

# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – July 2020

The corona pandemic is still hitting hard and almost 1000 people died this month, officially, the real number is likely much higher. New corruption cases surfaced and previous ones turned even more outrageous as new details came to light, e.g. overpaying badly-equipped mobile hospitals by \$5 million. Global Witness published its yearly report on the murder of environmental defenders and as if to prove that Honduras under the JOH regime deserves the spot as the place with the highest murder rate per capita, seven human rights defenders were murdered, four trans women, two media workers and a social leader and youth coordinator at MASSVIDA. 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

## The COVID-19 Crisis

Honduras has fewer, detected, dengue cases than last year, but there are still 15'117 cases (compared to some 20'000 in 2019) and children are the main affected.<sup>1</sup> The head of health for Tegucigalpa, Harry Book, warned of a possible dengue epidemic starting in the coming days. There are over 4000 dengue cases in this region and twelve people have died to it.<sup>2</sup>

July started with 20'262 COVID-19 cases and a death toll of 542. July ended with 42'014 COVID-19 cases and a death toll of 1337. The number of deaths is likely much higher. On July 7, El Heraldo reported that the Association of Funeral Homes of Honduras registered 1831 burials with a COVID-19 protocol until July 4, almost three times as high as the official death count at that time.<sup>3</sup>

## State Reaction

El Pulso reported on a recent poll which found that just under 40% of the Honduran population considers the government's handling of the COVID-19 emergency as "very bad," making Honduras one of the two worst-rated countries in Central America.<sup>4</sup> "The highest Catholic Church official, Ángel Garachana, urged President Juan Hernández to act ethically and responsibly in the government's management of the crisis caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, which he has so far described as "incompetent". The president of the Honduran Episcopal Conference, an organization at the top of the Catholic hierarchy, made the call to the president amid complaints of overvalued purchases of seven hospitals and masks, while hundreds of people are being treated with enormous shortages of tents because of the overflowing public hospital system."<sup>5</sup>

According to the Secretary of Finance, the JOH regime had spent almost 4.6 billion Lempiras on the response to the corona crisis until June 26. One quarter of this was spent on the controversial mobile hospitals (see below). At the same time, the JOH regime received millions of dollars, much more than the 4.6 billion Lempiras, and their whereabouts are unknown. "Where is the money?" has been making its rounds on social media.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, money was still flowing. The JOH regime received \$1 million from Taiwan through the System for Central American Integration (SICA).<sup>7</sup> Taiwan had previously already given \$1.5 million to the JOH regime.<sup>8</sup> The Inter-American Bank for Development (IDB) announced another \$76.2 million loan this month.<sup>9</sup> On July 30, Congress approved further \$109.2 million loans from the IDB and BCIE.<sup>10</sup> And almost \$69 millions came from the European Union.<sup>11</sup>

1 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45345>

2 <https://tiempo.hn/alerta-dengue-convertirse-epidemia-harry-book/>

3 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1392252-528/funerarias-registran-casi-el-triple-de-muertos-por-coronavirus-que-cifra-del>

4 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45323>

5 <https://criterio.hn/garachana-pide-a-joh-actuar-con-etica-y-responsabilidad-ante-pandemia/>

6 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1392682-466/4589-millones-de-lempiras-ejecutados-en-la-emergencia>

7 <https://www.laprensa.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1391584-410/honduras-un-millon-dolares-lucha-coronavirus-salud-taiwan-sica>

8 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/taiwan-desglosa-millonaria-ayuda-a-honduras-durante-la-pandemia.html>

9 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/07/09/el-bid-apoya-a-honduras-a-enfrentar-covid-19/>

10 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1397805-466/congreso-nacional-aprob%C3%B3-endeudamiento-de-m%C3%A1s-de-2709-millones-de-lempiras>

11 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/ue-y-sus-paises-miembros-daran-80-millones-de-euros-para-lucha-contra-el-covid-en-honduras.html>

On July 14, months into the pandemic, the JOH regime finally announced to send some public funds to the municipalities. "The country's 298 mayors' offices, which concentrate the nine million Honduran population, are supposed to receive 750 million lempiras, to be invested in creating patient selection centers (triage) and activating medical brigades, in order to advance in the fight against Covid-19."<sup>12</sup>

## Health Sector

Sounding like a broken record, July was another month in which the millions of dollars the JOH regime during the pandemic made no visible impact in the health sector (see also Corruption sub-chapter below). The president of the Association of Physicians of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS) in the north of Honduras, Carlos Umaña, talked of days where more than 1,000 people lined up to be treated at this assistance center.<sup>13</sup> According to public health expert, Henry Andino, the Honduran hospitals are occupied by more than 90% nationwide with some already overrun.<sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> El Tiempo reported that the medical system in Choluteca should be considered collapsed. "Exposed to the elements, medical personnel attend to patients with COVID-19 and those suspected of having contracted the disease at the Hospital del Sur, located in Choluteca. Under makeshift tents, on some mattresses and around mud, some patients receive oxygen in search of survival and others are examined while waiting for the results of their diagnostic test."<sup>16</sup> In response, the head of the anti-corruption body UFERCO tweeted: "That is the consequence of the billions looted from the Health Ministry over decades. During all that time, what did we do? I hope that all this situation will serve so that every day, there will be more INTOLERANT citizens towards the corrupt..."<sup>17</sup> The Honduran Medical Association (CMH) once more requested that a high level technical-scientific management committee be set up to deal with the corona pandemic.<sup>18</sup> But their expertise does not count. "According to a survey conducted by the organization Transformemos Honduras, being a member of the National Party is one of the most important requirements for doctors and nurses aspiring to a position in the national health system, in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic."<sup>19</sup>

The situation in Honduras reached even more very worrisome levels during the month. So much so that representative of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH) in the north of Honduras felt urged to call for the complete closure of five municipalities (San Pedro Sula, Villanueva, Choloma, La Lima and Quimistán) to try to stop the spread of the virus. They emphasized that this includes the closure of the Maquila sector. "Only the maquila generates between 27% and 35% of the IHSS patients in this part of the country, the rest are informal commerce, hardware stores and the general

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12 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2098-honduras-gobierno-aprueba-centavos-para-tratar-covid-en-298-municipios>

13 <http://www.radioamerica.hn/umana-hoy-mas-de-1000-personas-esperan-atencion-medica-en-ihss-de-la-zona-norte/>

14 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/07/03/la-red-hospitalaria-esta-ocupada-en-mas-de-un-90/>

15 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/seguro-socia-al-borde-del-colapso/>

16 <https://tiempo.hn/colapsa-hospital-del-sur-triaje-hace-bajo-carpas-improvisadas-lodo/>

17 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1279562041880182784>

18 <https://criterio.hn/colegio-medico-exige-instalacion-de-mesa-de-alta-gerencia-para-hacerle-frente-a-la-pandemia/>

19 <https://criterio.hn/afiliacion-politica-es-requisito-basico-del-gobierno-para-emplear-a-medicos-y-enfermeras/>

population. Citizens have not respected the exit digit and controls have not been effective".<sup>20</sup> A CMH leader, doctor Ligia Ramos, later tweeted: "What do they not understand for the love of God?! Close EVERYTHING! We are overcrowded, overflowed, we can't take it anymore, they're going to run out of health personnel. Close the fucking sweatshops for God's sake!"<sup>21</sup>

As in previous months, several doctors<sup>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</sup>, nurses<sup>29 30 31 32 33</sup> and other health workers died to COVID-19. On July 8, El Heraldo reported that there were at least 1600 health workers infected with COVID-19 in Honduras.<sup>34</sup> Suyapa Figueroa, president of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH), speaks of 40% of all medical staff who is infected.<sup>35</sup> By July 12, at least 16 doctors and 10 nurses had died.<sup>36</sup> By the end of the month, these gruesome statistics rose to at least 40 dead health workers<sup>37</sup> and estimates for infected health workers go up to 4000.<sup>38</sup>

## Human Rights

Social movements and human rights organizations published five additional joint press releases this month. 16<sup>th</sup>: "We arrive in July, and we continue to walk on the shifting sands that move to the sound of news of new acts of corruption, with new figures of the elite appearing muddy in embezzlement from public institutions, with links to drug trafficking, key pieces in the support of the dictatorship. As always, in this first week of July, we raise our voice before the Honduran society, to unite it with the clamor for health, food and justice of many people who wallow in indignation and repudiation of the rottenness that is enmeshed in the structures of official power. We unite all these voices in this sixteenth public manifesto."<sup>39</sup>

17<sup>th</sup>: "Our cry is not silent in the face of the corruption that is consolidating in front of a population that is torn between the threat of the virus, hunger and that of a dictatorship that pushes collective rage at the point of fear and threats. In a few months, the Coronavirus exposed a whole history of looting of the health system, and the criminality of those who drive it. We are fighting, and the

20 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1391772-410/medicos-honduras-colegio-medico-zona-norte-cierre-pandemia-crisis-cuarentena>

21 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/cierren-todo-cierren-las-p-maquillas-por-el-amor-de-dios-clama-doctora-ante-estragos-de-pandemia.html>

22 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1391657-410/muere-doctor-luis-reyes-jerezano-coronavirus-ihss>

23 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2086-urgente-honduras-pierde-otro-angel-de-la-salud-ya-van-diez>

24 <https://www.proceso.hn/salud/5-salud-y-sociedad/mueren-dos-medicos-por-covid-19-en-tegucigalpa-y-sps.html>

25 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/muere-otro-medico-por-covid-en-seguro-social-de-sps.html>

26 <https://tiempo.hn/dos-medicos-y-una-enfermera-pierden-batalla-contr-covid-19/>

27 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1396703-410/-doctor-enfermera-polic%C3%ADa-muere-coronavirus->

28 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1397736-410/muere-doctores-enfermera-coronavirus-honduras->

29 <https://www.laprensa.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1392310-410/enfermera-muere-coronavirus-covid-seguro-social-san-pedro-sula->

30 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/en-menos-de-24-horas-medico-y-enfermera-fallecen-por-sospecha-de-covid-19-en-choluteca.html>

31 <https://tiempo.hn/enfermera-pierde-batalla-hospital-torax-maria-emeteria-carrasco/>

32 <https://tiempo.hn/en-ihss-sps-fallece-enfermero-auxiliar-hospital-atlantida/>

33 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1395643-410/muere-enfermera-coronavirus-honduras>

34 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1392261-528/honduras-1648-m%C3%A9dicos-enfermeras-y-dem%C3%A1s-personal-de-salud-infectados-por-covid-19>

35 <https://confidencial.hn.com/colegio-medico-senala-que-40-por-ciento-de-galenos-son-positivos-de-coronavirus/>

36 <https://www.laprensa.hn/fotogalerias/1392569-411/muere-doctor-enfermera-coronavirus-honduras-pandemia->

37 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2137-honduras-al-menos-40-angeles-de-la-salud-han-muerto-por-covid>

38 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/07/28/las-muertes-en-el-personal-sanitario-aumentan-mientras-sus-demandas-persisten/>

39 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/decimo-sexto-manifiesto-publico>

actions are making their way between confinement and imposed fears, and we make it felt with the unity of these voices that we express in this Seventeenth public statement".<sup>40</sup> 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>41</sup>

19<sup>th</sup>: "While we are indignant and hold actions of repudiation and protest against the narco-dictatorship, which from its corrupt elite sustains a mortally wounded economic system, and attacks us with more criminal violence, we press on with organized actions and protests to hasten its imminent fall. Within this framework of joint actions of rebellion and resistance, and as an expression of our constant analysis and testimony of struggle, we raise our collective voice in this Nineteenth Public Manifesto".<sup>42</sup>

20<sup>th</sup>: "As an imposed and aggressive dictatorship, it is up to us to reaffirm our full right to place ourselves before it in a state of civil and popular disobedience. The historical path for the liberation of the peoples has always been popular organization, an infallible formula, which when it is well executed, there is no regime to support it. We need to break with the deadly logic of dictatorship and neoliberalism, from our collective project of becoming a people in freedom."<sup>43</sup>

## Corruption

For the third consecutive month, the corruption case revolving around the purchase of seven mobile hospitals occupied the headlines. The state body, at least superficially, responsible for it, Invest-H, has collected an abysmal track record these recent months.<sup>44</sup> On July 2, the MP intervened the offices of Invest-H, the Health Secretariat and the Finance Secretariat as well as the house of former Invest-H director Marco Bográn.<sup>45</sup> 46 The next day, the also intervened at the offices of COPECO.<sup>47</sup> They are investigating 11 cases of corruption in total. CESPAD wondered what this investigation really could bring forward. "In such circumstances, the fiscal investigation against Marco Bográn and the blockages he faces may represent the most important argument to end the elite's Impunity Pact, articulating a broad alliance of forces for decency and justice. The emerging Anti-Corruption Coalition (CAC) could be a bridge to bring together such diverse forces. It is essential to put pressure on the National Congress to repeal the set of decrees that shield the actions of corrupt public officials, decrees that are incompatible with the essence of the rule of law and the administration of an effective justice system."<sup>48</sup> CEDOH also took a closer look at this. "What has happened with INVEST-Honduras is just the tip of an institutional tangle of corruption that shows the shameless and cynical enrichment of a pyramid of accomplices who are there, receiving the percentage they demand or contracts from their own companies and undercover, from friends, family and co-religionists. It is up to all of us, and in particular the independent research bodies,

40 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/decimo-septimo-manifiesto-publico/>

41 <https://copinh.org/2020/07/manifiesto-publico-18-julio-2020/>

42 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/decimo-noveno-manifiesto-publico/>

43 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/vigesimo-manifiesto-publico/>

44 <https://criterio.hn/inversion-estrategica-de-honduras-una-nueva-mafia-institucional-al-desnudo/>

45 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/158-julio2020/5980-mp-secuestra-documentos-en-invest-h-y-otras-instituciones-como-parte-de-11-lineas-de-investigacion-por-supuesta-corrupcion-durante-pandemia>

46 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/158-julio2020/5985-mp-allana-vivienda-de-marco-bogran-para-decomisar-indicios-relacionados-a-caso-invest-h>

47 <https://confidencialhn.com/atic-llega-a-copeco-a-secuestrar-informacion-sobre-presuntos-actos-de-corrupcion-por-hospital-de-villanueva/>

48 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/05/analisis-semanal-la-investigacion-del-ministerio-publico-contra-bogran-y-las-oportunidades-para-la-sociedad-civil-hondurena/>

whether state or civil society, to pull the strings, to move forward in the web of identity protection and to reach the real perpetrators of and accomplices to this boundless corruption that has the country in a state of indignation, frustration and shame."<sup>49</sup>

Reporting on the mobile hospital case, El Heraldó got access to e-mails between Invest-H and the representative of HospitalesMoviles.com, Axel López, showing that the contracting and payment of the mobile hospitals was done almost blindly.<sup>50</sup> Later, the MP found that the places where they should be installed lack access to basic services needed for their functioning.<sup>51</sup> Even if the mobile hospitals would be fully functional, the price tag on just one hospital bed is more than \$100'000. The Association of Architects of Honduras (CAH) and the Association of Civil Engineers (CICH) denounced that they had offered alternatives costing less than half that.<sup>52</sup>

On July 10, the two first mobile hospitals should have arrived in Honduras.<sup>53</sup> ATIC agents and the Special Prosecutor's Office for Transparency and Combating Public Corruption (Fetccop) wanted to inspect the containers, but it was prohibited by customs arguing that Invest-H had first to present the necessary paperwork.<sup>54</sup> The MP announced legal actions against officials of the Honduran Customs Administration and the National Port Company.<sup>55</sup> As Invest-H and its former director Marco Bográn still had not shared the paperwork of the mobile hospitals the next day, the MP also raided the house of his mother. There, in a shed, they found official Invest-H documents.<sup>56</sup> On July 15, the mobile hospitals still at customs, it was made public mobile hospitals were heavily overpriced on the bills, by over \$5 million.<sup>57</sup> <sup>58</sup> Up to this point, JOH tried to shield himself from this case, but the next day Proceso Digital reproduced an audio showing how the Finance Minister Rocío Táborá told the former Invest-H director Marco Bográn that all the purchases related to the pandemic will be made through Invest-H. JOH gave the orders for this.<sup>59</sup> The Secretary of Finance threatened Radio América for publishing this audio file.<sup>60</sup> El Libertador showed how Bográn had mostly been a pawn and that the involvement of JOH was even greater than previously thought. "Marco Bográn has been a pawn in the looting of Invest-H funds in the covid-19 era, and EL LIBERTADOR reveals how the links between alleged businessman Axel López and President Juan Hernández are becoming closer. Currently, for the installation of the mobile hospitals, Lopez hired his friends, the couple composed of Luis Eveline and Jance Funes (in the graphic next to Lopez). In 2013, Luis Eveline manipulated the rules to make Óscar Chinchilla the Attorney General, even though he had not passed the psychometric test, while two years later, Jance Funes imposed the

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49 <http://www.cedoh.org/resources/Alertas/ALERTA-CORONAVIRUS-4.pdf>

50 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1391322-466/cruce-de-correos-muestra-pago-a-ciegas-en-compra-de-hospitales-m%C3%B3viles>

51 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/158-julio2020/5999-mp-constata-en-inspecciones-que-los-predios-donde-instalaran-hospitales-moviles-no-cuentan-con-servicios-basicos-vitales-para-su-funcionamiento>

52 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45528>

53 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1392935-466/honduras-vivo-buque-hospitales-moviles-barco-puerto-cortes>

54 <https://criterio.hn/no-permiten-a-la-atic-y-al-mp-inspeccionar-los-hospitales/>

55 <https://confidencialh.n.com/fiscalia-emprenderia-acciones-legales-contra-empresa-portuaria-por-no-dejar-inspeccion-de-contenedores/>

56 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1393372-466/allanan-vivienda-madre-marco-bogran-invest-h-hospitales-moviles>

57 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45738>

58 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/honduras-corruption-pandemic-contracts/>

59 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/audio-la-reveladora-comunicacion-de-ministra-de-finanzas-a-marco-bogran.html>

60 <https://twitter.com/darocohn/status/128432223432622080>



candidates for judges from civil society on the list sent by Juan Hernández to Congress, among others, to his fellow countryman Rolando Argueta on the Supreme Court of Justice."<sup>61</sup>

On July 19, the MP was finally able to start the inspection of the mobile hospitals.<sup>62</sup> At one point they found they were delivered to Honduras accompanied by faulty equipment which had to be decommissioned.<sup>63</sup> The inspection concluded on July 25.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, it was still unclear where the five additional mobile hospitals were or if they had even been produced yet. "La Prensa confirmed that in Turkey no company dedicated to this business is building the remaining five hospital modules ordered by Invest-H, and according to sources consulted, at this time no one wants to take over their assembly because of the legal implications and the media scandal it has caused."<sup>65</sup>

The CNA published its seventh report on corruption during the pandemic titled "The state biosecurity death trap". They found that COPECO and Invest-H bought 335'000 and 469'000 non-certified face masks respectively for Honduras' medical staff. Some of the vendors even explicitly wrote on their packaging that they were not meant for medical use.<sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup> They also published a report on the mobile hospitals.<sup>68</sup> Then, the public also had to find out that COPECO bought antibacterial gel for 4.2 million Lempiras from a company belonging to a husband of the president of the Honduran Institute of Land Transportation (IHTT).<sup>69</sup> UFERCO coordinator Luis Santos denounced that the JOH regime paid 526 Lempiras for one dose of a drug which costs only 88 Lempiras at the pharmacies.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, ContraCorriente wrote about "the pandemic of corruption in Honduras".<sup>71</sup> Using the hashtag #whereisourmoney (#dondeestaeldinero), Hondurans demanded to know what the JOH regime made with the millions of dollars approved to address the corona pandemic.<sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> Too little, too late? On July 13, the executive president of the BCIE, Dante Mossi, expressed concerns about the use of the funds given to the JOH regime to attend the corona crisis.<sup>74</sup> The BCIE has given the JOH regime more than \$1 billion in the last weeks to confront the crisis.

It is the same old story of the hammer only seeing nails everywhere. There is a problem in Honduras, JOH's throws the military at it. The body directly responsible for many of the corruption cases during the pandemic - leaving out possible criminal masterminds behind it - is Invest-H. Its director has already gone (see last month) and is under investigation, his replacement resigned just after a few days in office. On July 24, JOH announced an intervention body which would be lead by

61 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2105-exclusiva-peones-de-joh-que-impusieron-la-corte-socios-de-axel-lopez-en-hospitales>

62 [https://twitter.com/MP\\_Honduras/status/1284620230153703425](https://twitter.com/MP_Honduras/status/1284620230153703425)

63 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2125-honduras-equipo-usado-y-vencido-de-hospitales-confirma-estafa>

64 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/158-julio2020/6048-se-concluye-inspeccion-a-78-contenedores-con-hallazgos-preliminares-pero-mp-continua-tomando-declaraciones-y-requiriendo-informacion>

65 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/1397080-410/ninguna-empresa-turcu%C3%ADa-construye-otros-5-hospitales>

66 [https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/La-corupcio%C3%81n-en-tiempos-del-COVID\\_Parte-7.pdf](https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/La-corupcio%C3%81n-en-tiempos-del-COVID_Parte-7.pdf)

67 <https://criterio.hn/mascarillas-que-compro-el-gobierno-serian-causantes-del-contagio-de-medicos-y-enfermeras/>

68 <https://www.cna.hn/2020/07/20/la-corupcion-en-tiempos-del-covid-19-parte-viii/>

69 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1392673-466/esposo-de-funcionaria-vendio-gel-a-copeco-por-1-42-millones>

70 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1282748485293486080>

71 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/07/13/elementor-104399/>

72 <https://tiempo.hn/anuncian-mas-caravanas-de-autos-contr-la-corupcion-en-honduras/>

73 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2118-honduras-otra-vez-en-las-calles-ni-el-covid-frena-protesta-ciudadana>

74 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/preocupa-al-bcie-manejo-de-recursos-para-atender-la-pandemia.html>

the general José Ernesto Leva Bulnes. "The last three governments led by the National Party have resorted to appointing intervention bodies in at least 20 centralized and decentralized public institutions where shocking acts of corruption have occurred. These bodies have become the control strategy implemented in the last 11 years of the state administration in charge of the National Party of Honduras."<sup>75</sup> Later, El Heraldo reported that Bográn had signed a 250 million Lempiras contract for biosafety equipment two days before he was forced to resign.<sup>76</sup> The contract was signed with the company Cinsa whose president is Bográn's uncle Napoleón Bográn Idiáquez.<sup>77</sup>

At the end of the month, the CNA published another report on corruption during the pandemic focusing on so-called turnkey contracts (according to Wikipedia: "a contract where the essential design emanates from, or is supplied by, the Contractor and not the owner, so that the legal responsibility for the design, suitability and performance of the work after completion will be made to rest ... with the contractor").<sup>78</sup> The CNA denounced that this form of purchase is used by corrupt officials to free themselves from criminal responsibilities.<sup>79</sup>

## Poverty

An analysis on food security in Honduras by the IPC shows "an increase in the population in Crisis (Phase 3) from 19% to 32% in all areas analyzed with respect to the situation in November 2019. The 13 departments of Honduras have been classified in Crisis (Phase 3), which implies that households are not able to meet their food needs without depleting essential livelihood assets and without resorting to Crisis or Emergency coping strategies".<sup>80</sup> Some 250'000 to 300'000 additional people could become unemployed by the end of the year in Honduras.<sup>81 82</sup> The World Food Program came to the same conclusion. "In a country where 2 million people, or 40 percent of the total workforce, were already unemployed at the start of the year, restrictions adopted to contain the spread of COVID-19 are expected to take a heavy toll on employment — and on people's ability to meet their basic food needs. (...) In Honduras, small traders, daily laborers, subsistence farmers and families who rely on money-transfers from relatives working abroad are among the most affected; as are single mothers, elderly people, people with disabilities and those with chronic illnesses. Honduran authorities and WFP estimate that the loss of jobs and livelihoods caused by the pandemic has thrown 250,000 families across the country into food insecurity, meaning they do not know where their next meal will come from."<sup>83</sup>

<sup>75</sup> <https://criterio.hn/militar-a-la-cabeza-de-interventora-de-invest-h-nombrada-por-joh/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1396842-466/marco-bogr%C3%A1n-firm%C3%B3-millonario-contrato-con-empresa-china-previo-a-renunciar>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2136-honduras-ex-director-de-invest-h-concedio-mas-de-70-millones-a-su-tio>

<sup>78</sup> <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1287757216968212480>

<sup>79</sup> <https://criterio.hn/contratacion-de-llave-en-mano-un-blindaje-para-no-castigar-a-los-corrupitos-senalan-expertos/>

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1152716/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/pandemia-provocara-una-tasa-del-13-de-desempleo-en-honduras/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://radioh.hn/entre-250-mil-y-300-mil-nuevos-desempleados-podria-registrar-honduras-al-termino-del-2020/>

<sup>83</sup> <https://insight.wfp.org/coronavirus-in-honduras-this-pandemic-is-going-to-starve-us-fdec39be7cda?gi=ac82c5c7e96f>

## Economy

On July 14, Labor Minister Carlos Madero announced to extend for 60 more days the work suspension of more than 200'000 workers from 80 companies that, taking advantage of the crisis caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, closed their workplaces and left their employees without wages for a period of 120 days.<sup>84</sup> Madero also claimed that those employees suspended may be laid off after the 120 days have passed.<sup>85</sup> "However, Mr. Funez, an expert in labor law, assures that suspension due to fortuitous event or force majeure cannot be a cause for dismissal and termination of the employment relationship because article 111 of the Labor Code already determines the causes of dismissal, which is when the worker commits some fault and the employer follows a procedure through a discharge hearing. "If the worker does not manage to dispel the charges, the employer may dismiss him," he explained."<sup>86</sup>

According to COHEP, some 500'000 jobs have been lost in Honduras.<sup>87</sup> The economist Rafael Delgado estimates a drop of 10% in Honduras' GDP due to the pandemic.<sup>88</sup> And even though the number of corona cases was still high on the rise, by the end of the month, the JOH regime started to think again about opening up the economy.<sup>89</sup> On July 25, SINAGER and the multi-sectorial board (who has seen very important members leave in the recent past criticizing that the JOH regime does not listen to their concerns and is now even more of an empty shell) approved a proposal for a second try at reopening the Honduran economy.<sup>90 91</sup>

Medical experts criticize the plan.<sup>92</sup> "We cannot say, as a Medical College, that technically and scientifically it is the right time to return to normal activity in the country. Right now we have an increase in cases of Covid-19, in hospitalizations, hospitals are working at full capacity, there is an increase in the number of doctors, nurses and microbiologists who are dying," said the Vice President of the Medical Association of Honduras, Samuel Santos."<sup>93</sup>

## Human Rights and Their Defenders

Global Witness published its annual report into the killings of land and environmental defenders. 2019 was the worst year yet with 212 land and environmental defenders killed. They documented 14 assassinations in Honduras, the fifth highest rate in the world and the highest per capita.<sup>94</sup> Business and Human Rights presented a case study on Honduras on the role of businesses and

84 <https://criterio.hn/anuncian-60-dias-mas-de-suspension-laboral-para-mas-de-200-mil-trabajadores/>

85 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45721>

86 <https://criterio.hn/ministro-del-trabajo-confunde-las-causales-de-despido-asegura-experto-en-derecho-laboral/>

87 <https://confidencialhn.com/medio-millon-de-empleos-se-han-perdido-en-honduras-consecuencia-del-coronavirus/>

88 <https://tiempo.hn/pib-economia-economista-rafael-delgado-honduras-desplome/>

89 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1396035-410/gobierno-honduras-analiza-reapertura-econom%C3%ADa-lunes>

90 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1396459-466/en-agosto-las-empresas-iran-incrementando-el-personal>

91 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1396953-466/ Mesa-multisectorial-llama-al-gobierno-a-avanzar-en-la-fase-1-de>

92 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/aumenta-presion-empresarial-para-apertura-de-la-economia/>

93 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/medicos-en-desacuerdo-con-reapertura-economica/>

94 <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/defending-tomorrow/>

human rights violations.<sup>95</sup> In 2019, they documented 98 attacks against HRDs linked to business activities, making Honduras the most dangerous country to raise concerns about business operations.<sup>96</sup>

US Senator Jeff Markley commented on the situation in Honduras. "Honduran authorities have repeatedly targeted environmental defenders like Berta Cáceres, giving the country the highest per capita killings of environmental activists in the world. I stand with Congresswoman María Luisa Borjas, the Garifuna land defenders, and all who demand justice and an end to corruption."<sup>97</sup> The same month, 14 US congresswo/men wrote an open letter to Secretary Pompeo "urging him to prioritize human rights in Honduras. He should engage the Honduran government immediately about the abduction of 4 Garifuna leaders by Honduran police officials [see below] & growing impunity under Juan Orlando Hernández".<sup>98</sup> In his Twitter announcement of the letter, Congressman Sires further wrote: "Instead of speaking up, Trump political appointees have been holding public photo-ops w/ @JuanOrlandoH and lauding his assistance in implementing illegal asylum restrictions. This does not advance U.S. interests in working toward making #Honduras a place where Hondurans can imagine a future."<sup>99</sup> Congresswoman Torres followed-up: "President Juan Orlando Hernández is engaged in the systematic deterioration of human rights in Honduras. He will continue to do so unless the US condemns his actions & demands a just & democratic Honduran society."<sup>100</sup>

## Assassinations

Human rights defender and youth coordinator at MASSVIDA, Marvin Damián Castro, was found dead one day after having been kidnapped from his home.<sup>101</sup> COFADEH reports that he had expressed fear about his life at the National Protection System just days before his murder.<sup>102</sup> His caused widespread condemnation. "In recent months, OACNUDH has followed up on several cases of intimidation, attacks and threats against human rights defenders in the south of the country, as well as the violent death of one of them in April. In view of the above, this violent death raises concern about the serious risk faced by defenders in that region of the country."<sup>103</sup>

## Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

The regional office of the Honduran human rights organization ACI Participa in Choluteca was broken into and ransacked.<sup>104</sup> IM-Defensoras sent out an alert denouncing that the defender of

95 <https://twitter.com/BHRRC/status/1283033214198718472>

96 <https://dispatches.business-humanrights.org/hrd-january-2020/index.html>

97 <https://www.facebook.com/jeffmerkley/posts/10157399926731546>

98 <https://sires.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-sires-meeks-and-12-colleagues-denounce-rights-violations-against>

99 <https://twitter.com/RepSires/status/128885751069978624>

100 <https://twitter.com/NormaJTorres/status/1288990969786900481>

101 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2905-extensiva-represion-sufren-las-personas-defensoras-de-ddhh-del-sur-del-pais-en-el-contexto-de-la-cuarentena-por-covid-19>

102 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/defensor-del-ambiente-y-juventud-del-sur-temia-por-su-vida/>

103 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-de-marvin-damian-castro-molina-miembro-de-la-coordinacion-del-movimiento-ambientalista-social-del-sur-por-la-vida-massvida/>

104 <https://twitter.com/hondurasol/status/1281769631011631104>

territory and the rights of women and girls, Maria Felicita Lopez, was threatened over the phone by unidentified individuals who, through calls and messages from WhatsApp threatened to take her life. "It should be noted that this is not the first time that her life is at risk in the context of her work as a defender, so, since November 24, 2015, she has been granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). María Felícita denounces that, in spite of the court's ruling, the State of Honduras has limited itself to the installation of a solar energy plant in her house as an alleged measure of protection."<sup>105</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

In an open letter, Honduran social movements and human rights organizations together with international human rights organizations urge the Dutch development bank FMO not to approve a loan to FICOHSA. "Far from contributing to the development that the people of Honduras need, by providing a loan to FICOHSA the FMO would instead be providing support to the network of politically influential businesses involved in corruption scandals and violence that form part of FICOHSA's investment portfolio. There are ways of spurring development that is very much needed in Honduras, such as support for indigenous community development models that exist abundantly throughout the country."<sup>106</sup>

The Miskitu indigenous peoples sent out an alert due to the total lack of medical assistance while confronting the pandemic.<sup>107 108</sup> CESPAD also reported on the situation of the Miskitu people during the pandemic.<sup>109</sup> Criterio later reported: "The situation is terrible, and while in the capital the authorities spend their time defending themselves against accusations of corruption generated by the management of public resources destined to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, the Miskito community of Brus Laguna is dying because of government neglect."<sup>110</sup>

IM-Defensoras and others launched the "Their Lives are Our Lives" campaign in support of COPINH and OFRANEH this month. "Today we raise our voices to denounce the growing violence against the Garifuna and Lenca peoples of Honduras, organized in COPINH and OFRANEH".<sup>111 112</sup> The following paragraphs highlight the sad reality of how much this support is needed.

OFRANEH denounces the destruction of the beach at the Garífuna community Santa Fe to extend a luxury beach resort.<sup>113</sup> "NJOI, a Canadian tourism company is destroying the continuity and public access of the beaches in Trujillo bay #Honduras & building a gated community for North

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105 <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/07/alerta-defensoras-amenazan-de-muerte-y-hostigan-a-la-defensora-maria-felicita-lopez/>

106 <https://copinh.org/2020/07/organizaciones-istan-fmo-no-financiar-a-ficohsa/>

107 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1283754470896279552>

108 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1283852741895491585>

109 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/24/analisis-la-pandemia-del-abandono-en-la-muskitia-hondurena/>

110 <https://criterio.hn/pueblo-misquito-se-muere-por-el-abandono-del-gobierno-y-falta-de-medicinas/>

111 [https://twitter.com/IM\\_Defensoras/status/1280158788398600193](https://twitter.com/IM_Defensoras/status/1280158788398600193)

112 <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/07/carta-de-solidaridad-repudiamos-las-amenazas-y-hostigamiento-contra-el-copinh-y-su-dirigencia/>

113 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1282319557361831936>

Americans on stolen ancestral Garifuna land."<sup>114</sup> <sup>115</sup> OFRANEH's general coordinator Miriam Miranda denounced: "They want to disappear us as Garifuna people, (...) other criminals come to poison Santa Rosa de Aguán Lagoon, thousands of dead fish! KILLERS".<sup>116</sup> "We demand a prompt investigation into this ecocide, and the inhabitants say that this may be the result of the agrochemicals used by the palm growers. We do not forget the diversion of the Aguan river, to dry out wetlands and thus produce large areas of oil palm. Killers!"<sup>117</sup> The Secretariat for Natural Resources and the Environment announced an investigation and they took water samples.<sup>118</sup>

Grave as this is, more worrisome events were about to unfold. On July 18, OFRANEH sent out an alert that Snider Centeno, the President of the elected community council in Triunfo De la Cruz, had been forcefully disappeared by a group of men wearing bullet proof vests at 6am from his home.<sup>119</sup> Later, it was made public that in total 5 men were forcefully disappeared, 4 Honduran young Garífuna men, among them 3 active at OFRANEH, and 1 man from Belize. Urgent actions were launched<sup>120</sup> and the Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH) published a press release. They said that the armed men wore bullet proof vests looking like those of the Police Investigation Bureau (DPI). The SEDH also called for an investigation.<sup>121</sup> OACNUDH published a press release condemning their "forced disappearance"<sup>122</sup> and the the new UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, ALice H. Shackelford, also raised concerns about the situation.<sup>123</sup> UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor, also expressed concerns.<sup>124</sup>

As hours and then days passed without any sign of the men, the Garífuna community in Triunfo de la Cruz took to the streets demanding the return of the young men.<sup>125</sup> Miriam Miranda sent out an alert. "Alert, we are informed that vehicles with heavily armed people are entering the community of Triunfo de la Cruz at night, generating terror. The Court's sentence establishes that the state must guarantee the peace and security of the community. Compliance NOW!"<sup>126</sup>

On Day 4, a habeas corpus was presented in their favor at the court in Tela, Atlántida.<sup>127</sup> On Day 5, the Police Investigation Bureau (DPI) informed about the arrest of a man possibly linked to the kidnapping. Apparently, he possess clothing similar to those used by the security forces.<sup>128</sup> The Honduras Solidarity Network tweeted in response: "Authorities have arrested U.S. citizen, Rennie

<sup>114</sup> <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1283576587619893249>

<sup>115</sup> <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1283578202191994880>

<sup>116</sup> <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1284569871406309377>

<sup>117</sup> <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1284852145901260801>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.dw.com/es/honduras-investigan-la-muerte-de-miles-de-peces-en-el-caribe/a-54237380>

<sup>119</sup> <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1284478825691324419>

<sup>120</sup> <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/18/alerta-grupo-armado-secuestra-lider-y-habitantes-de-comunidad-garifuna-de-el-triunfo-de-la-cruz/>

<sup>121</sup> <https://twitter.com/sedhHonduras/status/1284591943440388096>

<sup>122</sup> <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-alberth-sneider-centeno-presidente-del-patronato-de-la-comunidad-garifuna-de-el-triunfo-de-la-cruz-y-de-tres-personas-mas-pertenecientes-a-la-comunidad/>

<sup>123</sup> <https://twitter.com/aliceshackel/status/1285038261988216832>

<sup>124</sup> <https://twitter.com/MaryLawlorhrds/status/1285128442548228098>

<sup>125</sup> <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1285237733087117318>

<sup>126</sup> <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1285356766079979522>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2912-ante-juzgado-de-tela-presentan-habeas-corpus-a-favor-de-garifunas-secuestrados>

<sup>128</sup> <https://confidencialhn.com/capturan-a-un-hombre-sospechoso-de-participar-en-el-rapto-de-cuatro-jovenes-garifunas/>



Michael Ugalde in Tela for his alleged involvement in disappearance of the four Garifuna men. Authorities haven't explained man's connection to crime & there are a lot of doubts".<sup>129</sup>

Throughout the days, protests continued. On July 24, Miriam Miranda sent out another alert yesterday. "Alert! reported from the community of San Juan, half an hour ago alleged members of the Military Police arrived in two vehicles to ask for the president of the Patronato and there is a young Garífuna in hospital. WHAT ARE THEY UP TO? With this harassment against community leaders".<sup>130</sup> On Day 6, the IACHR now also commented on the case condemning the forceful disappearance.<sup>131</sup>

On Day 8, protests were especially violently repressed. State security forces shot at young men in the Garífuna community Santa Fe and at least one young man got hurt.<sup>132</sup> On Day 10, OFRANEH published an update. "According to the information we have acquired from very reliable sources, the State, in an act of complicity, would be releasing in the next few hours the only suspect arrested, arguing lack of evidence. This action not only evidences the participation of criminal structures of the State but also puts the lives of the rest of the population of Triunfo de la Cruz at risk."<sup>133</sup> The same day, the Coalition against Impunity held a press conference on the case yesterday and there they demanded that the Police Bureau of Investigation (DPI) does not participate in this particular investigation as some of their members may be involved in the forceful disappearance (the men responsible wore DPI uniforms).<sup>134</sup> The same day, DPI informed that the investigation will be taken over by the MP and ATIC.<sup>135</sup>

At the end of the month, almost two weeks after the forceful disappearance, OFRANEH published another update. "There is one proven fact: the forced disappearance of the young Garifunas in Triunfo de la Cruz, in the early hours of July 18, was carried out by individuals wearing bulletproof vests with the initials of the Police Department of Investigation (DPI) and uniforms of the Military Police, who, acting violently, removed the young people from their homes, threatening their families and witnesses. We emphasize that the community of Triunfo de la Cruz, has been the object of usurpations for decades, in addition to crimes committed in the 1990s, against defenders of Garifuna territory, who to date have remained in impunity, despite the existence of a mandate from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, as part of the sentence issued in October 2015. We are emphatic in indicating that precisely on Saturday July 18th, there was a curfew in the country, which theoretically prevented the mobilization of vehicles without the permission of the authorities. In this sense, we find it impossible to believe that the mobilization of three vehicles, in which heavily armed individuals were transported, went totally "unnoticed". We state that the inclusion of the Police Department of Investigation (DPI), in the search for the young people and in the alleged investigations being carried out, implies a conflict of interest; it cannot be that the same agency

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129 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1286092084659855362>

130 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1286449264579813378>

131 <https://twitter.com/CIDH/status/1286652598397874177>

132 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1287362470236037122>

133 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/07/28/estructura-criminal-al-servicio-del-estado-y-la-desaparicion-forzosa-de-los-garifunas-en-honduras/>

134 <https://criterio.hn/coalicion-contra-la-impunidad-pide-que-dpi-no-investigue-caso-de-garifunas-desaparecidos/>

135 <https://tiempo.hn/dpi-mp-y-atic-tomaran-investigacion-caso-garifunas-desaparecidos/>

apparently involved in the facts, is in charge of the investigations. The State of Honduras claims to be a "guarantor" of human rights, but unfortunately the statistics indicate the opposite. In recent years, more than a dozen Garifunas have been killed in the defense of their ancestral territory, and to date the State has not presented concrete results, but rather in certain cases has limited itself to discrediting the arguments that relate the crimes to the defense of the territory. We condemn the handling of information about the investigations that has led to false alarms about the discovery of supposed bodies of the Triumphant Brothers, feeding disinformation and giving rise to false news that greatly affects the families of those affected and the Garifuna people in general. OFRANEH demands a totally impartial investigation that does not include the security agencies apparently involved in the events."<sup>136</sup>

## The Case of Berta Cáceres

It has been 52 months since the murder of Berta Cáceres.<sup>137</sup> And why COPINH and Berta's family continue to fight for justice, this month saw first a setback, then a hopeful sign. "Honduras' Supreme Court has denied an appeal by a lawmaker convicted last year of slandering a prominent local banker. María Luisa Borjas was convicted of defamation and sentenced to nearly three years in prison for naming Camilo Atala, president of Ficohsa bank, as a suspected mastermind in the 2016 killing of environmental activist Berta Cáceres. She made the statement in 2017 while she was running for a seat in Honduras' Congress."<sup>138</sup> This decision was widely denounced by human rights organizations and social movements in Honduras.<sup>139 140</sup> US Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky wrote: "No one should lose their job for seeking the truth and speaking out against police corruption. I stand with Congresswoman Maria Luisa Borjas and her quest for justice for Berta Cáceres".<sup>141</sup>

At the end of the month, the Court of Appeals denied the appeal by the defense of David Castillo and ordered to resume the hearing against him. The preliminary hearing should have taken place in April 2019, but was postponed again and again through delaying tactics by Castillo's defense team.<sup>142 143</sup>

The case further reappeared in the headlines as a new podcast on it was published this month<sup>144</sup> as well as a previously unpublished interview with Berta from 2015 focused on the concepts of democracy and power.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>136</sup> <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/07/31/respuesta-al-comunicado-emitido-por-la-cancilleria-de-honduras-julio-30-de-2020/>

<sup>137</sup> <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1278859737304633344>

<sup>138</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/honduran-lawmaker-loses-appeal-defamation-case-71908451>

<sup>139</sup> <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/07/corte-suprema-de-justicia-se-ensana-contr-la-defensora-y-diputada-maria-luisa-borjas/>

<sup>140</sup> <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/pronunciamientos/1210-csj-se-ensana-contr-diputada-maria-luisa-borjas>

<sup>141</sup> <https://twitter.com/janschakowsky/status/1285985411299454976>

<sup>142</sup> <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1289003922322006017>

<sup>143</sup> <https://copinh.org/2020/07/corte-niega-apelacion-defensa-castillo/>

<sup>144</sup> <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/blood-river/id1523301867>

<sup>145</sup> <https://towardfreedom.org/story/bera-caceres-in-her-own-words/>



## LGBTQ

Lawyer and human rights defender at the Red Lésbica Cattrachas, Astrid Campos, was arrested in Comayagua. "According to the complaint issued by Cattrachas, the lawyer is being held in a cell at UDEP number 3 in Comayagua and was the victim of abuse of authority, illegal and arbitrary detention by the National Police, exposing her health, integrity and security in this difficult context of the Covid-19 pandemic."<sup>146</sup> ContraCorriente reported on the lives of some Honduran trans women during the pandemic<sup>147</sup> and various LGBTQ+ organizations published a joint report on the situation of their community during the pandemic.<sup>148</sup>

## Assassinations

Four trans women were murdered this month in Honduras, Alejandra Ortiz<sup>149</sup>, Scarleth Cáceres, active at Arcoíris,<sup>150</sup> Monic Martinez<sup>151</sup>, and Cristal López.<sup>152</sup> In the case of Cristal, heavily armed men wearing military gear murdered her and then kidnapped her sister who was with her.<sup>153</sup> At least 16 members of the LGBTQ+ community have been murdered so far this year in Honduras.<sup>154</sup>

## Freedom of Expression and Journalists

C-Libre documented 21 cases of journalists tested positive for COVID-19 in June. In total, there have been 33 cases, three people died.<sup>155</sup> The situation further worsened this month. The well-known journalist and head of news at HCH Television, Pablo Matamoros, died of COVID-19<sup>156</sup> as did journalist Francis Jaqueline Bojórquez from Choluteca.<sup>157</sup> At the end of the month, another journalist, Edilberto Zelaya, died to COVID-19.<sup>158</sup>

Journalist Mauricio Ortega was arrested in the municipality of Puerto Cortés; it is the third times this year that the police restricts his journalistic work.<sup>159</sup> Journalist Leonel García denounced being persecuted by orders of the mayor of Nacaome, Víctor Flores.<sup>161</sup> Nationalist congressman Oscar Nájera verbally attacked and threatened journalist Rony Martínez. "The congressman's statements come after Rony Martínez, in his twitter account, published information transferred by a

146 <https://criterio.hn/abogada-de-la-red-lesbica-cattrachas-es-detenido-en-comayagua/>

147 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/07/07/encerradas-y-sin-derechos-asi-viven-la-pandemia-las-mujeres-trans-en-honduras/>

148 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45916>

149 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1278469173191094273>

150 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1282004853926047744>

151 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1287898052011982848>

152 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1288943801151762450>

153 <https://www.proceso.hn/caliente/12-caliente/asesinan-a-un-miembro-de-la-comunidad-lgbt-y-raptan-a-su-hermana-en-la-ceiba.html>

154 <https://criterio.hn/al-menos-16-personas-lgbt-han-muerto-de-forma-violenta-durante-el-2020/>

155 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/1626-junio-el-mes-con-mayor-contagio-por-covid-19-en-periodistas-de-honduras>

156 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/consternacion-por-muerte-de-periodista-pablo-gerardo-matamoros/>

157 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/07/02/muere-periodista-con-sintomas-de-covid-19-en-choluteca/>

158 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2128-honduras-covid-quita-vida-a-otro-companero-al-periodista-edilberto-zelaya-honduras-covid-quita-vida-a-otro-companero-al-periodista-edilberto-zelaya>

159 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1213-detienen-a-periodista-mauricio-ortega-sumando-ataques-policiales-en-su-contr>

160 <http://www.pasosdeanmalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2916-periodista-capturado-me-detienen-porque-ando-cubriendo-las-noticias-de-las-cosas-malas-que-la-policia-hace>

161 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1222-periodista-denuncia-persecucion-vehicular-ordenada-por-alcalde-de-nacaome>

source close to the president of the National Congress, where he affirms "that he asked Oscar Nájera..." about the distribution of 40 million lempiras to "some members of the Energy Commission of the National Congress to approve ONEROUS CONTRACTS to thermal energy generating companies".<sup>162</sup>

## Assassinations

On July 1, journalist German Gerardo Vallecillo and cameraman Jorge Posas were both shot dead in La Ceiba, Atlántida.<sup>163</sup> 86 journalists have been murdered in Honduras since 2003, some 95% of these crimes remain in impunity.<sup>164</sup> OACNUDH condemned the murders. "OHCHR has received information from the State authorities that five persons have been arrested for the alleged commission of the acts. As part of its mandate, OHCHR calls on the authorities to conduct an independent, prompt and impartial investigation to shed light on the facts and to effectively prosecute and punish the perpetrators and masterminds. Such investigations should exhaust all lines of inquiry, including journalistic activity, and take into account previous threats and attacks that had occurred, or even been reported."<sup>165</sup> "The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' (IACHR) Special Rapporteurship on Freedom of Expression condemns the murders of Honduran journalist Germán Vallecillo and cameraman Jorge Posas of Channel 45 in La Ceiba, Honduras. In the context of a crisis of violence against the press, it urges the State to investigate fully, effectively and impartially the material and intellectual authorship of these crimes and their link to journalistic activity."<sup>166</sup> On July 10, the investigation by the Bureau of Police Investigation (DPI) made public that the two were assassinated for the journalistic work. The work in point was a drug trafficking case.<sup>167</sup>

On July 5, criminalized journalist and director of Radio Globo, David Ellner Romero, was transferred from his prison cell to a hospital suspected of COVID-19.<sup>168</sup> A habeas corpus was presented for him.<sup>169</sup> His situation quickly worsened as he suffered a respiratory arrest.<sup>170</sup> He died on July 18. Or in the words of COPINH: "David Romero uncovered countless political and corruption scandals of the JOH regime. After a questioned judicial process he was imprisoned with maximum penalties. He was sentenced to death for COVID by the regime. Today he died in the health system that he denounced as suffering from corruption."<sup>171</sup> The former head of forensic medicine, Julissa Villanueva, explained that due to the nature of his death, in custody, a "forensic autopsy must be performed under the Minnesota protocol including histological and laboratory studies must verify the cause and manner of death".<sup>172</sup>

162 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1226-diputado-amenaza-y-emite-comentarios-homofobicos-contra-periodista>

163 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1198-asesinan-a-periodista-y-camarografo-en-la-ceiba>

164 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2896-ya-suman-mas-de-80-sicarios-matan-a-comunicadores-sociales-en-la-ceiba-atlantida>

165 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-el-asesinato-del-periodista-german-vallecillo-jr-y-del-camarografo-jorge-posas-e-insta-a-investigacion-pronta-y-exhaustiva-de-los-hechos/>

166 <http://defensoresonline.com/relatoria-especial-condena-doble-asesinato-de-comunicadores-en-honduras/>

167 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1392927-466/honduras-crimen-vallecillo-jorge-posas-periodismo-ceiba-investigacion>

168 <https://confidencialhn.com/trasladan-a-centro-asistencial-a-david-romero-por-sospecha-de-coronavirus/>

169 <https://confidencialhn.com/presentan-recurso-de-habeas-corpus-para-solicitar-liberacion-del-director-de-radio-globo-y-confidencialhn/>

170 <https://confidencialhn.com/se-complica-salud-de-david-romero-es-llevado-a-cuidados-intensivos/>

171 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1284537023093772288>

172 <https://criterio.hn/debe-realizarse-autopsia-medico-legal-a-cuerpo-de-david-romero-julissa-villanueva/>

## Violence against Women

Some 50'000 calls to 911 denouncing "domestic" violence were made in the first six months of 2020. The daily average increased during these last months of lockdown.<sup>173</sup> "El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have had more than 13,000 violent deaths of women in the last eight years. Although many of these meet the characteristics of the laws to be considered as femicides, they are not counted as such. Nor do they all receive justice. In this first episode of Station of Silence, a special on violence against women in Mesoamerica, we talk about femicide and impunity in northern Central America."<sup>174</sup> "Only 15 cases of femicide in Honduras have resulted in convictions since the crime was criminalized in 2013. The cases take place in a justice system with little training in gender issues and now, with legislation that reduces penalties. Women who dare to report domestic violence are not attended to in time, they are not safe, which can end up in femicide."<sup>175</sup>

There are also form of indirect violence. 24% of women in Honduras give birth before they are 19 years old.<sup>176</sup>

## Political Prisoners

The National Committee for the Liberation of the Political Prisoners held a press conference this month calling for the release of a dozen Hondurans, who for defending their territories, water, education and health have been imprisoned since last year and whose lives are now at risk from the Covid 19 pandemic.<sup>177</sup>

## Extractive Industries

10 months have passed since the criminalized human rights and environmental defenders from Guapinol have been illegally detained. There are ongoing calls for their liberation.<sup>178 179</sup> Their defense team presented a document to the local MP so that this institution would desist from its position of keeping the defenders of the San Pedro and Guapinol rivers under preventive detention."<sup>180</sup>

CESPAD published a piece of analysis on the role of the JOH regime in the Honduran agricultural sector and the millions of dollars dedicated to it.<sup>181</sup> Some months ago, a 4 billion Lempiras agriculture investment fund made headlines because it was to be managed by the Armed Forces.

<sup>173</sup> <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1393050-528/llamadas-por-violencia-dom%C3%A9stica-aumentaron-durante-la-cuarentena-por-covid-19>

<sup>174</sup> <https://contracorriente.red/2020/07/15/las-muertes-que-no-cuentan-en-el-norte-centroamerica-%e1%bb%bf/>

<sup>175</sup> <https://contracorriente.red/2020/07/15/femicidios-en-honduras-las-mujeres-que-el-estado-no-escucho/>

<sup>176</sup> <https://tiempo.hn/matrimonio-infantil-24-mujeres-madre-antes-19/>

<sup>177</sup> <https://criterio.hn/las-carceles-son-infiernos-de-injusticia-asegura-el-doctor-juan-almendarez/>

<sup>178</sup> <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1278390623108816902>

<sup>179</sup> <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/57-pueblos-indigenas/1660-continua-la-criminalizacion-a-defensores-por-influencias-de-empresa-minera>

<sup>180</sup> <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/exigen-al-ministerio-publico-desistir-su-postura-de-mantener-en-prision-a-ambientalistas-de-guapinol/>

<sup>181</sup> <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/14/en-manos-de-quien-est-an-los-8-mil-millones-de-lempiras-emitidos-para-el-agro-en-honduras/>

This month, the Armed Forces claimed that so far, they had only received 22 million Lempiras for the Agriculture Development Program (PDAH).<sup>182</sup>

## ZEDEs

José Luis Palma Herrera wrote a scientific article on the charter cities (ZEDEs) in Honduras. "Abstract: In its genesis, the objectives of the ZEDE, based on the theory of the Charter Cities of Paul Romer, were to generate job opportunities, economic development and offer security to the population of Honduras to reduce illegal immigration to the United States of America. However, with the emergence of the Migrant Caravans and after a decade of political uncertainty, this development proposal has proven to be one of the vernacular political fallacies of Honduras, characterized by its lack of transparency, lack of indicators of economic development, displacement of municipal autonomy and indifference to the reduction of national poverty. The present study shows how the ZEDE are already part of the historical list of failed Honduran enclaves."<sup>183</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

"The Specialized Fiscal Unit against Corruption Networks (UFERCO) has advanced during this pandemic period in building solid criminal cases against high officials, ex-officials, businessmen, partners, front men and third parties involved in million-dollar diversions of public funds. The work of the UFERCO teams at this time is focused on finalizing the individualization of the authorship of those investigated and those aspects related to the modus operandi, criminal associations and collusion between the public and private sectors; in order to present the corresponding Fiscal Requirements and to request the issuance of arrest warrants."<sup>184</sup>

## Pandora

UFERCO is waiting for the Court of Natural Appeals to issue a resolution to the request of extension of the precautionary measure of Preventive Prison imposed on the former minister of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG), Jacobo Regalado and his business partner Luis Fernando Urrutia.<sup>185</sup>

## The Case against the Former First Lady Rosa Elena de Lobo

The legacy of the MACCIH faded a bit further in Honduras this month.<sup>186</sup> The former first lady, Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo was allowed to leave prison and await a possible re-trial from home. Lobo was convicted on corruption charges and sentenced to 58 years, but this March, she won an

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/ffaa-dice-apanas-han-recibido-22-millones-de-4-mil-millones-para-programa-agricola.html>

<sup>183</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339386729\\_El\\_regreso\\_de\\_los\\_enclaves\\_a\\_Honduras\\_en\\_el\\_siglo\\_XXI\\_Las\\_zonas\\_de\\_empleo\\_y\\_desarrollo\\_economico\\_ZEDE\\_la\\_version\\_de\\_las\\_ciudades\\_charter\\_rechazada\\_por\\_su\\_creador\\_Paul\\_Romer\\_2010-2019](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339386729_El_regreso_de_los_enclaves_a_Honduras_en_el_siglo_XXI_Las_zonas_de_empleo_y_desarrollo_economico_ZEDE_la_version_de_las_ciudades_charter_rechazada_por_su_creador_Paul_Romer_2010-2019)

<sup>184</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/158-julio2020/5973-ufenco-prepara-casos-de-alto-impacto-contr-redes-de-corrupcion>

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/158-julio2020/6054-ufenco-a-la-espera-de-resolucion-de-solicitud-de-ampliacion-de-prision-preventiva-contr-exministro-de-la-sag-y-otro-implicado-en-el-caso-pandora>

<sup>186</sup> <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/26/analisis-semanal-lecciones-para-la-lucha-anti-corrupcion-la-excarcelacion-de-la-ex-primera-dama-de-honduras/>

appeal for a re-trial.<sup>187</sup> Radio Progreso spoke with constitutional lawyer Ramón Enrique Barrios agreed with the ruling, but also highlighted the possible impunity coming from it. "The Honduran Code of Criminal Procedure establishes that no person can be held in preventive detention for more than two years without having a definitive sentence," Barrios said. The case must be repeated in the anti-corruption court. "I think that the ruling that the court is giving is correct, it is in accordance with what the criminal procedure law says, but it must be said that it is not that she will not face the new trial, of course she will face the new trial but she will do so in freedom," Barrios said in an interview with Radio Progreso. (...) "But I anticipate what the lawyers for the defense of Rosa Elena Lobo will have as their argument some articles, some interpretations that are in the new penal code," Barrios said."<sup>188</sup> MADJ, meanwhile, denounced the decision: "Rosa Elena Bonilla will be released in the next few hours, confirming that the corrupt's script is still intact. 1. You are a civil servant, 2. I denounce you, 3. I prosecute you, 4. I sentence you, you go free, you demand and win, free and millionaire, we appeal but they will not admit it."<sup>189</sup>

## State Security Forces

CESPAD published an analysis on the public perception of the success or lack thereof of the police purge. "The results of the ERIC-SJ Opinion Poll aim to show the enormous inconsistencies between the president's discourse and the perception/reality of citizens, particularly on the issue of citizen insecurity and the role of the police institution. The levels of common and organized violence remain extremely high in the country, despite the enormous resources invested in the security and defense sector. Similarly, the lack of trust in the police and the levels of perceived corruption of the police institution remain of great concern. The Purge and Transformation of the National Police is hardly perceived as an achievement by the citizens."<sup>190</sup>

## Repressions

"In the community of La Playa, municipality of La Iguala, in the department of Lempira, an unfortunate event was recorded in which an element of the National Police arrived to arrest two people, who were apparently drinking alcoholic beverages. It was reported that the officer arrived assaulting relatives of the people who were in the house, even shooting with their weapon, injuring one of the inhabitants."<sup>191</sup>

## Assassinations

COFADEH demanded special protective measures from the IACHR for the family of Riner Argueta Oliva, a young men murdered by TIGRES special agents on June 21 in San Esteban, Olancho. "COFADEH considers that the family of the young Riner, especially his brother Adrián Argueta, are

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187 <https://tiempo.hn/primera-dama-rosa-elena-lobo-carcel-tamara-honduras-pepe-tamara/>

188 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/sale-libre-ex-primera-dama-rosa-elena-bonilla/>

189 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1286409362676875267>

190 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/29/analisis-en-la-percepcion-ciudadana-que-tan-exitosa-ha-sido-la-depuracion-policial/>

191 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/policia-dispara-y-deja-herido-a-joven-en-lempira/>

at risk when they denounce the human rights violation committed by the state repressive forces in the municipality of San Esteban, because of the reprisals that may be taken by the officers who participated in the event and who have not been fully tried."<sup>192</sup>

## Penitentiary System

The Honduran prison system continues to be gravely affected by the corona pandemic. The administrative manager of the National Penitentiary Institute, Col. José Miguel Mejía, said that, according to their estimates, some 5,300 prisoners may get infected.<sup>193</sup> In an interview with Radio Progreso, Digna Aguilar, spokeswoman for the National Penitentiary Institute (IN), said that there were currently some 886 COVID-19 cases among prisoners, operational and administrative staff, although official Sinager figures show fewer cases.<sup>194</sup> According to the human rights organization CODEH, there are at least 2500 inmates infected with COVID-19 and 16 have died so far.<sup>195</sup> At least 34 inmates at the prison in Gracias tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, 38 guards also tested positive.<sup>196</sup> More than 50 inmates at the prison in Ocotepeque tested positive for COVID-19.<sup>197</sup> At least 41 inmates at the prison in Santa Rosa, Copán tested positive.<sup>198</sup>

But apart from corona, there is also the violence. An inmate was murdered in a fight at the minimum-security prison El Porvenir.<sup>199</sup> A riot at the Puerto Cortés prison left two inmates dead and several injured.<sup>200</sup> Inmates at the prison in El Progreso denounced mistreatment and abuse.<sup>201</sup>

## Militarization

The Armed Forces have always played a key role in the JOH regime, but their role was further boosted by the corona pandemic.<sup>202</sup> "Honduran President Juan Hernandez faces the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic by reassigning a leading role to the leadership of the armed forces that hold him in power, despite corruption scandals and direct accusations of involvement with drug trafficking by U.S. Justice Department prosecutors. (...) "This military protagonism shows the profound loneliness in which the ruler finds himself: resorting to the military is a way of feeling safe and secure," military expert Leticia Solomon told Criterio.hn."<sup>203</sup> CESPAD explained how JOH used the pandemic as an excuse for further militarization.<sup>204</sup> Last but not least, ContraCorriente also investigated the role of the Armed Forces during the pandemic. "President Juan Orlando Hernandez

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192 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-solicita-medidas-de-proteccion-a-la-cidh-para-familia-de-joven-asesinado-por-escuadron-tigres-y-policia-nacional/>

193 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/mas-de-5-mil-privados-de-libertad-podrian-contagiarse-de-covid-19/>

194 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/unos-mil-privados-de-libertad-estarian-contagiados-instituto-penitenciario/>

195 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/al-menos-2-500-contagiados-y-16-reclusos-han-muerto-por-covid-segun-codeh.html>

196 <https://tiempo.hn/covid-34-reos-dan-positivo-prueba-rapida-carcel-gracias/>

197 <https://confidencial.hn.com/mas-de-50-reos-del-penal-de-ocotepeque-dan-positivo-al-nuevo-coronavirus/>

198 <https://tiempo.hn/covid-19-llega-centro-penal-santa-rosa-registran-41-casos/>

199 <https://confidencial.hn.com/matan-a-reo-durante-rina-en-el-presidio-de-minima-seguridad-de-el-porvenir/>

200 <https://confidencial.hn.com/dos-muertos-y-varios-heridos-deja-rina-en-la-carcel-de-puerto-cortes/>

201 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/privadas-de-libertad-denuncian-malos-tratos-y-abusos-en-centro-penal-de-el-progreso-yoro/>

202 <https://criterio.hn/las-fuerzas-armadas-grupo-sabelotodo-complice-del-regimen-de-joh/>

203 <https://criterio.hn/presidente-de-honduras-se-refugia-entre-las-estrellas-de-generales/>

204 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/07/20/analisis-covid-19-la-excusa-perfecta-para-profundizar-el-proceso-de-remilitarizacion-de-la-seguridad-en-honduras/>

has put the Armed Forces (FFAA) at the forefront of strategic actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Honduras. This is not free. The resources of the Armed Forces increase every year, as do their prerogatives in a country without the threat of war. During the pandemic emergency, we see this institution in programs ranging from welfare to hospital administration. However, the Ministry of Finance has omitted to account for the budget executed by this institution, and purchases of supplies and medicines with irregularities have gone unnoticed, as have complaints of human rights violations."<sup>205</sup>

## International Community

The World Bank granted Honduras a \$75 million loan to reactivate the agricultural sector - it is the third loan in more or less a month for the JOH regime.<sup>206</sup> And then there is also a new \$250 million loan by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) to encourage "electrical sustainability" in Honduras.<sup>207 208</sup>

Alice Shackelford started her work as the new United Nations Resident Coordinator in Honduras.<sup>209</sup>

## US

On the July 4th celebration, the US chargé d'affaires lauded the relationship between the US and Honduras. "Inalienable rights, such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, are principles that the United States shares with the Honduran people and government, says the diplomat". Difficult to find a moment in the recent past when these words have rung more hollow, in both the US and Honduras.<sup>210</sup>

"U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) Chief Executive Officer Adam Boehler today joined Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, U.S. Embassy Honduras Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Colleen A. Hoey, and Deputy Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the National Security Council Mauricio Claver-Carone to announce DFC's intent to finance \$1 billion of private sector investment over three years in Honduras. This effort will complement a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed today between the Governments of the United States and Honduras to establish a framework for bilateral cooperation in support of the Administration's América Crece initiative."<sup>211 212</sup>

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205 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/07/29/mas-responsabilidades-a-cambio-de-mas-impunidad-ff-aa-y-su-rol-en-la-pandemia/>

206 <https://tiempo.hn/reactivar-sector-agricola-bm-otorga-credito-75-millones-honduras/>

207 <https://tiempo.hn/bcie-monto-financiero-honduras-programa-energetico-ambiental-sostenibilidad/>

208 <https://confidencialhn.com/banco-centroamericano-aprueba-250-millones-de-dolares-para-desarrollar-area-energetica/>

209 <https://honduras.un.org/es/53027-alice-shackelford-asume-el-cargo-de-coordinadora-residente-de-las-naciones-unidas-en-honduras>

210 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/encargada-de-negocios-de-estados-unidos-destaca-relacion-fuerte-y-perdurable-con-honduras.html>

211 <https://www.dfc.gov/media/press-releases/dfc-aims-finance-1-billion-private-sector-investment-honduras>

212 <https://tiempo.hn/mike-pompeo-america-crece-generaria-1-billon-honduras/>



## EU

The Network of Domestic Workers denounced the Ambassador of the European Union in Honduras, Alessandro Palmero, for violating the labor rights of a domestic worker in his home.<sup>213</sup>

The EU announced 80 million Euros in support of the JOH regime in addressing the corona pandemic. Given the high level of corruption, once more clearly seen in the response to the pandemic, the EU felt the need to stress that support will be spent under "a very strict system". But why not ask for proof that the millions and millions of dollars already given to the JOH regime have been spent according to its intended purpose? Even if the money from the EU is spent well, it just means that the JOH regime can enrich itself from the funds already in control by the JOH regime.<sup>214</sup> The same question goes to Spain which just announced a \$35 million credit for the JOH regime.<sup>215</sup>

## Drug Trafficking

A drug lab was destroyed by ATIC in Colón this month.<sup>216</sup> Journalist Jeff Ernst reacted: "Another bust of a cocaine lab & estimated 20k plants in northern Honduras is further proof of ongoing shift from bridge state to producer."<sup>217</sup>

## Varia

### JOH

Last month, JOH tried to grab the headlines – and public sympathy? - with his announcement of having tested positive for COVID-19. This month, he left the hospital again.<sup>218</sup> He tweeted a picture of himself leaving the hospital, one fist in the air and writing "¿Quién dijo miedo?" - the title of a documentary on the Honduran coup d'état...<sup>219</sup>

ERIC published its tenth edition of its Public Opinion Poll.<sup>220</sup> They found that over 80% do not trust the government and 8 out of 10 respondents believe that corruption is widespread in the government. They give JOH 3.69 points out of 10.<sup>221</sup> ConexiHon reported on the misuse of the JOH regime of public funds to misinform the public.<sup>222</sup>

Even more public funds are used for the new Palmerola airports and the continue to be problems. Palmerola. "Palmerola International Airport (PIA) requested an additional \$51.3 million to complete the engineering work, claiming that the project will be affected by the "drastic drop in passenger

213 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/35-mujeres/1667-embajador-europeo-en-honduras-violenta-derechos-laborales-a-trabajadora-domestica>

214 <https://hondudiario.com/2020/07/24/donacion-de-la-union-europea-sera-bajo-estricta-supervision-para-evitar-corrupcion/>

215 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/espana-aprueba-credito-por-35-millones-de-dolares-para-pobres-de-honduras.html>

216 <https://confidencialhn.com/encuentran-narcolaboratorio-y-plantaciones-de-hoja-de-coca-en-poblado-de-colon/>

217 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1279470269967597575>

218 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/dan-el-alta-medica-al-presidente-herandez-tras-su-recuperacion-del-covid-19.html>

219 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1278695932478001154>

220 <https://eric-sj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Bolet%C3%ADn-SOP-2020-Final.pdf>

221 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/gobierno-lleva-mas-de-una-decada-ignorando-al-pueblo-segun-sondeo-de-opinion-publica/>

222 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/investigaciones/1649-gobierno-de-honduras-utilizo-fondos-publicos-para-desinformar-con-publicidad>



traffic" due to the COVID-19 pandemic and with it a loss of more than one million passengers."<sup>223</sup> This demand was never meant to become public so when it did, the company tried to confuse the public claiming that they just made the loss calculations but they did not expect the JOH regime to pay them that amount.<sup>224</sup> The former head of the Central Bank of Honduras, Hugo Noé Pino, criticized the contract between the company and the Honduran State. "[H]e explained that the contract was poorly drafted by the Superintendence of Public and Private Partnerships (SAPP), so the big loser is society."<sup>225</sup>

## Penal Code

Radio Progreso succinctly explains the state of Honduras and the Penal Code. "Once again the regime of Juan Orlando Hernández shows its contempt for constitutional values and the principle of separation of powers, and confirms its authoritarian nature. Let us remember that the National Congress, meeting in an extraordinary session on June 24, decided to abrogate the Criminal Code. Article 216 of the Constitution of the Republic establishes the path that a decree must follow after being approved by the legislature. In this sense, Congress must transfer it to the Executive, and the Executive has two paths: sanction it or veto it. In the case of vetoing it, it has 10 days to return it to Congress, stating the reasons on which its disagreement is based. If in these 10 days it does not veto it or sanction it expressly, Article 216 is clear in establishing that it will be considered sanctioned and will be promulgated as law. What the Hernandez regime has done is disrespect the Constitution again and instead of sanctioning or vetoing the decree, it sent a letter to Representative Jorge Cálix stating that the session of Congress is not legal, as if it had the constitutional power to decide what is legal or not in another power of the State. (...) The 10 days established by article 216 of the Constitution have passed without the Executive having sanctioned or vetoed the abrogation decree, so if we lived in a democracy the new Criminal Code would no longer be in force. We are aware that the power of arms and the control of the justice system allow the regime to apply by force a code that has been delegitimized and is already constitutionally abrogated. However, the citizenry will continue to reject this new anti-democratic act and work to rescue Honduras from this dictatorship."<sup>226</sup>

El Heraldo reported on legal gaps and conflicts with the new Penal Code. "Some legal analysts consider that the new legislation even clashes with precepts established in the Constitution of the Republic and instead of solving the problems it creates new legal entanglements, so it must be reformed as soon as possible."<sup>227</sup> The CNA highlighted why it should be considered unconstitutional and they call on the Constitutional Chamber to treat the constitutional challenge they had presented on this matter.<sup>228</sup>

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223 <https://www.proceso.hn/nacionales/9-nacionales/empresa-que-construye-palmerola-solicita-otros-51-millones-de-dolares.html>

224 <https://criterio.hn/filtracion-de-carta-mete-en-apuros-a-concesionaria-de-aeropuerto-palmerola-que-ahora-niega-reclamo-de-51-3-millones/>

225 <https://confidencialhn.com/expresidente-del-banco-central-sostiene-que-contrato-de-concesion-de-palmerola-fue-mal-elaborado/>

226 <https://radioprogreso.hn/net/np/el-codigo-penal-esta-abrogado/>

227 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1393566-466/surgen-lagunas-y-conflictos-legales-en-el-nuevo-c%C3%B3digo-penal>

228 <https://www.cna.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Los-motivos-de-inconstitucionalidad.pdf>

## Elections

Mauricio Oliva, Congress' president, nominated a special commission in charge of carrying out an analysis of the progress of the electoral census.<sup>229</sup> Shortly afterwards, the National Electoral Council (CNE) presented an electoral timetable without a clear plan for a new and much needed electoral census.<sup>230</sup> Libre immediately rejected the timetable.<sup>231</sup> El Tiempo reported that even the president the CNE voted against it. Rixi Moncada fears that it represents a fraud in the making.<sup>232</sup> She also highlighted the difficulty of wanting to take about elections during a pandemic. But, "she recognized that the nation needs electoral processes to "rebuild" the state through institutions. "Everything begins with democratic processes, there is no other way to elect authorities except through elections," she reinforced. (...) The head of the CNE urged that a budget of 1.1 billion lempiras be allocated for the primary process in March next year. However, a strengthened Electoral Law, an updated electoral census and a new identity card are also essential."<sup>233</sup>

On July 2, the congressional committee for the elaboration of the new Electoral Law, once again, claimed that the law was ready to be discussed and approved in the plenary. They had already said this weeks ago, but nothing happened.<sup>234</sup> The National Persons Registry (RNP), meanwhile, promised new identity cards for February, one month before the primary elections.<sup>235</sup>

## Education

Some two million Honduran children are without access to education during the pandemic.<sup>236</sup>

## Migration

Deportations to Honduras dropped by 59.6% in the first half of 2020, but it still means that 23'811 Hondurans were deported from the US and Mexico<sup>237</sup>, over 10'000 during the pandemic.<sup>238</sup> A new study found that "On Tuesday afternoon, the study "The experience of returning to the place of origin: migrant violence, fraud and sexual abuse are the most repeated experiences among Honduran women who have been deported."<sup>239</sup>

The Trump administration's migration policy suffered a setback this month. "A federal judge ordered the Trump administration on Tuesday to stop enforcing an immigration rule that disqualifies most non-Mexican migrants from asylum at the U.S. southern border, saying the broad restriction was enacted unlawfully in the summer of 2019. (...) Enacted as a final rule in July 2019, the

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229 <https://criterio.hn/comision-legislativa-analizara-proceso-de-nuevo-padron-electoral/>

230 <https://criterio.hn/sin-certeza-de-nuevo-censo-anuncian-nuevo-cronograma-electoral/>

231 <https://criterio.hn/libre-rechaza-nuevo-cronograma-electoral-por-no-contar-con-nuevo-censo-electoral/>

232 <https://tiempo.hn/rixi-moncada-vota-contr-a-cronograma-electoral-valida-censo-2017-dice/>

233 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/es-ingrato-tener-que-hablar-de-procesos-electorales-en-una-situacion-de-pandemia-por-covid-dice-jefa-del-cne.html>

234 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/nim-d-honduras-y-ue-fortalece-la-democracia-hondurena-a-traves-del-proyecto-prodemos.html>

235 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45851>

236 <https://criterio.hn/dos-millones-de-ninos-y-ninas-sin-acceso-a-educacion-en-crisis-pandemica/>

237 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1392605-410/disminuyen-hondure%C3%B1os-deportados-honduras-estados-unidos-pandemia>

238 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45949>

239 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/violencia-estafa-y-abuso-sexual-las-experiencias-que-mas-se-repiten-entre-hondurenas-deportadas.html>

regulation struck down on Tuesday deemed migrants who did not seek some form of humanitarian protection in a third country on their journey to the southern border ineligible for U.S. asylum. Because it includes limited exceptions to this disqualification and affects even unaccompanied minors, the regulation shut off the asylum system for most Central American and non-Mexican migrants, who travel through at least one third country to reach the U.S. border."<sup>240</sup>

At the same time, US authorities celebrated the detention of the newest migrant caravan by the Honduras police (see last month's monitor). Journalist Jonathan Blitzer rightly asked: "What's being celebrated here? People are fleeing a country that's refusing to let them leave. On top of everything else, it happens to be a country with a corrupt, criminal, and illegitimately "elected" president. Aka: a US ally, because he claims to be tough on immigration."<sup>241</sup> Even worse, one of the Haitian men leading the migrant caravan, Jamesley Bienvenue, disappeared after having been arrested by the police.<sup>242</sup> Pinu congressman David Reyes denounced that he had been arrested by members of the national police, for having carried out a humanitarian act in favor of the caravan of mostly Haitian, Cuban and African migrants while they were moving from Choluteca to the Tegucigalpa.<sup>243</sup>

More migration caravans may follow. Over 40% of Hondurans wish to leave Honduras due to the situation of the country according to the survey by ERIC. The survey was conducted in the beginning of February and the real number may be even higher now.<sup>244</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

It was a grim month in Honduras and the "best" news I could find was that remittances fell less so far than was previously feared.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/judge-blocks-trump-border-asylum-restriction-enacted-illegally/>

<sup>241</sup> <https://twitter.com/JonathanBlitzer/status/1278687821281341446>

<sup>242</sup> <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/migrantes/1630-desaparece-haitiano-que-lideraba-migrantes-de-paso-por-honduras>

<sup>243</sup> <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/migrantes/1652-policia-nacional-retiene-a-diputado-hondureno-por-prestarle-ayuda-humanitaria-a-migrantes-africanos-y-cubanos>

<sup>244</sup> <http://www.proceso.hn/portadas/10-portada/un-40-2-de-hondurenos-piensa-emigrar-a-raiz-de-actual-situacion-de-pais.html>

<sup>245</sup> <http://elpulso.hn/?p=45772>

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

Past Activities:

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Upcoming Activities:

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