

Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – August 2020

The JOH regime has spent some \$50 millions for mobile hospitals which are still not functional, 5 out of 7 are not even in the country yet. Adding to this, civil society organizations uncovered even more corruption cases, while the MP still has various corruption “investigations” which 150 days into them have not yet led to any charges. At the same time, previous corruption cases brought forward by the MACCIH are being undermined. The Honduran people are fed up and mobilize around the slogan “Where is the money” while the JOH regime reacts with violence and arbitrary arrests. The forcefully disappeared Garífuna activists are still not found, another community leader was murdered and the judicial system continues to go after the Guapinol defenders. At least, there was a hopeful sign in the Berta Cáceres case as the process against David Castillo was elevated to a trial.

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

El Pulso reported on a concerning fact. Rightly worried about the corona pandemic, people afflicted by dengue are not seeking out medical help in Honduras. There are 18'135 confirmed dengue cases, but likely there are much more.¹ There are currently at least 15 minors hospitalized for severe or even hemorrhagic dengue.²

August started with 42'685 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1368 confirmed deaths.³ Carlos Umaña, president of the Association of Physicians of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS) in the north of the country, explains that the real number of deaths is twice as high based on funeral home statistics and the number coming from COVID-wings at hospitals.⁴ The Association of Funeral Homes of Honduras had registered 3,500 burials of Hondurans under the Covid-19 protocol up until July 23.⁴

Honduras was still not at the level of testing as it should be and in a press release, the Association of Microbiologists and Clinical Chemists of Honduras requested guarantees for an ample, quality and timely supply of inputs, as well as reagents, equipment and the hiring of suitable personnel to attend to everything related to cases of COVID-19.⁵ Honduras has a low testing rate in general and even comparatively to its Central American neighbors. It only tested 1.2% of its population, compared to 5.8% in Panama or 3.9% in El Salvador for example.⁶ Even worse, El Tiempo reports that 250'000 detection tests bought in April were damaged.⁷ Additionally, the coordinator of the Virology Laboratory in the Cortés department, Carlos Leitzelar, denounced that of the five machines that process PCR tests to detect COVID-19, only one has reagents.⁸

ContraCorriente reported on the effects of corruption on the testing of Hondurans. "In almost 5 months of the pandemic, Honduras has counted 48,400 people infected with COVID-19 after processing an estimated 118,000 PCR tests. Only 0.12% of the Honduran population has been tested with the nasopharyngeal swab test used to detect the virus. Some private laboratories have taken it upon themselves to perform and process samples for people who can afford to pay a high price. Meanwhile, the lack of technical capabilities in the public health system and corruption have resulted in a loss of \$1.9 million in tests that were ruined in transport and storage while waiting for machines purchased for \$585,360.00 to process tests."⁹

August ended with 60'174 cases and 1858 deaths.¹⁰

1 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47226>

2 <https://confidencialhn.com/reportan-que-unos-15-menores-están-hospitalizados-por-dengue-hemorrágico/>

3 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1398217-466/honduras-muertos-covid-19-casos-sin-ager-agosto>

4 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/cierre-de-la-economia-ya-no-es-opcion-dice-umana-que-pide-mas-trajes-y-aplicacion-de-pcr.html>

4 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/03/monitoreo-del-covid19-en-honduras-3-de-agosto-del-2020/>

5 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1399189-410/colegio-microbiologos-honduras-poco-apoyo-insumos-equipo-pandemia-covid>

6 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/elheraldodata/1399598-504/honduras-pruebas-pcr-coronavirus-centroamerica>

7 <https://tiempo.hn/covid-19-en-plena-crisis-sanitaria-trasciende-250-mil-pruebas-danaron/>

8 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/de-cinco-maquinas-solo-una-tiene-reactivos-para-procesar-pruebas-pcr-dice-jefe-la-laboratorio.html>

9 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/08/13/mas-de-2-millones-suman-a-las-irregularidades-de-invest-h-con-compra-de-pruebas-y-maquinaria-para-su-procesamiento/>

10 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1404982-466/honduras-supera-los-60-mil-casos-de-covid-y-1858-muertos>

State Reaction

El Heraldo reported that the JOH regime had taken up debt worth almost \$3.4 billion since the start of the corona pandemic.¹¹ According to the Finance Ministry, the JOH regime has only executed so far 63% of all the funds destined to fight the pandemic.¹² Japan donated \$9 million to the JOH regime to combat the pandemic. It is meant to improve the radiology department at the University Hospital.¹³ The JOH regime will receive another \$500'000 from the BCIE to confront the corona pandemic.¹⁴

The state of exception was again prolonged this month. SINAGER extended the possibility to circulate on weekends deciding over the Multi-Sectorial Board. If one can leave their home still depends on the last digit of one's identity card.¹⁶ At the same time, the JOH regime announced that national flights would be possible again on August 10 and international ones on August 17.¹⁷

CESPAD published an analysis on the corona policies at the local level and the lack of support from the JOH regime. "After almost five months of the pandemic in Honduras, many municipal governments are "juggling" what little money they have because the central government owes them transfers from the beginning of the year to date, and the tax money collected in their areas is not even enough to pay the payroll for employees, much less to deal with Covid-19. "Scratching a living", this is how they describe the crisis facing the mayors, who have paraded in the media through appearances in which all, without exception, cite two common denominators: they have no funds and they lack health personnel and supplies to contain the pandemic."¹⁸

Health Sector

Six months into the pandemic, Honduran health workers still had to protest for adequate safety equipment. A nurse was even fired after he had reported that they were working without biomedical gear to care for patients.¹⁹ A doctor and outspoken critic of the JOH regime, Marco Eliud Girón, was arbitrarily detained by the police on the way to a patient.¹⁹ He was released after 24 hours. but journalist César Silva denounced that he was beaten by the police. Girón was evaluated by a forensic doctor and then transferred to a hospital as a result of the beatings.²⁰ "Ligia Ramos, the prosecutor of the Medical College of Honduras (CMH), reported on her Twitter account that a patrol car has been posted in front of her house and that police officers got off to take pictures of her home."²¹ Another doctor, María Angélica Milla, was detained for some time because she painted the question

11 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1398258-466/en-33708-millones-han-endeudado-a-honduras-durante-pandemia>

12 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/solo-un-15-de-los-2-500-millones-autorizados-por-el-cn-ha-ingresado-al-tesoro-nacional.html>

13 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1400552-410/japon-dona-honduras-millones-dolares-oronavirus->

14 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-dona-500-mil-dolares-a-honduras-para-el-centro-de-contencion-del-sars-cov2/>

16 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/sin-consenso-en-mesa-multisectorial-para-aprobar-la-circulacion-de-dos-digitos-por-dia.html>

17 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1398803-466/honduras-aeropuertos-nacionales-internacionales>

18 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/07/los-aprietos-de-las-alcaldias-de-honduras-y-la-deuda-del-gobierno-herandez/>

19 <https://confidencialhn.com/despiden-del-leonardo-martinez-a-enfermero-que-denuncio-malos-tratos-y-falta-de-pago/>

19 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2163-honduras-urgente-doctor-que-denuncio-atentado-envia-sos-por-detencion-policia/>

20 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2934-interno-en-hospital-por-los-abusos-policia-propina-golpiza-a-doctor-eliud-giron-dentro-de-la-celda>

21 <https://criterio.hn/doctora-ligia-ramos-denuncia-persecucion-policia/>

"Where is the Money?" near the Olympic Stadium in San Pedro Sula. After an uproar, the police claimed that she had been detained for violating the lockdown.²²

After days of warning, health workers at the Leonardo Martínez Valenuela hospital left work in protests as they are owed months in salaries.²⁴ According to the speaker of the National Nurses Association (ANEEAH), 63 of their members resigned at the hospital.²⁵ Microbiologists (and many other State employees) have not been paid for weeks or months, they have to wait another three weeks according to the authorities.²⁶ Employees at the San Felipe Hospital have not been paid for two months.²⁷ "More than 500 employees of the Hospital Escuela in Tegucigalpa had their salaries deducted for days of disability by Covid-19, making the economic situation more precarious for people who are on the front line of the battle against the virus, denounced Mauricio Corrales, representative of the Workers' Union."²⁸

Several doctors^{29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36} and nurses^{37 38 39 40 41 42} died this month to COVID-19. Speaking to Pasos de Animal Grande, Suyapa Figueroa, president of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH), holds the JOH regime responsible for the high death rate in the medical sector during the pandemic.⁴³ CESPAD published an important report, as part of a series, on the public management of the corona pandemic. The report focuses on the situation of health workers. "Unprotecting those who protect us: Health worker risks in the face of the pandemic".⁴⁴ By August 9, 17 nurses had died and 1800 got infected.⁴⁴ By the end of the month, it was over 20 and more than 40 doctors. According to the president of the Association of Physicians of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS), Carlos Umaña, law enforcement authorities should investigate those responsible for the death of health workers.⁴⁴

22 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1401713-410/polic%C3%ADa-libertad-doctora-milla-detenido-donde-esta-el-dinero>

24 <https://tiempo.hn/por-falta-de-pago-de-brazos-caidos-personal-medico-del-hospital-lmv/>

25 <https://confidencialhn.com/mas-de-60-empleados-del-hospital-leonardo-martinez-renuncian-por-falta-de-pago-y-equipo-de-bioseguridad/>

26 <https://tiempo.hn/respuesta-autoridades-salud-microbiologos-tres-semanas-pago/>

27 <https://criterio.hn/sindicato-del-hospital-san-felipe-emplaza-al-gobierno-por-incumplimiento-de-pago-de-salarios/>

28 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/trabajadores-del-hospital-escuela-en-desacuerdo-con-deduccin-de-incapacidades-de-su-propio-salario/>

29 <https://confidencialhn.com/fallece-reconocido-medico-de-san-pedro-sula-por-el-nuevo-coronavirus/>

30 <https://confidencialhn.com/muere-por-el-nuevo-coronavirus-el-director-de-las-clinicas-capitalinas-de-emergencia/>

31 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1401029-466/muere-covid-19-doctor-josue-calix-ardon-ihss-virus>

32 <https://tiempo.hn/covid-19-muere-manuel-ordonez-querido-doctor-el-paraiso/>

33 <https://confidencialhn.com/otro-galeno-de-la-region-norte-muere-por-complicaciones-del-nuevo-coronavirus/>

34 <https://confidencialhn.com/fallece-en-el-hospital-del-ihss-otro-galeno-por-el-nuevo-coronavirus/>

35 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1403393-466/muere-doctora-ada-vel%C3%A1squez-v%C3%ADctima-del-covid-19-el-d%C3%ADa-de-su-cumple%C3%A1os>

36 <https://tiempo.hn/covid-19-muere-medico-de-29-anos-en-tocoa-colon/>

37 <https://confidencialhn.com/muere-en-el-hospital-del-ihss-enfermero-auxiliar-por-sospechas-del-nuevo-coronavirus/>

38 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1399821-410/muere-doctor-enfermera-coronavirus-onduras>

39 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/08/12/brigadas-medicas-y-triajes-de-alcaldias-se-haran-con-prestamo-del-bid/>

40 <https://tiempo.hn/con-sospechas-covid-19-fallece-enfermero-hospital-tela/>

41 <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias-otra-enfermera-fallece-por-covid-en-la-zona-sur-de-honduras.html>

42 <https://www.proceso.hn/salud/5-salud-y-sociedad/otro-enfermero-fallece-bajo-sospecha-de-covid-19-en-la-capital.html>

43 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2931-autoritarismo-prevalece-a-la-solucion-de-la-pandemia-gobierno-de-joh-es-responsable-de-alta-tasa-de-muertes-de-medicos-por-covid19>

44 <http://cespad.org.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/1-informe-monitoreo-COVID.pdf>

44 <https://proceso.hn/covid-19-a-cobrado-la-vida-de-17-enfermeras-y-mil-800-se-han-contagiado-segun-la-aneeah/>

44 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-debe-de-investigar-a-los-responsables-del-contagio-de-medicos-y-enfermeras/>

The president of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH) calls on international bodies to stop working together with the JOH regime, but should rather send a delegation to investigate "the grave crimes against humanity" conducted with the use of international funds.⁴⁵

Human Rights

Social movements and human rights organizations published further joint press releases during the pandemic.^{46 47} "We continue to assert that the main crisis is not the Coronavirus crisis. The fundamental crisis is the one that is led by a pact of corruption and impunity and built around the narco-dictatorship led by Juan Orlando Hernandez. With an unshakable firmness, we raise our voices to call for unity between all of the social and popular movements to help lead and create a new path forward, one that expunges the criminals who control the country and institutions. In an attempt to continue gathering more voices for our coordinated response we collectively put forward this Twenty-Third public manifesto".⁴⁸ "August ends, but the dignity and word of these more than forty social and popular organizations remains intact. United our voices to the clamor of indignation of all our people, in repudiation of the disgusting narco-dictatorship, in calls and firm proposals".⁴⁹

The Human Rights Roundtable published a press release denouncing the ongoing human rights violations during the pandemic: "the deepening of the human rights crisis, the larceny of public resources, selective justice that favors the groups in power and fails to protect the victims, and the lack of institutions to counteract this situation".⁵⁰ According to them, more than 34'000 Hondurans have been arrested since the start of the lockdown.⁵¹ "From March 16 to July 2020, the National Human Rights Commissioner, CONADEH, received some 3,179 complaints, of which 1,198 were related to crimes, detentions during public protests, excessive use of force, and poor attention to patients and family members, as a consequence of Covid.19".⁵²

Corruption

Corruption cases have dominated the headlines since the first week of the pandemic. Interestingly, even the corporate media outlets seem more critical than usual of these cases. El Herald's fact-checker came to the conclusion that a recent statement by the president of the Medical Association of Honduras (CMH), Suyapa Figueroa, is true. The statement was that the emergency resources meant for the corona pandemic were used as a "piñata". "The questioned acquisition of seven mobile hospitals, five of which are not known when they will arrive, the purchase of lung ventilators that are still not working, as well as the purchase of 250,000 PCR tests without the extraction kits,

45 <https://confidencialhn.com/colegio-medico-pide-organismos-internacionales-no-dialogar-mas-con-joh-ante-negligencia-por-pandemia/>

46 <https://copinh.org/2020/08/manifiesto-publico-21-agosto-2020/>

47 <https://copinh.org/2020/08/manifiesto-publico-22-agosto-2020/>

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

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

50 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2947-denuncia-mesa-de-ddhh-en-conferencia-de-prensa-las-violaciones-a-derechos-humanos-justicia-selectiva-para-grupos-de-poder-y-el-latrocinio-del-erario-publico-sin-castigo>

51 <https://radioprogreso.net/instante/mas-de-34-mil-personas-han-sido-detenido-durante-la-pandemia/>

52 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2955-en-tiempos-de-pandemia-alarmando-aumento-de-quejas-por-violaciones-a-derechos-humanos-en-el-conadeh>

and the purchase of biosafety equipment that does not reach medical personnel, is proof that taxpayers' money has been wasted."⁵³

The body in the crossfire, at least publicly, Invest-H, has been accompanied by an intervention bodies for week, but this body itself is very problematic. ConfidencialHN found out that Nora Waleska Escoto Álvarez, the wife of one its members, army colonel José Ernesto Leva Bulnes, is a supplier to the State through the trading company Productos Médicos Especializados SA (Promesa).⁵⁴ Radio Progreso demanded that the board of Invest-H also needed to be investigated.⁵⁵ But not much is to be expected from this side. The MP announced that the had 16 lines of investigation, but there are any meaningful results so far, not even formal accusations.^{56 57}

The main corruption case remained the one with the mobile hospitals, or rather "triage rooms" as the CNA denounced.⁶⁰ They also sent the results of their investigations to US authorities.⁶¹ El Heraldo reports that Invest-H signed an illegal confidentiality agreement with the businessman Axel López about the purchase of the mobile hospitals.⁶² On August 24, La Prensa reported that the five remaining mobile hospitals were being constructed in a rented workshop not really meant for this kind of work in Ankara, Turkey.⁶³ At the same time, Invest-H claimed that two of the five missing hospitals were finished and the other three were finished by 90%.⁶⁴ They also promised that the two already delivered would be up and running soon. At the time of writing (September 7) this is still not the case.

The CNA published a report on another corruption case in which COPECO and Invest-H had bought overpriced face masks which additionally are inadequate to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁵ The Institute for Access to Public Information denounced that both COPECO and Invest-H had not published reports on their purchases by the end of August.⁶⁶ The CNA published its 9th report on corruption during the pandemic, this time focusing on the controversial MAIZ treatment. They showed that the drugs were overpaid by 2.8 million Lempiras.⁶⁷

Already last month, Hondurans have shown publicly that they were fed up with this corruption. The protest reached a new level in August. On August 10, Tegucigalpa woke up to a huge street painting asking "Where is the money?".⁶⁸ The JOH regime erased it but the next day, Hondurans just returned and repainted it.⁶⁸ In the coming days, the slogan "Where is the Money!" resurfaced through-

53 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/factchecking/1396975-504/presidenta-cmh-covid-emergencia>

54 <https://confidencialhn.com/familion-y-oligopolios-al-descubierto-intereses-de-interventor-de-investh-y-amarre-de-contratos-a-empresas-para-instalar-hospitales-moviles/>

55 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/fiscalia-debe-ampliar-investigacion-a-consejo-directivo-de-invest-h/>

56 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/mp-confirma-16-lineas-de-investigacion-por-compras-durante-la-pandemia/>

57 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/cna-denuncia-corupcion-tambien-en-la-compra-del-tratamiento-maiz/>

60 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1290281377821102081>

61 <https://criterio.hn/departamento-de-justicia-de-ee-uu-ya-tiene-documentacion-de-la-compra-de-hospitales-moviles-en-honduras/>

62 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1403387-466/marco-bogran-acuerdo-de-confidencialidad-axel-lopez-hospitales-moviles>

63 <https://www.laprensa.hn/premium/1403437-410/en-una-bodega-rentada-axel-lopez-termina-de-ensamblar-los-5-hospitales-coronavirus-honduras>

64 <https://tiempo.hn/invest-h-dos-hospitales-moviles-estran-terminados-tres-restantes-90/>

65 <https://tiempo.hn/cna-copeco-invest-h-compraron-mascarillas-no-medicas-precio-doble/>

66 <https://tiempo.hn/desaparecido-informe-de-compras-de-invest-h-y-copeco-iaip/>

67 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1300437996852916225>

68 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1292625941076889605>

68 <https://tiempo.hn/hondurenos-remarcan-letras-grafiti-donde-esta-el-dinero-1/>

out Honduras.⁶⁸ After another attempt to erase the huge slogan in Tegucigalpa, Luis Santos, head of UFERCO, reacted: "The erasure of this slogan shows in all its splendor, INTOLERANCE towards criticism, towards the demand for transparency in the management of public funds, but at the same time, permissive of the praise towards those who manage them, this in the best of cases is, hypocrisy."⁶⁸ Similar words from the CNA: "They were more concerned with erasing the popular call than with getting the mobile triages up and running or answering the question "Where's the money? So much money has been stolen that it can never be forgotten; more than L 90 billion unaccounted for."⁶⁹ The most direct response came by Padre Melo presenting JOH as "the thief".⁷⁰ And then, there was also a new sign outside of the offices of the National Party saying "Here is the money".⁷¹

As with previous protests, the JOH regime reacted with violence. Pasos de Animal Grande denounced that the JOH regime has started to arbitrarily arrest people from stopping the spread of the slogan.⁷² Heavily armed police threatened a group of people painting the slogan in El Progreso.⁷³ "The mayor of Utila, Troy Bodden, of the National Party, called the graffiti asking "Where is the money?" on the façade of the mayor's office in that Bay Island municipality a criminal act. He also offered the island's population 25,000 lempiras for anyone who would denounce and help capture the individuals so that the law would be applied because this type of action he will not tolerate, since it is a new and beautiful building, he said to local media."⁷⁴ Three young women and a boy were arrested for participating in a "Where is the Money?" protest held in the municipality of Santa Ana, Francisco Morazán.⁷⁵ C-Libre denounced that the police took picture of a young activist when she spoke with media outlets about the "Where is the Money?" movement.⁷⁶

Poverty

Poverty levels will reach 70% in Honduras as a result of the pandemic and the failed response by the JOH regime.⁷⁷ According to consumer protection organizations, some 60 basic goods have seen their prices substantially rise during the pandemic.⁷⁸ Taiwan donated 6.6 million pounds of rice to Honduras meant to alleviate poverty during the pandemic.⁷⁹ Remittances sent to Honduras have dropped 2.8% so far during the pandemic.⁸⁰

68 <https://criterio.hn/donde-esta-el-dinero-el-grafiti-que-se-hizo-viral-en-honduras-y-que-quieren-borrar-de-cualquier-forma/>

68 <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1295147761050976257>

69 <https://twitter.com/odirfernandez/status/1295037241786535936>

70 <https://twitter.com/Melosmoreno/status/1295099068897808384>

71 <https://criterio.hn/aqui-esta-el-dinero-la-frase-que-pone-en-jaque-al-partido-nacional/>

72 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2942-detenciones-arbitrarias-es-la-nueva-estrategia-para-evitar-las-pintas-de-donde-esta-el-dinero>

73 <https://criterio.hn/con-fusiles-ar-15-policia-desaloja-a-ciudadanos-que-pintaban-donde-esta-el-dinero/>

74 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1233-detienen-a-ciudadanos-por-expresar-en-via-publica-consigna-donde-esta-el-dinero>

75 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2948-en-santa-ana-francisco-morazan-policia-golpea-y-detiene-cuatro-jovenes-por-preguntar-donde-esta-el-dinero>

76 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1240-policia-toma-fotografias-a-joven-mientras-brindaba-declaraciones-a-medios-de-comunicacion-exigiendo-donde-esta-el-dinero>

77 <http://elpulso.hn?p=46731>

78 <https://tiempo.hn/60-productos-de-canasta-basica-aumentaron-precio-durante-la-pandemia/>

79 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2181-sedis-entregara-6-6-millones-de-libras-de-arroz-donadas-por-taiwan>

80 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/honduras-ha-recibido-este-ano-un-2-8-menos-en-remesas-que-en-2019.html>

"More than 42 maquiladora companies in the department of Cortés, in northern Honduras, are firing workers who are pregnant or have medical diagnoses for occupational diseases, the coordinator of the Honduran Women's Collective Codemuh, María Luisa Regalado, denounced on Radio Progreso."⁸¹ "According to Daniel Durón, Secretary General of the Central General de Trabajadores (CGT), Honduras has more than half a million workers who are unemployed due to layoffs and the suspension of work contracts. He said that the problem is aggravated by the lack of administrative follow-up at the Ministry of Labour, which remains closed."⁸²

Education

The corona pandemic has also an effect on the Honduras education sector. "150 days ago, school activities were suspended in Honduras and since March 25 the Ministry of Education ordered to continue classes remotely, thus starting a new modality through electronic means that require internet access. This new system affects children and young people who do not have access to a smart phone or a computer at home, much less a residential internet service."⁸³ The president of the College of Pedagogues of Honduras (Colpedagogosh), Edwin Hernandez, said that the teachers affiliated with the union suspended the teaching of virtual classes due to the lack of salary in July.⁸⁴ Things are not better at UNAH. According to its dean, the JOH regime owns UNAH one billion Lempiras. Due to this, wages won't be payed on time.⁸⁵

CESPAD summarized the situation as follows: "In the current situation, exclusion in education has increased and strongly demonstrates the way in which four decades of failed neoliberal education policies are expressed. This situation has alarmed the country's main specialized education centers and civil society organizations, since the current figures for dropout and educational exclusion have reached the most critical level that the public education system has experienced in recent years."⁸⁶

Economy

The corona pandemic and its abysmal management by the JOH regime will lead to a historic drop in the Honduran economy. The Central Bank of Honduras (BCH) estimates minus 7-8% in GDP.⁹⁰ The Honduran economy shrunk by 10% in the first semester of 2020.⁹¹ FOSDEH estimates a drop of 40% in tax collection this year.⁹² The Honduran tourism sector reported losses of more than \$1 billion.⁹³

81 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/maquilas-despiden-obreras-embrazadas-y-con-diagnosticos-medicos/>

82 <https://criterio.hn/en-calamidad-domestica-mas-de-medio-millon-de-hondurenos-suspendidos-y-despedidos-de-sus-trabajos/>

83 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/08/05/la-pandemia-suma-a-la-desigualdad-y-mas-ninos-quedan-sin-educacion/>

84 <https://confidencialhn.com/docentes-afiliados-al-colpedagogosh-suspenden-imparticion-de-clases-virtuales/>

85 <https://confidencialhn.com/por-falta-de-desembolso-autoridades-de-la-unah-atrasan-a-empleados-el-pago-de-salarios/>

86 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/05/reporte-semanal-13-ninez-hondurena-en-riesgo-de-perder-el-ano-educativo-por-altos-niveles-de-exclusion/>

90 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2143-covid-y-corrupcion-dejaran-la-peor-ruina-historica-de-honduras>

91 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/la-economia-de-honduras-se-contrajo-un-10-en-primer-semester-por-covid-19.html>

92 <https://confidencialhn.com/preven-que-honduras-tendra-una-caida-del-40-por-ciento-en-sus-ingresos-fiscales-al-cierre-de-2020/>

93 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=46509>

Human Rights and Their Defenders

This month, a virtual forum on forced disappearance organized by COFADEH, REL-UITA and OACNUDH took place.^{94 95} OACNUDH published various impressions of the event, citing among others Bertha Oliva: "We continue working and we are not satisfied because the disappeared in Honduras were many, for many it is difficult to talk about forced disappearance when the State of Honduras has not given us an answer".^{96 97 98}

Assassinations

From March to July, a total of 5 murders (9 so far until August) and a hundred criminalization actions against environmental defenders were registered.⁹⁹ This month, the tenth assassination took place. OACNUDH condemned the murder of community leader Rosa Aydee Tórres in Santa Bárbara on August 18.¹⁰⁰

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

CESPAD sent out an alert denouncing threats against MILPAH leader Víctor Vásquez.¹⁰¹ State security forces, mostly military, illegally detained Katherin Cruz, a member of the National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders of Honduras, at a checkpoint in the Tegucigalpa ring road. "The defender denounces that in spite of having presented the documentation that accredits her to mobilize in the city, the military, exercising a task out of their competence, held her and her companion (who was driving the vehicle) illegally for approximately 40 minutes, until they decided to release them."¹⁰² COPINH sent out an alert that human rights defender Reynaldo Dominguez is being intimidated by a car making circles around his home on several occasions on two consecutive days.¹⁰³

Indigenous Peoples

Forcefully Disappeared Garífuna

Last month, five young men from the Garífuna community Triunfo de la Cruz were forcefully disappeared. Throughout the month, there were national¹⁰⁴ and international¹⁰⁵ calls for their safe return or to at least find out about their whereabouts, but August ended without any hopeful news.¹⁰⁶ Even

94 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/no-podra-ningun-pais-construir-futuro-sin-la-verdad/>

95 <https://criterio.hn/impunidad-sobre-desapariciones-forzadas-la-deuda-historica-del-estado-de-honduras/>

96 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1297946752935440386>

97 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1297939514225315845>

98 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1297960957570883584>

99 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/12/analisis-honduras-la-nueva-ola-de-violencia-y-vulneracion-de-ddhh-en-las-comunidades-en-resistencia/>

100 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1296821274946211842>

101 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/08/alerta-amenazas-y-detenciones-contr-el-pueblo-lenca/>

102 <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/08/militares-retienen-injustificadamente-a-defensora/>

103 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1299206383271907330>

104 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1291507802243051520>

105 <https://twitter.com/ErikaGuevaraR/status/1295817404593971206>

106 <https://radioprogreso.hn/portada/bajo-que-realidad-se-sustenta-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-dirigentes-garifunas/>

the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) urged the Honduran State to take up all necessary measures to find them as well as to take up all necessary measures to protect the Garífuna communities Triunfo de la Cruz and Punta Piedra.¹⁰⁶ On August 24, a deadline passed given by the Court to the JOH regime to hand in a report.¹⁰⁶

The Case of Berta Cáceres

"53 months of your sowing, Berta, and here we continue to demand justice. We will not be silenced, we will continue with the strength of your legacy fighting this system. Because they have believed that impunity is eternal, but they are wrong. We, the people, know how to do justice!"¹⁰⁶

There is an important corruption case in Honduras linked to the assassination of Berta Cáceres and the Agua Zarca hydroelectric project, the Gualcarque Fraud case, originally presented by the MAC-CIH. The MP reported this month that the Court of Appeals of the Anti-Corruption Circuit denied the appeals filed by the private defense of three of the 16 accused in the case, among them the former vice-minister of SERNA, Darío Roberto Cardona Valle.¹⁰⁷

In the case against David Castillo, the hearing was again postponed, for the fourth time so far.¹¹¹ Even more worrisome, the judge was replaced at the last minute without previous notice.¹¹² "The decision of the Supreme Court of Justice to remove Judge Liseth Rosario Vallecillo Banegas raises strong concerns about the intentions of continued impunity for the intellectual authors of the crime, the Atala Zablah family. (...) The judicial process has been unjustifiably delayed, which is the responsibility of the judiciary. (...) In the judicial and investigative process, the evidence, including chats, calls, text messages, photos, GPS locations, telephone tapping, among others, which clearly demonstrates the responsibility of David Castillo in the coordination with the hitmen who murdered Berta Cáceres and those who made the decision in the Atala Zablah family. The evidence is clear and conclusive."¹¹³

On August 21, the hearing against Castillo finally took place. The day before, UN Congressman Albino Sires had commented: "If David Castillo goes free, it will be yet another triumph for impunity in #Honduras. More than four years since the murder of #BertaCáceres, justice delayed increasingly looks like justice intentionally denied."¹¹⁴ The hearing was accompanied by worrisome developments. Not only granted the judge the petition by Castillo's defense to not transmit the process, three of Berta's daughters and one son were stopped from attending the hearing.¹¹⁵ OACNUDH denounced the lack of transparency during the hearing. "OACNUDH expresses concern about the lack of publicity of the hearing on the murder of Berta Cáceres held today, which resulted in the impossi-

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2929-corte-interamericana-de-ddhh-requiere-al-estado-de-honduras-para-que-informe-sobre-el-paradero-de-garifunas>

¹⁰⁶ <https://criterio.hn/honduras-debe-cumplir-ordenanza-de-la-cidh-en-caso-de-garifunas-desaparecidos/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1289969927982649352>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/159-agosto2020/6110-confirman-auto-de-formal-procesamiento-contra-ex-vice-ministro-de-la-serna-y-otros-involucrados-en-el-caso-fraude-sobre-el-gualcarque>

¹¹¹ <https://copinh.org/2020/08/newsletter-david-castillos-trial-a-consummated-delaying-maneuver/>

¹¹² <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1296152399497908224>

¹¹³ <https://copinh.org/2020/08/impunity-continues-in-the-berta-caceres-case/>

¹¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/RepSires/status/1296538203076386817>

¹¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1296859530786209792>

bility of participation by victims and observers, including Berta's relatives."¹¹⁶ In a press release, the MP denounced the tactics by the defense of Castillo. "Now, in what the Public Prosecutor's Office describes as a new delaying tactic, the private defense of the accused presented an appeal for annulment with which it intends to disqualify the findings of the expert's report of criminal links, since it is a key evidence in the process, by managing to link messages and calls between David Castillo and the former military officer, Geovanny Bustillo, convicted of the crime against the indigenous leader".¹¹⁷

But the tactics by the defense failed. On August 27, the judge formalized the charges against David Castillo.¹¹⁸ "OACNUDH reiterates the importance of punishing those materially and intellectually responsible for the murder of defender Berta Cáceres, and welcomes the steps taken to achieve access to justice in this case. The Office reiterates its commitment and accompaniment in the process."¹¹⁹

LGBTQ

This month, LGBTQ+ rights defender and director of the Trans Feminist Association (AFET), Viena Ávila, was unjustifiably detained by members of the Military Police in San Pedro Sula.¹²⁰

The murder of trans woman Vicky Hernández on June 28, 2009 in Honduras will be known by the Inter-American Human Rights System on November 11, 2020. They could hold Honduras responsible for transfemicide.¹²¹

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

The journalist Rigoberto Torres denounced to be a victim of police reprisals, after he informed about the seizure of a vehicle without presenting a report in Roatan.¹²² Radio Globo journalist Marvin Ortiz denounced that someone loosened the nuts on the front left tire of his car almost causing him an accident.¹²³ This was just the last of several incidents involving Ortiz.¹²⁴ Journalist Santiago López denounces that a police officer has been harassing him for over a year threatening to tear gas him and even to shot him.¹²⁵ Last but not least, members of the Military Police fired shots in the air, while journalist Tony Mungia and his cameraman interviewed an inhabitant of Comayagüela.¹²⁶

¹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/129693522391562240>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/159-agosto2020/6186-mp-alerta-que-recurso-de-nulidad-que-plantea-defensa-del-presidente-de-desa-no-cumple-requisitos-de-admisibilidad-y-busca-disfrazar-el-hecho-que-este-pago-por-el-asesinato-de-bera-caceres>

¹¹⁸ https://twitter.com/MP_Honduras/status/1298810617453740032

¹¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1299121507550081027>

¹²⁰ <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/08/alerta-defensoras-hn-honduras-policia-militar-retiene-injustificadamente-a-defensora-de-los-derechos-lgbti/>

¹²¹ <https://criterio.hn/audiencia-contra-estado-de-honduras-por-caso-de-vicky-hernandez-ya-tiene-fecha/>

¹²² <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1229-represalias-policiales-denuncia-periodista-tras-informar-inconsistencias-en-decomiso-vehicular>

¹²³ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1230-sabotaje-a-su-vehiculo-a-punto-de-ocasionar-dano-a-periodista>

¹²⁴ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2151-honduras-otra-vez-va-dias-atentan-contra-el-periodista-marvin-ortiz>

¹²⁵ <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2952-periodista-santiago-lopez-oficial-portillo-me-hizo-senas-con-sus-dedos-que-me-iba-a-disparar>

¹²⁶ <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1228-periodista-denuncia-disparos-de-policia-militar-durante-cobertura-de-suceso>

"The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reported that it accepted to hear the case of the journalist Nahum Elit Palacios Artiga, whose arbitrary detention, subjection to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; as well as his murder and that of his wife Yorleni Sánchez, in March 2010, took place in the context of the 2009 coup d'état."¹²⁷

Violence against Women

"Girls forced to give birth as a result of rape because they do not have access to the Emergency Contraception Pill (ECP), because its use is restricted; women who are not treated for cancer or other diseases, or even lack of access to food, are just some of the problems that have become more acute for women, and about which the State of Honduras turns a blind eye, using Covid-19 as a pre-text to leave women completely abandoned".¹²⁸

There have been more than 65'000 calls made during the pandemic to the authorities denouncing "domestic violence". Women's rights and feminist organization denounce that only some 5% of the calls have been answered by the authorities. ""The issue of violence against women, domestic violence and violence within the family is a growing problem. The calls for help to 911 for this type of situation already in this year exceed 65,000 complaints; but the problem is that only five percent manage to obtain a response and process in the courts".^{129 129}

Extractive Industries

"Despite the opposition of the residents of the community of Azacualpa, department of Copán, the Canadian mining company Aura Minerals (MINOSA), which operates in the area, began to dynamite the hill where the local cemetery is located, in order to extract gold. However, the neighbors denounce that the machinery is collapsing two hills that surround the community, putting at risk some 590 homes that are in danger of falling down if the collapses continue."¹²⁹

Guapinol

This month, the situation around the Guapinol community and its criminalized defenders remained tense. An alert was sent out that hooded soldiers were intimidating the Guapinol community.¹³² Lawyer Kenia Oliva denounced that in the case of the eight imprisoned Rio Guapinol defenders, the Supreme Court could be acting maliciously by delaying their case.¹³³ In this regard, Radio Progreso denounced: "Injustice has a face: Judge Liseth Vallecillo and the Guapinol case".¹³³

127 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/comision-interamericana-de-derechos-humanos-conoce-caso-sobre-golpe-de-estado-en-honduras/>

128 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2930-covid19-es-la-excusa-estado-ha-dejado-en-el-total-abandono-la-salud-de-las-mujeres-en-honduras>

129 <https://tiempo.hn/feministas-solo-el-5-de-denuncias-por-violencia-intrafamiliar-llega-a-tribunales/>

129 <https://criterio.hn/menos-del-5-de-65-mil-denuncias-por-violencia-intrafamiliar-son-atendidas/>

129 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/18/alerta-minosa-comienza-de-nuevo-a-dinamitar-cementerio-de-azacualpa-y-pone-en-riesgo-decenas-de-familias/>

132 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2932-zozobra-en-guapinol-ante-presencia-inexplicable-de-militares>

133 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2937-abogada-de-los-encarcelados-el-caso-guapinol-puede-estar-siendo-retenido-maliciosamente>

133 <https://radioprogreso.hn/net/np/la-injusticia-tiene-rostro-la-jueza-liseth-vallecillo-y-el-caso-guapinol/>

The situation even worsened throughout the month. On August 15, the Court of Appeals revoked the provisional freedom of five defenders granted in March 2019.¹³⁴ "The Municipal Committee of Public Assets Defenders strongly rejects the decision of the Court of Appeals that once again confirms the political persecution against the defenders. And it reaffirms its defense of water, environment, territory and peace, from the year 2015, in Tocoa".¹³⁵ Pasos de Animal Grande reports that on Their lawyers later presented a document to the MP in Tocoa, Colón, requesting the application of the new Penal Code to the criminalized defenders. However, they have not responded to this request.¹³⁶ The legal team continued to fight for them, presenting another challenge¹³⁷ as well as an appeal for protection.¹³⁸

The International Human Rights Law Clinic of the University of Virginia found multiple violations by the Honduran judicial system during the criminalization process of the human rights defender from Guapinol.¹³⁹

ZEDE

Since the announcement of the planned ZEDE, i.e. Charter City, on Roatán, people started to protest it.¹⁴⁰ OFRANEH explained the current situation as a "return of territorial concessions" some hundreds years after the arrival of the USS Sacramento in La Ceiba to defend the interests of the Standard Fruit Company.¹⁴¹

Corruption and Its Enemies

Estimates by the FOSDEH indicate that around 65 billion Lempiras are lost annually due to corruption, a figure that represents 25% of the General Budget of the Honduran State.¹⁴³ The Wilson Center published an important report on corruption in Honduras. "In this report, I explore salient forms of corruption in Honduras and assess existing accountability mechanisms. I find that: 1. Corruption helps fund Honduran politics, making it a fundamental input to the Honduran political process. 2. Anti-corruption and accountability mechanisms have either been undermined or are designed to provide only the appearance of accountability. 3. Despite their limitations, civil society activism and popular protest remain the main counterweight to government corruption."¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, Jeff Ernst reported for Vice on corruption in Honduras under the headline "Corruption Is King in

134 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2941-corte-de-apelaciones-chepeo-de-otra-sentencia-para-mantener-presos-a-ocho-defensores-y-reabrir-proceso-contra-otros-cinco>

135 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/peligra-la-libertad-de-los-defensores-de-guapinol/>

136 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2943-fiscalia-de-tocoa-colon-tiene-sin-resolver-peticion-de-los-abogados-para-que-se-aplique-nuevo-codigo-penal-a-los-defensores-de-guapinol>

137 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2946-abogados-denunciaron-a-corte-de-apelaciones-que-ayuda-a-inversiones-los-pinares-a-perseguir-a-defensores-de-guapinol>

138 <https://radioprogreso.net/portada/caso-guapinol-presentan-recuso-para-que-ambientalistas-puedan-defenderse-en-libertad/>

139 <https://guapinolresiste.wixsite.com/guapinol/post/estado-de-honduras-debe-liberar-inmediatamente-a-ambientalistas-encarcelados>

140 <https://radioprogreso.net/portada/poblacion-de-roatan-se-opone-a-construccion-de-ciudad-modelo-en-su-territorio/>

141 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/08/26/1942/>

143 <https://radioprogreso.net/instante/honduras-pierde-alrededor-65-mil-millones-de-lempiras-por-corupcion-segun-fosdeh/>

144 <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/when-corruption-funds-political-system-case-study-honduras>

Trump's 'Safe Third Country'".¹⁴⁵ Deputy Attorney General Daniel Arturo Sibrián Bueso, meanwhile, criticized the ever increasing obstacles in trying to go after corruption.¹⁴⁶ Lack of effort is probably also part of the explanation.

The National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) published a report on corruption related to the concession of the new international airport Palmerola.¹⁴⁷ "According to the document, the State assumes most of the cost of the project, so that "it will not receive large amounts of economic resources, due to the poor negotiation carried out in this concession contract; in addition, it should be mentioned that through Legislative Decree No. 30-2016 of April 16, 2016, the concessionaire was granted a tax exemption".¹⁴⁸ "The air terminals of San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba and Roatán will be managed by the Secretariat of Infrastructure and Public Services (Insep), which has already been accused of acts of corruption by evading public bidding processes to grant some 73 million lempiras."¹⁴⁹

Pandora

The MACCIH, with all its flaws, had at least two important cases with some success, the one against the former first lady and the Pandora case. The first received a heavy blow last month (see previous monitor), the second one was undermined this month. A court dismissed the charges against 22 of the 36 accused.¹⁵⁰ The MP immediately announced to challenge the decision.¹⁵¹ Attorney General Óscar Fernando Chinchilla called it "unacceptable" - but given his general role in Honduras, this is too little, too late.¹⁵² Former General Attorney Edmundo Orellano explained why the the courts making such decisions have no credibility - they are composed of judges who were elected by politicians in the National Congress.¹⁵³

InSight Crime summarized: "A Honduras court has ended the prosecution of nearly two dozen people — including government officials — accused in the Pandora case, a vast corruption scheme that saw \$12 million in public money embezzled for political ends. The court's decision deals a final blow to Honduras' already embattled anti-corruption efforts."¹⁵⁴ The Acting Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Michael G. Kozak, commented: "The Pandora case is an emblematic corruption case. Attorney General Chinchilla's announcement committing @MP_Honduras to appeal the dismissal of charges continues the fight against corruption and impunity. #NoMásImpunidad"¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁵ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/dyzkdy/corruption-is-king-in-trumps-safe-third-country

¹⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/dsbhn1/status/1297673266572689413>

¹⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1297895642744922112>

¹⁴⁸ <https://confidencialhn.com/cna-revela-inconsistencias-en-contrato-de-concesion-del-aeropuerto-internacional-de-palmerola/>

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2209-honduras-joh-crea-empresa-para-administrar-tres-aeropuertos>

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2149-honduras-silbando-y-libres-salieron-implicados-en-caso-pandora>

¹⁵¹ <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/159-agosto2020/6086-mp-presentara-accion-de-amparo-contrasobreseimiento-definitivo-emitado-por-la-csj-a-favor-de-22-imputados-en-el-caso-pandora>

¹⁵² <https://confidencialhn.com/chinchilla-saca-cabeza-del-hoyo-por-pandora-y-anuncia-impugnacion/>

¹⁵³ <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/tribunales-de-excepcion-no-tienen-credibilidad-porque-son-politicos-dice-exfiscal-orellana.html>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/honduras-buries-pandora-case-remnants-anti-corruption-fight/>

¹⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/WHAAstSecty/status/1292872671097688064>

On August 17, UFERCO accused the three judges of the Appeals Court for their decision to drop the charges. UFERCO called their decision "devoid of elementary logic".¹⁵⁵ But things went the other way as another accused in the Pandora case had his charges dropped, Elvin Ernesto Santos Lozano.¹⁵⁶ The head of UFERCO, Luis Santos, could not believe this. "More than 100 million, coming from the SAG [Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock], deposited in a simulated and fractioned form in an account opened in the name of the CCEPL [Central Committee of the Liberal Party], but managed outside of its accounting by the accused and a personal employee and the CSJ [Supreme Court] does not see an OFFENSE in this act... This cannot be!"¹⁵⁷

The Case against the Former First Lady Rosa Elena de Lobo

The appeals court nominated the judges for the re-trial against the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo and Saúl Escobar.¹⁵⁹ But the judges all rejected their nomination saying that this does not correspond to the Court of Appeals in Matters of Corruption but rather to the Supreme Court.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, an appeals court rejected the challenge against the liberation of former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo. She can continue to await her re-trial outside prison.¹⁶¹

IHSS

The new Penal Code already starts to benefit the corrupt, as foreseen by human rights organizations. Mario Antonio Rojas Rodríguez had been sentenced to 15 years in prison linked to the IHSS corruption case, but he was released now to house arrest.¹⁶¹

State Security Forces

In a new report, FOSDEH highlighted how the failure to allocate resources to the Judiciary and the MP in compliance with the constitution hinders the application of justice in Honduras.¹⁶³

An active member of the National Police Force and his brother-in-law were sent to pre-trial detention accused of drug trafficking.¹⁶⁴ CESPAD published another short analysis on the failures of the police purge focusing on the lack of reducing impunity.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁵ <https://confidencialhn.com/denuncian-a-tres-magistrados-del-poder-judicial-que-emitieron-sobreseimiento-a-favor-de-22-imputados-por-pandora/>

¹⁵⁶ <https://criterio.hn/dictan-sobreseimiento-definitivo-contr-elvin-santos-lozano/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/LuisSan16779987/status/1296569064798801922>

¹⁵⁹ <https://criterio.hn/csj-nombra-jueces-para-nuevo-juicio-a-exprimera-dama-de-honduras/>

¹⁶⁰ <https://confidencialhn.com/declinan-los-cuatro-jueces-para-conocer-el-nuevo-juicio-a-ex-primera-dama-piden-reconsideracion/>

¹⁶¹ <https://tiempo.hn/niegan-apelacion-mp-contr-excarcelacion-rosa-elena-de-lobo/>

¹⁶¹ <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2171-honduras-estafador-del-ihss-en-libertad-gracias-a-nuevo-codigo-penal>

¹⁶³ <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/apuntes-presupuestarios-sobre-el-poder-judicial-y-ministerio-publico-en-honduras/>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/prision-preventiva-a-policia-activo-y-su-cunado-por-trafico-de-drogas.html>

¹⁶⁵ <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/28/analisis-reducir-la-impunidad-el-flanco-mas-debil-de-la-depuracion-policia-en-honduras/>

Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations

A police agent accused of murdering a minor during the post-electoral violence in 2017 will have his case sent to trial.¹⁶⁶

Repressions

A video made the rounds this month of a police agent throwing a tear gas canister into a full bus.¹⁶⁷ The content of the video was confirmed. The bus transported Maquila workers to their workplace. The video caused widespread outcry and the MP announced an investigation.¹⁶⁸ Two police officers were involved in the attack and El Heraldo later reported that they were suspended.¹⁶⁹ A new survey by IUDPAS found that only 28.2% of Hondurans trust the police, 31.9% the Military Police and 15.2% the presidency. Worst off is Congress with 13.9%.¹⁷⁰

Assassinations

COFADEH denounces that state security forces detained an elder man and tortured and murdered him. "On Monday, August 3, elements of the National Police captured Mr. Rufino Portillo López, 74 years old, when he was on the sidewalk of his house in the community Entre-cerros, municipality of Nueva Frontera, department of Santa Bárbara, returning his body to his family without life and with signs of torture."¹⁷¹ Four former Military Police agents were sentenced to 22 years in prison for murdering a merchant in Comayagüela.¹⁷² COFADEH requested a report from the MP in Catacamas, Olancho, on the progress made in the investigation into against TIGRES agents and the National Police involved in the murder of a young man in the municipality of San Esteban.¹⁷²

Penitentiary System

According to official figures, over 1100 inmates were infected with COVID-19.¹⁷⁴ The Coalition against Impunity denounces that at least 29 inmates died to COVID-19.¹⁷⁵ At the same time, there is the ongoing general violence in the prison system. Three inmates at the "maximum-security" prison La Tolva were murdered this month.¹⁷⁶ Most of these cases remain unpunished. Last year, 20 inmates were murdered in one day at the prison in Tela. On August 13, the Court of Appeals of the city of La Ceiba granted a period of two months to the authorities of the National Penitentiary Insti-

166 <https://radioprogreso.net/instante/a-juicio-policia-acusado-por-muerte-de-menor-en-la-crisis-postelectoral/>

167 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1293999460054233088>

168 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/autor-login/159-agosto2020/6130-fiscales-de-ddhh-investigan-incidente-ocasionado-por-policias-al-lanzar-bomba-lacrimogena-en-el-interior-de-autobus>

169 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1400955-466/suspenden-policias-bomba-lacrimogena-bus-choloma-pasajeros>

170 <https://criterio.hn/solo-tres-de-cada-10-hondurenos-confian-en-la-policia-segun-estudio/>

171 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/policia-detiene-tortura-y-asesina-a-adulto-mayor-en-nueva-frontera-santa-barbara/>

172 <https://tiempo.hn/cuatro-exmilitares-sentenciados-22-anos-prision-matar-comerciante/>

172 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/solicitan-informe-sobre-ampliacion-requerimiento-fiscal-contra-policias-involucrados-en-asesinato-de-joven-en-olancho/>

174 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1399599-410/privados-libertad-contagiados-carceles-honduras-covid-coronavirus>

175 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/1682-al-menos-29-privados-de-libertad-han-muerto-por-el-covid-19-en-honduras>

176 <https://criterio.hn/tres-privados-de-libertad-fueron-ahorcados-en-sus-celdas-en-la-tolva/>

tute (INP) to begin work on the improvement and remodeling of the prison.¹⁷⁶ Insight Crime summarized the situation in Honduras prisons along the following lines: "Targeted killings, massacres, and deadly riots have all occurred in Honduras' maximum-security prisons this year, putting a spotlight on how violence has spiraled out of control despite government efforts to stop it. Since November 2019, at least 55 killings have taken place inside Honduras' prison system, according to Insight Crime's count of murders by inmates reported in local media. Officials did not respond to requests for these figures."¹⁷⁷

Militarization

CESPAD published a short new analysis on the militarization of Honduras, focusing on their role in politics. This was recently highlighted by a statement of the head of the Armed Forces, Tito Livio Moreno Coello, attacking the political opposition while defending the lack of transparency and effectiveness of the JOH regime in face of the pandemic.¹⁷⁸ CESPAD also published a short piece of analysis on the remilitarization of public security as a setback for the Honduran democracy.¹⁷⁹

A while ago, a multi-million development project for the Honduran agriculture sector governed by the Armed Forces made headlines. There are still a lot of questions regarding the program and it is not even clear how much money was transferred to the Armed Forces. They claim to have received only 23.7 million Lempiras out of the 4000 million promised.^{180 181}

International Community

Japan announced assistance for Honduras through the World Food Program with \$4 million to improve food security in the dry corridor.¹⁸³ Israel opened a cooperation office in Tegucigalpa.¹⁸⁴

US

"Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) led a letter to oppose the Trump Administration's plan to invest \$1 billion in controversial projects in Honduras over the next three years through the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). The DFC was created through passage of the Build Act in 2018—with the mission of promoting and facilitating investment with respect for human rights, the environment, and worker rights in developing countries. The letter raises serious concerns related to human rights, worker rights, environmental protections, and community consultation on the proposed project. "There are elements of the proposed investment that run in direct and flagrant contradiction to DFC's stated commitment – and Congress's stated intent in creating DFC – to pro-

176 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/159-agosto2020/6134-habeas-corpus-correctivo-presentado-por-la-fiscalia-especial-de-derechos-humanos-obliga-a-las-autoridades-del-inp-a-mejorar-condiciones-en-centro-penal-de-tela>

177 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/honduras-rising-violence-prisons/>

178 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/14/analisis-el-peligroso-avance-politico-de-los-militares-hondurenos/>

179 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/08/18/analisis-la-remilitarizacion-de-la-seguridad-publica-signo-relevante-en-los-retrocesos-de-la-democracia-hondurena/>

180 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/solo-23-7-millones-de-lempiras-han-recibido-las-ffaa-para-programa-de-desarrollo-agricola.html>

181 <https://criterio.hn/dinero-no-esta-en-el-sector-agricola-rafael-alegria/>

183 <https://honduras.un.org/es/86423-japon-suscribe-asistencia-con-el-pma-para-fortalecer-la-resiliencia-y-garantizar-la-seguridad>

184 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/israel-ve-como-un-paso-importante-la-inauguracion-de-su-oficina-en-honduras.html>

mote and facilitate investment with respect for human rights, the environment, and worker rights,” the Members wrote. “It is a staggering disappointment, just seven months into DFC’s existence, that it would take such a profound misstep.”¹⁸⁵

EU

Five EU-Parliamentarians wrote an open letter to the ambassador of the EU in Honduras, to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, as well as to Coordinator of the Technical Cooperation Office of the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECID) in Honduras. “On various occasions we have conveyed our concern about the situation of human rights defenders and the criminalization and persecution by the State against grassroots organizations such as the Honduran Black Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH) and the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations (COPINH). More recently, we have spoken out with concern about the political prisoners in Guapinol and the situation of vulnerability in the face of Covid-19. (...) Our concern is transformed into indignation when we receive news of the murders, attacks and arbitrary arrests that have been committed in Garifuna and Lenca territories in the midst of the health crisis and where state security forces and organized crime have been involved. During these months, members of COPINH have been detained while carrying out assistance work, and OFRANEH biosecurity points have been attacked and members have also been killed for carrying out community biosecurity work as a measure against the pandemic. (...) In view of the facts, we can infer that EU funding is not investing in security, justice, respect for the human rights of the Honduran people or guarantees for their defense, in addition to failing to comply with the commitments made in terms of foreign policy and gender equality. On the contrary, the evidence shows us that a repressive system is being strengthened against Lenca and Garifuna communities that are self-organising in defense of the environment, their territories and fundamental rights. In this regard, we would like to express our concern at the lack of attention and involvement of the European Union in the face of the violations of rights in Honduras and in particular of the communities, women and men who defend them.”¹⁸⁶

The EU granted co-financing for more than 900 solar dryers to dry coffee to 135 coffee organizations in El Paraíso.¹⁸⁷ The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arancha González Laya, met with her counterparts in Guatemala and Honduras to discuss the needs of these countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸⁸

Drug Trafficking

The trial against the former Liberal congressman Fredy Nájera in New York for drug trafficking was postponed to October 15.¹⁸⁹ In Honduras, José del Transito García Teruel, a.k.a. «El Pipo», was ar-

185 <https://omar.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-omar-leads-letter-condemn-trump-administration-s-plan-invest-controversial>

186 <http://im-defensoras.org/2020/08/sobre-el-aumento-de-la-represion-en-las-comunidades-lencas-y-garifunas-y-el-papel-de-la-ue-y-espana/>

187 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/ue-cofinancio-mas-de-900-secadoras-solares-a-135-organizaciones-cafeteras-en-el-paraiso.html>

188 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/cancilleres-de-espana-guatemala-y-honduras-tratan-apoyo-espanol-por-covid-19.html>

189 <https://confidencialhn.com/reprograman-hasta-el-15-de-octubre-la-lectura-de-sentencia-contra-el-excongresista-najera/>

rested due to possible drug trafficking activities. The US had requested his extradition.¹⁹⁰ Next month, three accused Honduran drug traffickers will appear in US courts. Among them the already convicted brother of JOH, Tony Hernández, who is expecting his sentence on September 16. The two other men are Geovanny Fuentes Ramírez and Mauricio Hernández Pineda.¹⁹¹

"Authorities in Honduras have seized more cocaine during the first seven months of this year than all of 2019, indicating a resurgence of one of Central America's most important cocaine routes despite border shutdowns and transport restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic. Officials say 2,241 kilograms of cocaine have been seized between January and July 2020, a little more than last year's entire haul of 2,218 kilograms, Proceso Digital reported."¹⁹² The World Customs Organization (WCO) voice concern about the increase in seizures of drug containers coming from Puerto Cortés, despite the fact that the terminal was listed as safe several years ago by U.S. anti-narcotics authorities.¹⁹³

Varia

JOH

The JOH regime came under pressure during the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing in the US. US Senator Jeff Merkley did not mince words. "Extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrest, violence against indigenous & LGBTQ communities, corruption, human rights abuses—this is what Honduras looks like under its current president, so I asked Sec. Pompeo why this Admin continues to cozy up to Juan Orlando Hernández."¹⁹⁴ Both US Senator Patrick Leahy and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky build on the words of Senator Jeff Merkley (see last month¹⁹⁵ Schakowsky: "The U.S. must stop backing the Juan Orlando). Leahy: "The State Department, which brags of its devotion to the rights of life and liberty enshrined in the Declaration, ignores all of that when those rights are trampled in Honduras by a government that the Department continues to call a friend and partner."¹⁹⁶

Every month or so, the former president Pepe Lobo publicly attacks JOH. This time, he called him an animal that is used to fight and will do everything to stay in power.¹⁹⁷ Lobo is also part of a new party coalition formed to oust him from power, but may as well divide the opposition against him, even more if there is now two-round presidential election (see above). "Under the name "Political and Social Coalition with Different Forces, Social Movements and Political Parties" the first political alliance was formed in view of the upcoming electoral process with the objective of removing the National Party of Honduras from power. Five minority parties such as the Democratic Unifica-

190 <https://criterio.hn/a-peticion-de-ee-uu-detienen-a-extraditible-hondureno-vinculado-a-trafico-transnacional-de-drogas/>

191 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2215-honduras-en-17-dias-dictan-sentencia-a-tony-y-dos-mas-daran-cuentas-a-ee-uu>

192 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/cocaine-honduras-corridor/>

193 <https://confidencialhn.com/autoridad-aduanera-mundial-alerta-sobre-exportacion-de-cocaina-desde-puerto-cortes/>

194 <https://twitter.com/SenJeffMerkley/status/1289320870360621057>

195 <https://twitter.com/SenatorLeahy/status/1289649913874092032>

196 <https://twitter.com/janschakowsky/status/1289728632005353474?s=20>

197 <https://confidencialhn.com/expresidente-porfirio-lobo-califica-de-animal-a-joh-y-sostiene-que-hara-todo-para-sacarlo-del-ejecutivocv/>

tion Party (UD), Christian Democracy (DC), and the parties in formation Rescate Honduras, Todos Somos Honduras and the movement led by former president Porfirio Lobo Sosa "Todos por el Cambio" formed this coalition against the National Party and Juan Orlando Hernandez himself."¹⁹⁸ Then, there were also other Nationalist leaders distancing themselves from the JOH regime and its ever more tainted image due to widespread corruption. Of course, these leaders are themselves part of the same elite, but it is still an interesting observation.^{199 200}

In the newest Global Impunity Index, the JOH regime ranks highest in Latin America and second highest out of the 69 countries considered.^{201 202} "54% of Hondurans have been victims of crime, while 11% have been victims of crime in the last year, according to the report on victimization launched in June 2020 by the University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS) of the National Autonomous University of Honduras in partnership with the U.S. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)."²⁰³ And more bad news was to follow. Throughout the existence of the JOH regime, there had been talks about his unholy alliance with the OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro. This month, talks began again. "Attorney Julio Arbizu, former prosecutor of the now defunct Mission of Support Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (Maccih), confirmed this Friday -in the program Directo al Grano produced by Radio Progreso and hosted by journalist Jose Peraza- that his resignation and that of former Maccih chief Juan Jimenez Mayor was due to the pact between Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro. He also said that they were pressured by groups in Honduras not to investigate the cases denounced by Berta Cáceres before she was murdered. He also revealed that they were pressured not to appoint Luis Javier Santos as head of the Special Prosecutor's Unit against Impunity of Corruption (UFECIC) of the Public Ministry."^{204 205}

Under pressure, JOH continued to nominate people loyal to him to important positions, even against widespread vocal protest. This month, he nominated the former deputy director of the National Penitentiary Institute (INP), German McNeil, as a new commissioner at the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture (Conaprev).²⁰⁶

Elections

Always in the first weeks after elections in Honduras, the dominant parties promise electoral forms its need highlighted in national and international reports. But over time, these reforms don't materialize and it seems to happen again. The main party blocking substantial reforms is the National

198 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=46858>

199 <https://confidencialhn.com/no-cargaremos-muertos-de-funcionarios-corruptos-ricardo-se-desliga-de-criticas-por-corrupcion-al-ejecutivo-de-joh/>

200 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2182-honduras-oliva-presiona-por-elecciones-para-rescatar-al-partido-nacional>

201 <https://www.udlap.mx/cesij/files/indices-globales/0-IGI-2020-UDLAP.pdf>

202 <https://confidencialhn.com/regimen-de-joh-hundio-a-honduras-en-el-foso-de-la-corupcion-segun-indice-global-de-impunidad-2020/>

203 <https://criterio.hn/mas-de-la-mitad-de-los-hondurenos-han-sido-victimas-de-delitos/>

204 <https://criterio.hn/julio-arbizu-confirma-pacto-entre-joh-y-secretario-de-la-oea-e-indica-que-hubo-presiones-para-no-investigar-asesinato-de-berta-caceres/>

205 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/la-ciudadania-debe-comprometerse-en-la-lucha-anticorupcion-entrevista/>

206 <https://confidencialhn.com/nombran-a-german-mcneil-como-comisionado-de-conaprev/>

Party and in an attempt to shift the blame, Nationalist vice-president of Congress, Antonio Rivera Callejas, claimed at the beginning of the month that there is a hurry to approve a new electoral law until September 12.²⁰⁷ What is needed for successful reforms is a united opposition, which presents a challenge.²⁰⁸ The former presidential candidate Salvador Nasralla denounces that the National Electoral Council (CNE) refuses to inscribe his new party "Salvador de Honduras".²⁰⁹ "In the opinion of analysts in Honduras there are no conditions for democratic elections, and this is because the reforms approved have not been profound. The analyst Tomás Andino and coordinator of the Convergence Against Continuity in Francisco Morazán believes that it is necessary for the social and popular movement to continue mobilizing to achieve substantial changes for the citizenry."²¹⁰

But there were also some hopeful signs this month. The CNE spoke out in favor of a two-round presidential election. But Congress will have the last word.²¹¹ ²¹² The National Party continues to block it, i.e. claimed that it needs a popular vote which could not be done before the coming election.²¹³ According to FOSDEH economist Alejandro Kafati, a two-round presidential election would cost an additional 400-500 million Lempiras, funds that neither the National Electoral Council (CNE) has planned for nor has it the Finance Secretary in its budget.²¹⁴ And according to political analyst Raúl Pineda, the two-round presidential election is just a distraction for there being more important electoral reforms. "Instead, he believes it is important to talk about reforms that will reduce the high cost of elections in Honduras or the proliferation of small parties that have turned political participation into a business; while trying to exclude others that do have a significant number of supporters."²¹⁵

On August 7, Yani Rosenthal Hidalgo returned to Honduras after having been imprisoned in the US for three years.²¹⁶ And with his return, voices grow louder claiming he may run for president for the Liberal Party. "A powerful business tycoon jailed in the United States for laundering drug money may soon be a presidential candidate in Honduras following his release this month. At least 14 lawmakers from the opposition Liberal Party are reportedly urging Yani Rosenthal to run for president when he returns to the Central America nation on August 7, according to Criterio. One of them, Juan Carlos Ávila, said they believe Rosenthal is the "only one" able to unite the political opposition ahead of the 2021 general election."²¹⁷

By mid-August, the president of the National Electoral Council (CNE), Rixi Moncada, warned that electoral reforms must be approved before the call of the primary elections, i.e. September 13,

207 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/hay-acuerdos-importantes-en-el-tema-de-reformas-electorales-dice-vicepresidente-del-cn.html>

208 <https://criterio.hn/si-oposicion-no-se-une-proximas-elecciones-seran-sin-reformas-electorales-profundas/>

209 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/nasralla-denuncia-que-cne-no-quiere-inscribir-su-partido-y-anuncia-protestas.html>

210 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-a-las-puertas-de-un-proceso-electoral-sin-garantias-de-transparencia/>

211 <https://criterio.hn/cne-aprueba-segunda-vuelta-electoral-decision-final-esta-en-manos-del-congreso/>

212 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1400977-466/segunda-vuelta-electoral-honduras-cne-polemica>

213 <https://criterio.hn/partido-nacional-cierra-filas-para-que-segunda-vuelta-no-se-implemente-en-elecciones-de-2021/>

214 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/segunda-vuelta-electoral-no-es-viable-economicamente-dice-economista.html>

215 <https://criterio.hn/segunda-vuelta-electoral-es-un-distractor-asegura-analista-raul-pineda/>

216 <https://criterio.hn/yani-rosenthal-llega-a-honduras-envuelto-en-un-manto-de-impunidad/>

217 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/drug-money-launderer-president-honduras/>

2020.²¹⁸ At the same time, Criterio wrote that both electoral bodies, the CNE and the Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE), suffer from a lack of budget and staff. "Enrique Reina, Magistrate President of the Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE) of Honduras, said Wednesday that this body has only 22 professionals, of whom only 10 are lawyers, who have been working on extensive issues - strategic plans, the communication part and the content of a website - when in reality next year they will have to resolve challenges that have to do with legal and electoral issues."²¹⁹

Another challenge for the electoral process is the census. RNP commissioner Oscar Rivera, once again, promised that the new electoral census will be ready in December.²²⁰ At the same time, they found some 50'000 dead people in its census in a first control.²²¹ Rivera described the census as "a disaster, we have been able to verify that the database is 'fulleada' (full) of irregular data of all kinds: deceased, transfers and other inconsistencies."²²² But Rivera also promised a new census by November.²²³ Later, the RNP informed that Thales Group and Cell will be the two companies to emit the new Honduran identity card before the primary elections in March 2021.²²⁴ Accordingly, Hondurans will be allowed to vote in the primaries with both their former and the new identity card.²²⁵ For years they have promised that the new identity card will be ready by the new electoral circles, which now won't be the case. Honi soit qui mal y pense.²²⁶

At the end of the month, new questions arose regarding the two-round presidential election. The president of the CNE, Rixi Moncada, denounced that her two co-chairs are standing in the way of a two-round presidential system.²²⁷ The Liberal Party until then supported this, at least publicly. On August 29, its president said that they were still in favor, but not for this election.²²⁸

Penal Code

The discussion about the new Penal Code resurfaced this month. At a press conference, opposition congresswo/men announced that in view of the refusal of the JOH regime and the Official Gazette to publish the decree that makes the abrogation of the new Penal Code come into force, they had to do so alternatively through the publication of the decree JDP-01-2020.²²⁹ ²³⁰ As expected, Nationalist congresswo/men do not agree with the interpretation that the Penal Code is now abrogated.²³¹ Criterio spoke with Ramón Enrique Barrios, University Professor of Law at the National Autonomous University of Honduras in the Sula Valley, about this. He sees it as a political success, espe-

218 <https://tiempo.hn/moncada-antes-13-septiembre-aprobar-nueva-ley-electoral/>

219 <https://criterio.hn/tribunal-de-justicia-electoral-solo-cuentan-con-22-empleados-y-un-raquitico-presupuesto/>

220 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/censo-electoral-estara-listo-en-diciembre/>

221 <https://criterio.hn/rnp-encontro-50-mil-muertos-habilitados-para-votar-en-primarias-pesquisas-del-censo-electoral/>

222 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2188-honduras-piden-que-haya-elecciones-hasta-que-los-muertos-descansen>

223 <https://tiempo.hn/rnp-muertos-no-votaran-proxima-elecciones-comisionado/>

224 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/consorcio-thales-group-cell-sera-encargado-de-elaborar-nueva-tarjeta-de-identidad.html>

225 <https://tiempo.hn/elecciones-primarias-votar-tarjeta-identidad-vieja-nueva/>

226 <https://criterio.hn/dictamen-de-reformas-electorales-no-contiene-transformaciones-tecnologicas-para-evitar-otro-fraude/>

227 <https://confidencial.hn.com/moncada-denuncia-que-cne-bloqueo-iniciativa-para-implementar-segunda-vuelta/>

228 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/partido-liberal-apoya-segunda-vuelta-discurso-de-rixi-moncada-no-es-congruente-senala-luis-zelaya.html>

229 <https://criterio.hn/ante-negativa-de-la-gaceta-oposicion-publica-abrogacion-de-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

230 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2146-historico-decreto-no-jdp-01-2020-anulo-nuevo-codigo-penal>

231 <https://tiempo.hn/opositores-publican-abrogacion-nuevo-codigo-sin-validez-juridica-dice-cn/>

cially that the complete political opposition came together for this. At the same time, the legal aspect is uncertain and the Constitutional Chamber will have to decide and their track record leans heavy on the side of the JOH regime.²³² To further increase the pressure, the Association of Judges for Democracy (ADJ) presented another constitutional challenge²³³, as did C-Libre.²³⁴

Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported this month that about 60 percent of people planning to migrate from Central American countries and Mexico postponed or canceled such plans because of the coronavirus pandemic.²³⁵ But migration did not come to a standstill. Criterio published a long article on "The upsurge in migration in Honduras driven by despair".²³⁶

The UN human rights offices in Mexico, Panama and Tegucigalpa called on the States of El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico "to redouble efforts to search for and investigate missing migrants in the region".²³⁷ The call was linked to the tragic events 10 years ago in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, where 72 migrants, most of them Hondurans, were murdered.²³⁸

And Light at the End of a Month

Writing about the daily live in Honduras, ContraCorriente summarized the situation: "We have been robbed of everything but hope".²³⁹

232 <https://criterio.hn/esta-abogado-el-nuevo-codigo-penal-de-honduras-el-abogado-penalista-ramon-barrios-responde/>

233 <https://criterio.hn/piden-declarar-la-inconstitucionalidad-y-derogacion-parcial-del-abogado-codigo-penal/>

234 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/noticias/1238-c-libre-presenta-inconstitucionalidad-ante-vigencia-de-nuevo-codigo-penal>

235 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/pandemia-freno-60-migracion-de-mexico-y-centroamerica-a-estados-unidos/>

236 <https://criterio.hn/el-repunte-del-fenomeno-migratorio-en-honduras-empujado-por-la-desesperanza/>

237 <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-insta-a-los-estados-involucrados-a-cooperar-y-redoblar-esfuerzos-para-la-busqueda-e-investigacion-de-migrantes-desaparecidos-en-la-region/>

238 <https://radioprogreso.hn/np/masacre-de-san-fernando-tamaulipas/>

239 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/08/30/nos-han-robado-todo-menos-la-esperanza/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

Past Activities:

-

Upcoming Activities:

-

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