never stopped fighting and with democracy and active and peaceful citizen participation defeated a narco-dictatorship." He also highlighted the problematic role the OAS played in Honduras since the coup d'état.<sup>104</sup>

FAO director general Qu Dongyu announced support for the Honduran agricultural sector. President Xiomara met with him in Rome.<sup>105</sup> "The president of the Cortés Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIC), Eduardo Facussé, applauded the initiative presented by President Xiomara Castro at the World Food Forum of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) where he emphasized that food sovereignty is an imperative."<sup>106</sup> President Xiomara also met with Pope Francis this month.<sup>107</sup>

"Honduras and Costa Rica signed a cooperation agreement for the development of energy projects of regional benefit to promote electricity modernization, interconnection and geothermal energy."<sup>108</sup> "Engineers from the Saudi Arabian Development Fund are continuing their tour of Honduras to advance the project to build a four-lane highway from the La Democracia bridge in El Progreso to the Triunfo de la Cruz turnoff in Tela with a budget of US\$150 million."<sup>109</sup>

"The president of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE), Dante Mossi, indicated that US\$170 million are available for the financial recovery and reduction of losses in the Empresa Nacional de Energía Eléctrica (ENEE)."<sup>110</sup> On October 27, Congress approved a \$200 million loan from the BCIE to subsidize fuel and energy.<sup>111</sup>

## US

"Complaints, strikes, mobilizations, nothing seems to attract the attention of the State Department and its contractor B.L. Harbert, who after three months continue to ignore the demands of more than a thousand workers in the construction of the new U.S. embassy in the Honduran capital."<sup>112</sup>

## EU

Three European parliamentarians traveled to Honduras to meet with the Xiomara administration.<sup>113</sup>

"In order to present the situation in the country and the challenges faced by the government of President Xiomara Castro, a Honduran delegation had a special audience with Members of Parliament at the headquarters of the European Union (EU) in Brussels, Belgium."<sup>114</sup>

<sup>104</sup> <https://proceso.hn/vicecanciller-hondureno-acusa-a-oea-de-avalar-comicios-irregulares-en-su-pais/>

<sup>105</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/18/director-de-fao-anuncia-apoyo-a-honduras-para-revitalizar-plan-tecnico-en-agricultura-y-ganaderia/>  
<https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/18/el-presidente-ccic-eduardo-facusse-aplaudio-la-iniciativa-presentada-por-la-presidenta-xiomara-castro-en-la-fao/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/18/el-presidente-ccic-eduardo-facusse-aplaudio-la-iniciativa-presentada-por-la-presidenta-xiomara-castro-en-la-fao/>

<sup>107</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/papa-francisco-recibe-a-la-presidenta-de-honduras-xiomara-castro/>

<sup>108</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/16/honduras-y-costa-rica-firma-acuerdo-para-desarrollo-de-proyectos-energeticos/>

<sup>109</sup> <https://hondudiario.com/economia/honduras-firmara-convenio-de-150-millones-con-arabes-para-construir-carretera-el-progreso-tela/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/24/bcie-dispone-de-170-millones-de-dolares-para-la-recuperacion-financiera-y-reduccion-de-perdidas-en-la-enee/>

<sup>111</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/28/cn-aprueba-prestamo-de-200-millones-para-subsidio-a-combustibles-y-energia-electrica/>

<sup>112</sup> <https://criterio.hn/continuan-ignorando-reclamos-de-empleados-en-construccion-de-nueva-embajada-de-ee-uu-en-honduras/>

<sup>113</sup> <https://eliberador.hn/2022/10/31/eurodiputados-buscan-fortalecer-alianza-con-honduras/>

<sup>114</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/03/gobierno-de-honduras-fortalece-relaciones-con-el-parlamento-europeo/>



"The Spanish ambassador to Honduras, Diego Nuño García, said Wednesday that the relationship between the two countries is experiencing an "extraordinary moment" and that Spanish cooperation to the Central American nation demonstrates the "firm, selfless and supportive commitment" with the most vulnerable."<sup>115</sup>

"The President of Honduras, Xiomara Castro, met this Wednesday with her Italian counterpart, Sergio Mattarella, to discuss investment and cooperation issues between the two countries. (...) After the meeting between President Xiomara Castro and her counterpart Sergio Mattarella, it was reported that Italy will support the Honduran tourism sector and cooperation programs, which were stopped due to the weakening of the rule of law, will return."<sup>116</sup> "A group of Italian investors are interested in building a railroad in Honduras. This was announced by the Secretary of Economic Development, Pedro Barquero."<sup>117</sup> This brought back to memory the disputed plans for an interoceanic railroad.<sup>118</sup>

## Drug Trafficking

At the beginning of the month, La Prensa reported that there are at least 20 pending extradition requests from the US.<sup>119</sup> On October 13, Honduras extradited Norlan José Carrasco López.<sup>120</sup>

"A report into extortion in the Northern Triangle -- Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador -- has shed light on how incarceration policies are likely to worsen extortion problems in the region. The extortion industry in the Northern Triangle is now worth at least \$1.1 billion annually, according to Global Financial Integrity's Extortion in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Following the Money report which was released in September."<sup>121</sup>

Drug trafficker Juan Ramón Matta Walduuraga was extradited from Colombia to Honduras. He had been imprisoned for two years in the US for drug trafficking, then went to Colombia, where he was imprisoned again in 2019. In Honduras, he is accused of money laundering.<sup>122 123</sup>

Former Liberal congressman Fredy Nájera was sentenced in the US to 30 years in prison for drug trafficking.<sup>124</sup>

## JOH

"Two co-defendants of former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández pleaded guilty Thursday in a New York federal court, in a dramatic turnaround in the case against the ex-president on drug trafficking and weapons charges. The Guatemalan cousins, Ronald and Otto Salguero, had initially pleaded not guilty. Their change of plea is a blow to Hernandez, as it strengthens the government's overall case involving multiple co-defendants, several of whom have also pleaded

<sup>115</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/13/relacion-con-honduras-pasa-extraordinario-momento-senala-embajador-de-espana/>

<sup>116</sup> <https://hondudiario.com/nacionales/honduras-e-italia-retomaran-programas-de-cooperacion-tras-reunion-de-castro-y-mattarella/>

<sup>117</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/19/inversionistas-italianos-analizan-construir-un-ferrocarril-en-honduras/>

<sup>118</sup> <https://criterio.hn/ferrocarril-interoceanico-en-honduras/>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/hay-20-solicitudes-de-extradicion-pendientes-de-ser-ejecutadas-en-honduras-KH10351821>

<sup>120</sup> <https://proceso.hn/honduras-extradita-a-norlan-carrasco-el-catracho-a-eeuu/>

<sup>121</sup> <https://insightcrime.org/news/extortion-northern-triangle/>

<sup>122</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/07/honduras-repatria-a-juan-ramon-matta-walduuraga-preso-en-colombia-por-lavado-de-activos/>

<sup>123</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/08/dictan-detencion-judicial-para-ramon-matta-walduuraga-extraditado-de-colombia-por-lavado-de-activos/>

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/condenan-a-30-anos-de-carcel-a-capo-hondureno-fredy-najera-en-ee-uu-PN10484975>

guilty. Two others were found guilty at trial, including Hernandez's brother, Juan Antonio Hernandez."<sup>125</sup> On October 24, JOH's next hearing was suspended for a second time<sup>126</sup> and reprogrammed for November 15.<sup>127</sup>

"Today the Public Prosecutor's Office executed the operation called "Nemesis", within which there is an accusation for corruption crimes against Roberto Ordoñez Wolfvich, former minister of the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Public Services (INSEP), who in 2019 was included among the co-conspirators of drug trafficker and former congressman Juan Antonio Hernández. (...) It should be noted that with the resent accusation of the Public Prosecutor's Office, Wolfvich could evade US justice and avoid a possible extradition, since according to the agreement between Honduras and the US, for someone requested in extradition to be handed over to the requesting country, he must not have pending charges in his country of origin, so Roberto Ordoñez would have immunity until any process against him is closed or he serves a sentence imposed by the Honduran justice system."<sup>128</sup>

## Varia

### Rains

After already suffering heavy rain falls in September, Honduras was hit again this month. As a consequence of hurricane Julia, more massive rainfalls devastated Honduras.<sup>129 130</sup> The hurricane hit landed in Nicaragua on October 9.<sup>131</sup> At least 3 people died in Honduras by October 10.<sup>132</sup> Classes were suspended for several days.<sup>133</sup> 744 million Lempiras were transferred from the central government to the affected municipalities.<sup>134</sup> INA estimated harvesting losses worth 1.5 billion Lempiras due to the rains.<sup>135</sup> "The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) approved US\$500,000 in emergency and natural disaster assistance to the Republic of Honduras to help meet the immediate and timely needs of Honduran families affected by the torrential rains caused by tropical storm Julia."<sup>136</sup>

### Supreme Court Election

CESPAD also explained how the self-postulation process for the Supreme Court election plays a key role. "For the first time in Honduras, self-nomination is the only way to be elected as a candidate to the high magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ). This reform is considered one of the most significant because in previous processes, one of the strong questions was,

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/united-states/codefendants-in-drug-case-of-honduran-ex-president-hernandez-change-plea-to-guilty>  
<sup>126</sup> <https://proceso.hn/suspenden-audiencia-para-el-expresidente-hernandez-programada-para-esta-semana/>  
<sup>127</sup> <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2022/10/25/debido-a-protocolos-por-covid-19-audiencia-de-juan-orlando-se-realizara-el-15-de-noviembre/>  
<sup>128</sup> <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2022/10/31/sistema-judicial-de-honduras-blinda-posible-extradicion-de-uno-de-los-co-conspiradores-del-cartel-hernandez/>  
<sup>129</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/09/establecen-alerta-roja-para-10-departamentos-del-territorio-hondureno-por-el-huracan-julia/>  
<sup>130</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/devastacion-tormenta-julia-lluvias-intensas-recuento-danos-honduras-GB10440341>  
<sup>131</sup> <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2022/10/julia-sweeps-onto-nicaraguas-caribbean-coast/>  
<sup>132</sup> <https://www.laprensa.hn/portada/tres-muertos-inundaciones-cierre-aeropuerto-honduras-tormenta-julia-NG10432168>  
<sup>133</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/se-mantienen-suspendidas-las-clases-presenciales-se-autoriza-la-modalidad-virtual/>  
<sup>134</sup> <https://proceso.hn/finanzas-transfiere-mas-de-1-744-millones-a-153-alcaldias-para-atencion-de-la-emergencia/>  
<sup>135</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/12/ina-aproximadamente-11500-millones-son-las-perdidas-en-la-costa-norte/>  
<sup>136</sup> <https://proceso.hn/bcie-aprueba-ayuda-de-emergencia-de-500-mil-para-atencion-de-danos-por-la-tormenta-tropical-julia/>

precisely, that through the power that the law gave to the institutions and organizations that make up the Nominating Board, the pre-selection was manipulated."<sup>137</sup>

According to the lawyer Héctor Pérez, for the first time Supreme Court candidates have to fulfill several requisites which leads to a narrower, but hopefully more qualified field of candidates.<sup>138</sup> CESPAD highlighted the importance of the Transparency Portal for the Supreme Court electoral process.<sup>139</sup> In a press release, the IACHR called for a transparent and participatory selection process.<sup>140</sup>

On October 13, "[t]he members of the Nominating Board (JN), made the formal call for those who aspire to be elected as magistrates of the new Supreme Court of Justice to apply. However, according to the Law that governs this entity, "All internal regulations and technical instruments must be approved and published prior to the call and receipt of nominations", but none of this has been made public".<sup>141</sup> <sup>142</sup> The Center for the Study of Democracy (CESPAD), the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF) and Lawyers Without Borders Canada (ASFC) announced that they would oversee the process.<sup>143</sup> By October 17, "[t]he Nominating Board for the Nomination of Candidates for Magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), confirmed on Monday that it has not received a single application from lawyers who want to apply to join the Honduran Judiciary. In a broad statement, the Nominating Committee informed about the actions developed one month after having been nominated by the various sectors to choose 45 experts in law that they believe are the best to aspire to form the new Court for the next seven years (2023-2030)."<sup>144</sup> "However, the representative of the Honduran Bar Association (CAH) affirmed that there is a lot of expectation, enthusiasm and many requests for certificates to participate in the process."<sup>145</sup> On October 21, the board received the first nomination.<sup>146</sup>

CESPAD explained what the rupture of the Libre-PSH alliance (see below) could mean for the selection of the Supreme Court elections. "Facing the election of the CSJ, with the current fragmentation of forces and political polarization, the only way out is the dialogue and negotiation among all political parties present in the legislature, which allows to agree on quotas of representation in the highest court of justice, ensuring the inter-party construction of a qualified majority, avoiding the outbreak of a new institutional crisis. However, the big question that this raises is how in these circumstances it could be guaranteed that the election of a CSJ represents a change and/or substantive progress with respect to the current failed judiciary.

In this context, three points would be crucial to advance towards that necessary change:

The first, that the Nominating Board complies faithfully with the Special Law and that it selects in a transparent manner and based on merit, suitability and honesty, the list of candidates and candidates for magistrates.

<sup>137</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/la-autopostulacion-una-fase-clave-para-la-independencia-de-la/>

<sup>138</sup> <https://tiempo.hn/candidatos-a-magistrados-se-retiraran-exceso-requisitos/>

<sup>139</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/la-importancia-del-portal-de-transparencia-en-el-proceso-de-seleccion-de-magistrados-as-de-la-csj/>

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/JsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2022/236.asp>

<sup>141</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/sin-reglas-del-juego-definidas-junta-nominadora-convoca-a-aspirantes-a-magistrados-de-la-nueva-corte-suprema-de-justicia-de-honduras/>

<sup>142</sup> <https://criterio.hn/abogados-y-notarios-comienzan-a-autopostularse-como-posibles-candidatos-a-magistrados-de-la-csj/>

<sup>143</sup> <https://proceso.hn/cespad-dplf-y-asfc-anuncian-que-seran-veedores-del-proceso-de-seleccion-de-magistrados-csj/>

<sup>144</sup> <https://proceso.hn/junta-nominadora-no-ha-recibido-solicitud-de-abogados-para-postularse-a-magistrado-de-la-corte-suprema/>

<sup>145</sup> <https://proceso.hn/junta-nominadora-sigue-sin-recibir-autopostulaciones-de-candidatos-a-magistrados-de-la-csj/>

<sup>146</sup> <https://proceso.hn/junta-nominadora-recibe-primera-postulacion-a-magistrado-de-la-csj/>

Second, that the National Congress respect the results of the Nominating Board and that, based on the proposed candidates, the members of the highest court of justice be elected.

And, the third, that in the plenary of the legislature, the candidates who have reached the highest scores in the evaluation of the Nominating Board are elected.

Finally, beyond the election of the CSJ, if LIBRE (as a government) aspires to carry out and/or advance in the ambitious reforms proposed in the Bicentennial Program, it must necessarily advance towards the construction in the legislature of a simple inter-party majority with an agreed agenda, that is to say, dialogued, discussed and agreed upon by different political forces. This must be complemented with the effective opening of the civic-democratic space to ensure dialogue and the construction of agreements with the social movement and civil society. In this way, it will be possible to lay the firm foundations for the reconstruction and transformation of the limited and excluding Honduran democracy."<sup>147</sup>

By the end of the month, the Nomination Board received 185 applications for Supreme Court positions.<sup>148 149 150</sup> "The executive director of the National Anticorruption Council (CNA) Gabriela Castellanos questioned that current magistrates are self-applying before the Nominating Board. Castellanos' assertions come after learning that the current magistrate of the Constitutional Chamber, José Abilio Serrano, presented his documentation before the Nominating Board to be considered in the next election of the judges of the highest court of justice of Honduras for the period 2023-2030."<sup>151</sup> Criterio also reported on some problematic applications and called on the Nomination Board to sort them out.<sup>152</sup>

## Penal Code

Libre congresswoman Silvia Ayala announced that the corresponding congressional committee recommends repealing the JOH-era Penal Code.<sup>153</sup>

## Migration

Almost 80'000 Hondurans have been deported by October.<sup>154</sup> "By unanimous vote, the National Congress approved an exhortative motion for this branch of government to request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote a dialogue with the government of the United States and achieve the re-designation of the Temporary Protected Status, TPS, for the 58,000 Honduran migrants."<sup>155</sup> But by the end of the month, Radio Progreso reported: "At least 58,000 Honduran men and women beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status, TPS, have been left in uncertainty in the United States

<sup>147</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/analisis-semanal-honduras-ante-la-eleccion-de-la-nueva-csj-y-la-reconfiguracion-de-fuerzas-en-el-congreso-nacional/>

<sup>148</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/29/55-personas-se-han-postulado-ante-la-junta-nominadora-para-magistrados-de-la-csj/>

<sup>149</sup> <https://criterio.hn/rolando-argueta-y-otros-seis-magistrados-buscaran-reelegirse-en-la-corte/>

<sup>150</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/11/01/185-abogados-se-postularon-ante-junta-nominadora-para-una-magistratura-en-la-csj/>

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/odir-fernandez-verguenza-postulan-podrida-justicia-EE10729782>

<sup>152</sup> <https://criterio.hn/junta-nominadora-debe-evitar-que-personas-corrumpas-y-asociadas-al-crimen-organizado-lleguen-a-la-csj/>

<sup>153</sup> <https://proceso.hn/comision-legislativa-recomendara-derogar-el-vigente-codigo-penal-dice-diputada-oficialista/>

<sup>154</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/honduras-ya-se-acerca-a-los-80-mil-deportados/>

<sup>155</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn/aplicacion-movil/congreso-nacional-aprueba-comision-multipartidaria-para-abogar-por-el-tps/>

after the failure of negotiations that for at least 16 months sought an agreement with the administration of President Joe Biden."<sup>156</sup>

Honduras registered over 120'000 migrants trying to pass Honduras to reach the US.<sup>157</sup> There is an ongoing problem in Honduras with transiting migrants being charged illegal fees. "The complaints against undue charges made to migrants passing through Honduras, whose rights have been strongly violated in Honduras by military, police, civilians and employees of various government ministries, continue to occur left and right. In one of the videos captured by migrants, they expose agents of the Honduran Institute of Land Transportation (IHTT) making irregular charges to Venezuelan migrants, who demand an explanation for this interference, after the government ordered to eliminate the charge for safe conduct (USD 261) and let them pass respecting their human rights."<sup>158</sup> Passing migrants also seem to suffer violence. "A Venezuelan migrant shared on his TikTok account a video showing the aggression he suffered at the hands of several National Police officers, who were allegedly asking for money to let them pass through the border between Honduras and Guatemala."<sup>159 160</sup>

"The United Nations announced that it is currently working on a new migration law in conjunction with Honduran authorities, while migration analysts note that there may be a mandate to eliminate charges to migrants, but it has "no teeth".<sup>161</sup> "Through a report on the irregular migratory situation of the southern border of Honduras, UNICEF revealed with statistics, the inhumane conditions that migrants are suffering, the danger of the journey, the abuses suffered and the most urgent needs."<sup>162</sup>

## Xiomara Administration

According to a new CID Gallup poll, president Xiomara has an approval rating of 65%, 1% more than in May.<sup>163</sup> But the rest of the month, the news was less positive.

The back and forth between Mel Zelaya and Salvador Nasralla took a turn to the worst this month. In an official interview, Mel declared that he considered the alliance between Nasralla's party PSH and Libre broken by Nasralla by his verbal attacks on president Xiomara.<sup>164</sup> Nasralla reacted by giving the last word to president Xiomara saying that she would have the final decision to break the alliance.<sup>165</sup> Similar words came from PSH congresswoman Ligia Ramos.<sup>166</sup> President Xiomara did not react the same day, but she retweeted the statement by her husband.<sup>167</sup> With still no response the next day, Xiomara was in Italy for a FAO summit and a meeting with the Pope, the corporate media outlet decided that her retweeting was her official statement making the rupture of the alliance official.<sup>168</sup> Doris Gutiérrez, designated president for the alliance, representing Pinu-SD, also

<sup>156</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/beneficiarios-del-tps-presionan-al-gobierno-de-honduras-para-no-quedar-desamparados/>

<sup>157</sup> <https://proceso.hn/mas-de-124800-migrantes-han-entrado-de-forma-irregular-a-honduras-en-2022/>

<sup>158</sup> <https://criterio.hn/denuncian-al-instituto-de-transporte-por-cobros-indebidos-a-migrantes-de-paso/>

<sup>159</sup> <https://confidencial.hn.com/blog/2022/10/03/policias-hondurenos-agreden-a-migrantes-en-frontera-con-guatemala-subsecretaria-de-seguridad-julissa-villanueva-asegura-se-esta-investigando-video/>

<sup>160</sup> <https://criterio.hn/urgen-a-la-didadpol-proceder-contra-policias-que-realizan-cobros-ilegales-a-migrantes-en-transito/>

<sup>161</sup> <https://criterio.hn/naciones-unidas-anuncia-que-trabajan-en-nueva-ley-de-migracion-analistas-senalan-que-esta-debe-tener-dientes/>

<sup>162</sup> <https://criterio.hn/informe-de-unicef-sobre-situacion-migratoria-irregular-revela-necesidades-y-abusos-sufridos-por-los-migrantes/>

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.laprensa.hn/fotogalerias/honduras/hondurenos-aprueban-gestion-de-la-presidenta-xiomara-castro-segun-cid-gallup-BK10382120>

<sup>164</sup> <https://twitter.com/gobprensaHN/status/1581127844327231488>

<sup>165</sup> <https://proceso.hn/decision-final-de-romper-la-alianza-la-tiene-xiomara-ella-es-la-presidenta-salvador-nasralla/>

<sup>166</sup> <https://proceso.hn/me-gustaria-saber-si-la-presidenta-castro-tambien-da-por-terminada-la-alianza-pregunta-diputada-del-psh/>

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/presidenta-castro-retwitteo-declaraciones-mel-alianza-BE10508449>

<sup>168</sup> <https://proceso.hn/presidenta-xiomara-castro-reacciona-a-declaraciones-sobre-fin-de-alianza-con-el-psh/>

commented on the situation. She assured that the popular will must prevail because it is sacred. She further stressed that they were elected to govern and work on the problems of Honduras.<sup>169</sup>

CESPAD published an analysis on the governance crisis. "The above elements, as a whole, have determined a fragile institutional framework to address urgent problems such as health, education and infrastructure. Even so, relevant demands of the majority of the electorate have been satisfactorily met, such as the repeal of the ZEDE Law. And some strategic problems have begun to be addressed, such as the process aimed at recovering the Electric Energy Company as a public company and public good, but progress has been slow. However, strategic issues such as agrarian, environmental, indigenous peoples' and women's reproductive rights are still not on the national agenda. And we are still awaiting effective advances in the installation of the CICIH ("international mechanism" against corruption), the repeal of the impunity pacts in the National Congress, the adherence to the Escazú Agreement, and the approval of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In spite of all the above, this government continues to represent a great historical opportunity to promote the substantive reforms required by the country to face the serious problem of lack of development, poverty, inequalities and exclusions that affect the great majority of the population. A fact in favor is the high degree of legitimacy that President Castro still has (according to CID GALLUP, 65% positive approval in September). However, it is striking that while the right-wing opposition is regrouping to oppose substantive reforms or to hinder the government's management in general, the civic-democratic space for dialogue, agreement building and formulation of a new generation of public policies in favor of the interests of social organizations and civil society, which were the core of the resistance to the narco-dictatorship, continues to be closed from the government."<sup>170</sup> <sup>171</sup> "[Libre] Congressman Jari Dixon Herrera pointed out that although there is a rupture in the ruling party, he hopes that there will be consensus in the next bills. "A pity the rupture of the alliance with the comrades of the Salvador Party of Honduras (PSH), but one thing is theory and another thing is practice, now this does not mean that we cannot continue dialoguing and working on the issues that unite us", he expressed."<sup>172</sup>

On October 17, Congressional president and PSH member Luis Redondo called for a private meeting with Salvador Nasralla to follow-up on the announced rupture of the PSH-Libre alliance. Redondo stated that he did not agree with recent statements by Nasralla.<sup>173</sup> Nasralla responded by calling for a public meeting.<sup>174</sup> PSH members of Congress, meanwhile, called for an emergency meeting.<sup>175</sup> Even before the talks between Redondo and Nasralla took place, Redondo declared that the Libre-PSH alliance had not ruptured, the situation just showed different positions.<sup>176</sup> Redondo's party PSH seemed to disagree as they published a press release the same day on the rupture of the alliance. They held Libre responsible for the this.<sup>177</sup> Former PSH member Virgilio Padilla held

<sup>169</sup> <https://proceso.hn/libre-epicentro-de-polemica-celebra-o-lamenta-con-el-psh/>

<sup>170</sup> <https://cespad.org.hn/analisis-semanal-honduras-los-riesgos-actuales-de-gobernabilidad-requieren-una-gestion-publica-mas-eficiente-y-democratica/>

<sup>171</sup> <https://criterio.hn/alianza-entre-psh-y-libre-parece-haber-llegado-a-su-fin/>

<sup>172</sup> <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/16/que-panorama-genera-en-el-oficialismo-la-disolucion-de-la-alianza/>

<sup>173</sup> <https://tiempo.hn/luis-redondo-pide-reunion-a-salvador-nasralla/>

<sup>174</sup> <https://confidencial.hn.com/blog/2022/10/18/nasralla-pide-a-luis-redondo-que-la-reunion-que-ha-solicitado-el-titular-del-cn-sea-publica-y-no-privada/>

<sup>175</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/bancada-psh-convoca-reunion-emergencia-postura-oficial-alianza-psh-libre-salvador-nasralla-xiomara-castro-honduras-FH10533622>

<sup>176</sup> <https://proceso.hn/no-hay-ruptura-entre-libre-y-psh-son-posiciones-diferentes-segun-presidente-del-cn/>

<sup>177</sup> <https://tiempo.hn/ps-h-se-pronuncia-sobre-ruptura-de-alianza/>



Nasralla responsible, accusing him of creating instability and not recognizing that the Xiomara government gave the second most powerful position, president of Congress, to Nasralla's party.<sup>178</sup>

And then, on October 24, the situation took another turn for the worse. After a week of the National Party grabbing public attention with a PR stunt, presenting themselves as victims of political persecution in Honduras - probably because for the first time in the last twelve years, there are at least some attempts to try them for corruption<sup>179</sup>, the real powers in Honduras showed their face again. JOH ally and president of the Supreme Court, Rolando Argueta told media outlets that the Supreme Court had admitted two challenges of the legality of the congressional leadership. This is a clear attempt to undermine the current administration and, in a nefarious way, maybe even try to undermine the installation of a CICIH, which could really help bring the corruption cases to court.<sup>180</sup> "The president of the Legislation and Constitutional Affairs Committee in the National Congress, Representative Ramón Barrios, stated this Sunday that the Supreme Court of Justice should not decide on political matters."<sup>181</sup>

Just a day later, Nationalist congresswoman Leda Pagan encouraged Hondurans to prepare their white shirts, bringing back memories of 2009 when supporters of the coup d'état wore white shirts.<sup>182 183 184</sup> "This invitation has been strongly questioned by government authorities. In this case, the Secretary of Human Rights, Natalie Roque, reproached the congresswoman for having made such an open call to wear white shirts, which in her opinion represent the beginning of the coup d'état that filled Honduras with blood and pain."<sup>185</sup>

Another day later, US ambassador Laura F. Dogu joined in.<sup>186</sup> She criticized the Honduran government for creating a bad investment climate. By themselves, the comments could be just that, but given that this was a follow-up to a letter by two US Senators in support of the ZEDEs and in light of all of the above, people became alert.<sup>187 188 189</sup> Political leader Gilberto Rios did not mince words: "Here, let's not fool ourselves, we know who is behind the whole strategy [to question govt & Congress], it's Laura Dogu, the US Ambassador, who is the John Dimitri Negroponte 2.0 from the 80s, in order to try and maintain US hegemony in Central America."<sup>190</sup> Foreign Minister Enrique Reina reacted from Argentina. "We are surprised because we believe that there are words expressed by the ambassador that concern us since we have had more than 30 meetings with the US authorities at all levels, we believe that the situation is complex because we have expressed the situation that the country is going through and President Castro is trying to make us competitive. It seems to us that the ambassador's statements complicate our relationship because they do not see clearly the situation of the country and we see that beyond defending their interests and their companies they must understand when we take measures that are to clean up and put right the rule

178 <https://elpulso.hn/2022/10/18/exaliado-del-pac-y-psh-acusa-a-nasralla-de-causar-la-inestabilidad-del-gobierno/>

179 <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/diputados-nacionalistas-desesperados-ahora-quieren-manipular-el-tema-de-ddhh/>

180 <https://proceso.hn/presidente-de-csj-admite-que-hay-dos-recursos-de-inconstitucionalidad-admitidos-sobre-ilegalidad-de-directiva-del-cn/>

181 <https://proceso.hn/presidente-de-comision-de-asuntos-constitucionales-en-cn-adviente-que-csj-no-debe-decidir-sobre-temas-politicos/>

182 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1584699046626983936>

183 <https://tiempo.hn/diputada-leda-pagan-pide-alistar-camisas-blancas/>

184 <https://tiempo.hn/camiseta-blanca-toneladas-cocaina-asi-reaccionan/>

185 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/24/las-camisetitas-blancas-representan-el-inicio-de-un-golpe-de-estado-sangre-y-dolor-natalie-roque/>

186 <https://criterio.hn/a-que-le-esta-apuntando-la-embajadora-estadounidense-en-honduras/>

187 <https://proceso.hn/desafortunadas-politicas-en-energia-e-inversion-complican-exito-del-pais-dogu/>

188 <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/26/todas-estas-acciones-est-an-enviando-un-mensaje-claro-a-empresas-de-que-deberian-invertir-en-otros-lugares-no-en-honduras-laura-dogu/>

189 <https://twitter.com/USAmbHonduras/status/1584986218973929473>

190 <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1584916543514845187>

of law".<sup>191</sup> Reina also announced to meet with the ambassador the next week.<sup>192</sup> "The Secretary of the Presidency, Rodolfo Pastor, expressed that as government officials they have the responsibility to keep the compass and not be distracted by all those who want to destabilize the country. He reiterated "we cannot allow ourselves to be distracted by all those who want to destabilize the project", for which he asked the government team to have clarity on what the people entrusted them with."<sup>193</sup> Pastor met with Ambassador Dogu on October 26.<sup>194 195</sup>

On October 28, Foreign Minister Enrique Reina commented again on the US-Honduran relations. "The Foreign Minister of Honduras, Eduardo Enrique Reina, said Friday that relations with the United States continue, but when it is necessary to be frank, he will do so (...) "Our ambassador in Washington continues to have meetings and we continue to have contact on other issues of interest, but when it is time to make the relationship clear, we will do so frankly," said Foreign Minister Reina."<sup>196</sup> On October 31, the requested meeting between Reina and Ambassador Dogu took place. She tweeted afterwards: "Open and honest communication facilitates our strong bilateral relationship focused on economic growth, security and strengthening democracy. The U.S. remains committed to Honduras - Vamos Adelante!"<sup>197</sup> Reina highlighted the importance of dignity. "We have to understand that a normal relationship leads to these schemes of dignity. It is true, the United States is extremely important for Honduras, extremely important for the thousands and millions of Honduran migrants who live there, but we are also important for the U.S. We should not live believing that we are less important for the U.S. We should not live believing that we are less important for Honduras."<sup>198</sup>

## Poverty

Remittances sent to Honduras increased by over 20.4% compared to the previous year.<sup>199</sup> Labor unions called on President Xiomara to create a negotiating table to adjust the minimum-wage and benefits to address the high cost of living in Honduras.<sup>200</sup>

## Education

Up to 40% of Honduran children remain outside of the education system.<sup>201</sup> The 2023 education budget will be 4 billion Lempiras higher than this year.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>191</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/honduras/canciller-reina-pide-respeto-embajadora-dogu-advierde-relacion-eeuu-crisis-LB10669626>

<sup>192</sup> <https://proceso.hn/expresiones-de-la-embajadora-complican-nuestras-relaciones-responde-canciller-reina-y-anuncia-la-convocara-a-consultas-el-lunes/>

<sup>193</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/25/rodolfo-pastor-la-nueva-administracion-debe-mantener-la-brujula-y-no-dejarse-distraer-por-los-que-quieren-desestabilizar-el-pais/>

<sup>194</sup> <https://twitter.com/SEPresidencial/status/1585452025223020544>

<sup>195</sup> <https://proceso.hn/reaccionamos-para-dejar-claro-que-honduras-es-un-pais-soberano-e-independiente-ministro-pastor/>

<sup>196</sup> <https://proceso.hn/relaciones-con-eeuu-continuan-pero-cuando-se-deba-ser-franco-lo-haremos-afirma-canciller-reina/>

<sup>197</sup> <https://twitter.com/USAmbHonduras/status/1587186535165841408>

<sup>198</sup> <https://criterio.hn/canciller-de-honduras-propone-relacion-de-dignidad-y-no-de-mendicidad-con-ee-uu/>

<sup>199</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/18/las-remesas-enviadas-a-honduras-suben-un-20-4-de-enero-a-septiembre-de-2022/>

<sup>200</sup> <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow/status/1582054228255682568>

<sup>201</sup> <https://criterio.hn/40-de-los-jovenes-en-edad-escolar-esta-fuera-del-sistema-educativo-en-honduras/>

<sup>202</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/blog/2022/10/26/en-4-mil-millones-de-lempiras-aumentara-presupuesto-de-educacion-para-el-2023/>



## Public Health

"Between 30 and 40 percent of the country's hospitals and health centers are short of medicines, which makes the recovery of those who visit public health centers on a daily basis precarious."<sup>203</sup> <sup>204</sup> Also this month, the Medical College of Honduras (CMH), presented a plan for the reconstruction of the health system, which proposes that "the State guarantees health protection under criteria of universality, equality and gratuity so that the population receives what it is entitled to as a human right".<sup>205</sup>

## Economy

Labor unions announced protests against the mass firing of employees in the maquila sector, more than 15'000 people lost their jobs in the last two months.<sup>206</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

"The government, in a hearing held on May 9 in San José, Costa Rica, acknowledged before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR), the international responsibility of the State of Honduras for the extrajudicial execution of Herminio Deras, as announced this Monday by the head of the Attorney General's Office (PGR), Manuel Díaz. (...) In addition, at the event held as part of the commemoration of Human Rights Day, the head of the SEDH, Natalie Roque, in response to the clamor of relatives and victims of human rights violations, presented the program "Memories, Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition for the Reconciliation and Refoundation of Honduras", which aims to promote, guarantee and promote the right to truth for people who have been subjected to violations of their rights, through historical memory, support and monitoring of reparation processes; and facilitating access to justice, whether transitional, restorative or traditional."<sup>207</sup> <sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/desabastecimiento-de-medicamentos-pone-en-la-mira-al-secretario-de-salud/>

<sup>204</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/gobierno-invierte-mil-lempiras-al-ano-en-salud-por-cada-hondureno-y-hondurena/>

<sup>205</sup> <https://criterio.hn/presentan-plan-para-la-reconstruccion-del-sistema-sanitario-en-honduras/>

<sup>206</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/aplicacion-movil/sindicatos-anuncian-manifestaciones-contra-masivos-despidos-y-cierres-de-maquilas/>

<sup>207</sup> <https://confidencial.hn.com/blog/2022/10/25/gobierno-reconoce-responsabilidad-del-estado-por-la-ejecucion-extrajudicial-de-herminio-deras/>

<sup>208</sup> <https://www.defensoresonlinea.com/solicitan-a-la-alcaldia-del-distrito-central-que-plaza-la-merced-se-llame-plaza-de-los-desaparecidos/>

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

Past Activities:

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Upcoming Activities:

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