

# *Another Month in Honduras...*

## Human Rights Monitor – September 2020

COVID-19 cases still on the rise accompanied by a sometimes forgotten dengue crisis. Mobile hospitals that are still not functional or not even yet in the country. More health workers who lost their lives trying to save lives. A journalist assassinated after denouncing death threats against him. A young campesino leader and an elderly environmentalist murdered. The young Garífuna men still unaccounted for. At least in the Berta Cáceres case, David Castillo was not released from pre-trial detention. But given the lack of real electoral reforms, more of the same could await the country in the coming years. 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

There are 19'535 dengue cases in Honduras.<sup>1</sup> "The pediatric ward of the Hospital Escuela in the Honduran capital remains crowded with dengue patients, it was reported this weekend. Dr. Carlos Maldonado, head of the pediatric ward, said at least 17 minor patients are receiving care for dengue fever."<sup>2</sup>

September started with 61'769 COVID-19 cases and 1888 deaths.<sup>3</sup> Mid-September, the deputy health minister once again announced a higher testing capacity for the coming days. According to him, 3000 tests per day should be possible.<sup>4</sup> The Association of Funeral Homes, meanwhile, assured the public on September 17, that the real death figure exceeds 5 thousand deaths, according to their records, when the official number was at 2146.<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> During this month, the JOH regime continued with a very low testing rates with several days with fewer than 1000 tests. Carlos Umaña, president of doctors at the IHSS, criticized this.<sup>7</sup> The month ended with 76'900 COVID-19 cases and 2353 deaths.<sup>8</sup> Testing was still not higher than at the start of the month.

## State Reaction

Employees of some 16 state institutions protested outside the Ministry of Finance demanding the outstanding payment of their salaries.<sup>9</sup> ConfidencialHN counted some 50'000 unpaid workers.<sup>10</sup> The next day, a group of 70 professionals from various disciplines, including doctors, lawyers, engineers and economists, concerned about the mishandling of the Covid 19 pandemic, announced the emergence of the citizen's movement, Patria en Acción, to recommend the government to step aside and hand over the management of the emergency to a commission of experts.<sup>11</sup> "A few days ago, the members of the Grupo Promotor del Diálogo Fiscal (Promotion Group of Fiscal Dialogue) launched a proposal to the central government and the citizens of Honduras on the need to make radical changes that seek to benefit the people in health and economic matters. "First of all, there is a major criticism in the management of the pandemic, and that there is no comprehensive plan to solve the problem from both a health and economic point of view. The Government is called upon to create a comprehensive plan with the participation of various sectors," said Dr. Hugo Noé Pino. (...) On the observations and analysis made by the Grupo Promotor del Diálogo Fiscal, Radio Progreso spoke

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1 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=48076>

2 <https://proceso.hn/abarrota-sala-de-pediatria-por-ninos-de-dengue-en-el-hospital-escuela/>

3 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1405432-466/honduras-coronavirus-covid-sinager>

4 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/especiales/coronavirus/1404852-528/pruebas-pcr-honduras-laboratorios>

5 <https://tiempo.hn/muertes-por-covid-19-igual-honduras-funerarias/>

6 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=48301>

7 <https://proceso.hn/no-se-si-reir-o-llorar-critica-doctor-umana-ante-bajo-procesamiento-de-pruebas-pcr/>

8 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1412246-466/honduras-contagios-muertes-coronavirus-pandemia>

9 <https://www.proceso.hn/empleados-de-16-instituciones-protestan-frente-a-finanzas-por-falta-de-pago-de-salarios/>

10 <https://confidencialhn.com/unos-50-mil-trabajadores-estatales-exigen-al-ejecutivo-nacionalista-que-les-paguen-salarios-atrasados/>

11 <https://criterio.hn/patria-en-accion-insta-al-gobierno-a-la-integracion-de-un-consejo-de-emergencia-nacional/>

with one of its members, Dr. Hugo Noé Pino (HNP), former President of the Central Bank of Honduras."<sup>12</sup>

FOSDEH published a report for a "Plan for the Economic and Social Reconversion of Honduras".<sup>13</sup> "Sociologist and researcher Leticia Salomón expresses her doubts about how the Honduran government is handling the Codvid-19 pandemic to such an extent that she wonders what is behind the government's apathy."<sup>14</sup> On September 16 it was announced that the coming week, twice as many people may circulate on any given day in Honduras.<sup>15</sup> This measure came into force on September 21.<sup>16</sup> The same day, Restaurants were allowed to run again with 50% of their capacity.<sup>17</sup> But the state of exception was still prolonged to October 4.<sup>18</sup> And warnings were voiced by medical experts about a second wave hitting Honduras.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Honduras has taken up most debt during the pandemic from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE) among all the member states, over \$1 billion.<sup>20</sup>

On September 27, COPECO announced that Honduras would enter Stage II of the planned reactivation.<sup>21</sup>

## Health Sector

September was another dark month for health workers as several died.<sup>22 23 24 25</sup> Contract employees of the health system protested in order to get the Health Ministry to give them permanent positions, in compliance with the decree approved several months ago by the National Congress.<sup>26</sup> Already back in March, Congress approved \$420 million to build 94 health centers to address the pandemic, so far this has been an empty promise.<sup>27</sup> The Secretary of Health, Alba Consuelo Flores, meanwhile, claimed that they have spent 472 million Lempiras to address the pandemic.<sup>28</sup>

On September 17, employees of the Vicente D'Antoni Hospital in the city of La Ceiba, Atlántida, carried out a protest due to the breach of the collective contract.<sup>29</sup> Even worse, the JOH regime announced that the additional medical staff hired to face the pandemic would not have their contracts renewed. To be precise, they told them on September 17 that their contract running out on

12 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/hugo-noe-pino-se-necesita-un-plan-integral-de-solucion-sanitaria-y-economica/>

13 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/elementos-de-diagnostico-y-lineamientos-de-propuesta-del-fosdeh-para-un-plan-de-reconversion-economica-y-social-de-honduras/>

14 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/que-hay-detras-de-la-apatia-del-gobierno-para-enfrentar-la-pandemia/>

15 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1408942-466/aprueban-circulaci%C3%B3n-de-dos-d%C3%ADgitos-en-honduras-a-partir-del-21-de>

16 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1409838-466/aprueban-salida-de-dos-d%C3%ADgitos-y-sigue-fase-1-de-la-reapertura>

17 <https://confidencialhn.com/restaurantes-listos-para-empezar-a-atender-con-el-50-por-ciento-de-su-capacidad/>

18 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1409806-466/toque-de-queda-honduras-coronavirus-pandemia-octubre>

19 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-debe-prepararse-para-segunda-oleada-de-la-pandemia/>

20 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/09/26/honduras-el-pais-que-mas-se-endeuda-por-pandemia/>

21 <https://tiempo.hn/honduras-avanza-a-fase-ii-de-la-apertura-economica-y-social/>

22 <https://www.proceso.hn/muere-medico-por-sospecha-de-covid-en-san-francisco-de-yojoa-cortes/>

23 <https://proceso.hn/suman-44-los-galenos-fallecidos-por-causa-de-covid-19-en-honduras/>

24 <https://criterio.hn/muerte-de-doctor-manuel-sarmiento-conmociona-a-gremio-de-la-salud-que-sigue-siendo-enlutado-por-pandemia/>

25 <https://www.latribuna.hn/2020/09/30/muere-por-covid-19-reconocido-medico-de-tela-atlantida/>

26 <https://confidencialhn.com/empleados-de-la-region-metropolitana-de-salud-exigen-que-se-les-den-contratos-permanentes/>

27 <https://criterio.hn/triajes-el-paliativo-con-que-el-gobierno-sustituyo-promesa-de-94-centros-de-salud%e2%80%af-%e2%80%af-%e2%80%af-%e2%80%af/>

28 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/09/11/salud-ha-ejecutado-mas-de-1472-millones-para-atender-emergencia/>

29 <https://criterio.hn/empleados-de-hospital-dantoni-de-la-ceiba-protestan-por-incumplimiento-a-contrato-laboral/>

September 21, would not be renewed.<sup>30</sup> The next day, health workers protested outside the IHSS against the removal of 145 workers.<sup>31</sup> The Medical College of Honduras (CMH) announced to go to the international level regarding the non-renewal of medical contracts. "Young doctors do not deserve the treatment by the government, to take their jobs when they have exposed their lives attending to COVID-19 patients".<sup>32</sup> The former deputy health minister Carlos Aguilar speaks of an insult to the medical profession.<sup>33</sup>

The director of the Leonardo Martínez Hospital, meanwhile, warned of the imminent closure of their intensive care unit due to a lack of doctors.<sup>34</sup> Medical staff at the University Hospital protest against the conditions at their workplace.<sup>35</sup> News that the notorious Invest-H would be responsible for managing the operating rooms of the University Hospital caused concern among its employees.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the month, ContraCorriente reported that the situation at the Honduran hospitals had recovered a bit, especially in San Pedro Sula, where hospitals were on the brink of collapse in the first months of the pandemic. But the situation remains tense and medical expert fear the consequences of the so-called "intelligent reopening" by the JOH regime.<sup>37</sup>

## Human Rights

The Platform for the Defense of Public Health and Education resurfaced this month successfully calling for protests.<sup>38</sup> OACNUDH documented 477 protests in 76 municipalities in the 190 days of the lockdown.<sup>40</sup> On September 27, six months into the pandemic, the Human Rights Secretariat finally announced safe passage to human rights defenders.<sup>41</sup> OACNUDH welcomed this but also announced to monitor its implementation.<sup>42</sup>

Social movements and indigenous organizations continued to publish joint statements during the pandemic. "In the midst of the hypocritical ceremonies with which the so-called "Month of the Fatherland" is inaugurated, the savagery of the narco-dictatorship continues against the Honduran people and against the social fighters in particular, demonstrating its policy of state terrorism and judicial assassination to try to silence the voices of the best sons and daughters of Honduras and to ensure the most reprehensible impunity. But with the same dignity of Morazán, here we are and we

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30 <https://criterio.hn/para-gobierno-de-honduras-pandemia-ya-termino-y-despide-medicos/>

31 <https://tiempo.hn/145-medicos-despedidos-en-el-ihss-protesta/>

32 <http://www.radioamerica.hn/colegio-medico-de-honduras-acudira-instancias-internacionales-por-despido-de-galenos-durante-pandemia/>

33 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/despido-de-medicos-es-un-insulto-del-gobierno/>

34 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sanpedro/1409982-410/hospital-leonardo-martinez-uci-cierre-honduras-pandemia-covid>

35 <https://confidencial.hn.com/radiologos-del-hospital-escuela-exigen-solucion-para-terminar-con-el-hacinamiento-en-los-quirosfanos/>

36 <https://tiempo.hn/invest-h-quirosfanos-hospital-escuela-empleados-desconfianza/>

37 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/09/24/hospitalizaciones-por-covid19-bajaron-pero-capacidad-de-diagnostico-sigue-siendo-minima/>

38 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2240-honduras-pueblo-vuelve-a-la-calle-con-la-plataforma-por-salud-y-educacion>

39 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1304485724763365378>

40 <https://criterio.hn/mas-de-470-manifestaciones-en-190-dias-de-confinamiento-reflejan-descontento-de-los-hondurenos/>

41 <https://criterio.hn/defensores-de-dd-hh-pueden-solicitar-salvoconducto-ante-sedh/>

42 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1310321840196325378>

raise our voice firmly in this Twenty-Fifth Public Manifesto".<sup>43</sup> "While the narco-dictatorship has surpassed the limits of impunity and corruption, and while the neoliberal business class and the transnationals are preying on the rights of the workers and imprisoning defenders of water and natural resources, there is a people that is turning its anger and indignation into an organized struggle, and is preparing to recover the homeland from the criminals who are shaming us today".<sup>44</sup> Social movements and indigenous organizations published their 27th joint press release during the pandemic.<sup>45</sup> "Behind the official patriotic boasts, the regime ratifies its surrender by selling off our sovereignty and territory, criminalizing defenders of the common good, hiding public information and infringing on freedom of expression. These are times of a crushed homeland, but they are also times for the organized struggle from which we grow in commitment that leads to shaking off the traitors who today have captured the homeland, and sell it as they have sold their consciences. And from our spirit of rebellion, we raise our voice in this Twenty-Eighth Public Manifesto".<sup>46</sup>

## Corruption

MADJ denounced the impunity in the corruption cases linked to the pandemic. "Today is the 145th day since the first act of corruption was discovered and denounced in Honduras within the state management of the emergency by covid-19, a determining fact for the Honduran population to be aware of the destination of the funds approved and managed at will by public officials in collusion with NGOs linked to the government."<sup>47</sup> Libre congressman Jorge Cáliz denounces that the mayor of Tegucigalpa, Nasry Asfura, tries to stop an investigation into his management of the pandemic and possible acts of corruption.<sup>48</sup> El Heraldo reported that the MP also cited Defense Minister Fredy Díaz Zelaya and the head of the Armed Forces Tito Livio Moreno Coello regarding the irregular purchase of mechanical lung ventilators for the Military Hospital.<sup>49</sup>

Pasos de Animal Grande denounced the intimidation of Hondurans protesting against state corruption during the pandemic. "José Romero, from the movement "Where is the Money", was arbitrarily summoned by means of a telephone call made to him by two alleged agents of the Technical Agency of Criminal Investigation, (ATIC), to appear at the offices of Tegucigalpa, next Thursday, as they argued that they are not operating in San Pedro Sula. According to what they explained, he should arrive to be interrogated for his participation in the vehicular protests."<sup>50</sup> Padre Melo denounced that a group of young people in El Progreso was attacked and persecuted by members of the National Police while painting the popular claim: "Where is the money?". "During the incident, the director of Radio Progreso stopped when he saw the police carrying long weapons

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

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

45 <https://copinh.org/2020/09/manifiesto-publico-27-septiembre-2020/>

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

47 <https://madj.org/index.php/2020/09/03/la-pandemia-de-la-impunidad-para-la-corrupcion-en-el-covid-19/>

48 <https://confidencialhn.com/diputado-de-libre-revela-que-asfura-busca-frenar-investigacion-por-supuestos-ilicitos/>

49 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1407110-466/fiscal%C3%ADa-investiga-al-ministro-de-defensa-y-al-jefe-de-las-fuerzas>

50 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2963-arrecian-estrategias-silenciadoras-atic-cita-a-ciudadano-para-ser-interrogado-por-las-protestas-de-donde-esta-el-dinero>

and bombs against the youth. Both Moreno and the journalists present were threatened by the agents."<sup>51</sup>

Expediente Público documented that the company Sersel still has links with the presidential family and received in the midst of the pandemic between March and August 2020 contracts for \$320'000 granted by the State for surveillance in hospitals.<sup>52</sup> Criterio reported on the purchase of dysfunctional mask by the JOH regime for over \$3 million from the Honduran Maquiladoras Association (AHM).<sup>53</sup>

According to the CNA, the ten corruption cases investigated by them cost the Honduran people some 811 million Lempiras.<sup>54</sup> In mid-September, they published another one into the irregularities behind the social program Honduras Solidaria.<sup>55</sup> The CNA denounced that the pandemic served as another excuse to suppress transparency.<sup>56</sup> According to the JOH regime, they "invested" 659 million Lempiras in the program.<sup>57</sup> Most of the corruption cases investigated by the CNA and others involve Invest-H. Nevertheless, Congress continued to benefit Invest-H by approving a new construction project.<sup>58</sup> This decision was met with widespread criticism.<sup>59</sup> The same day, Reporteros de Investigación reported on suspicious purchases by the IHSS, again linked to Invest-H.<sup>60</sup> The former head of the National Association of Industrialists (ANDI), Adolfo Facussé, criticized that the intervention body at Invest-H is only there to cover things up and say that everything is fine."<sup>61</sup>

CNA published a further investigation this month, the 11<sup>th</sup> into corruption case during the pandemic. This one focused on the purchase of face masks from a company linked to a Nationalist congresswoman and her husband.<sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> The next day, they wrote an open letter to the Attorney General and his deputy regarding the lack of action by the MP in all the corruption cases that came to light during the pandemic.<sup>64</sup> El Pulso reported that the US had canceled the visas of former COPECO commissioner Gabriel Rubí and former Invest-H director Marco Bográn for their role in the many corruption cases having taken place during the pandemic.<sup>65</sup>

By the end of the month, a 12<sup>th</sup> report by the CNA followed.<sup>66</sup> The report focused on the first purchase of a mobile hospital by COPECO (previous to the seven bought by Invest-H), which was

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51 <https://criterio.hn/policia-amenaza-al-padre-melo-por-defender-jovenes-manifestantes/>

52 <https://expedientepublico.org/exclusiva-presidente-hernandez-y-su-familia-aprovechan-pandemia-para-hacer-negocios/>

53 <https://criterio.hn/gobierno-pago-mas-de-l-78-millones-a-maquiladores-en-mascarillas-que-son-una-burla/>

54 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/noticias-nacionales/corruptcion-durante-pandemia-suma-mas-de-811-millones-de-lempiras-afirma-el-cna/>

55 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1305506360377958400>

56 <https://criterio.hn/pandemia-es-la-oportunidad-de-oro-de-los-funcionarios-para-suprimir-la-transparencia-gabriela-castellanos/>

57 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/09/14/honduras-solidaria-ha-invertido-l-659-millones-para-entregar-alimentos-a-la-poblacion-afectada-por-el-confinamiento/>

58 <https://criterio.hn/a-pesar-de-corrupcion-congreso-sigue-entregando-fondos-a-invest-h/>

59 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1409286-410/congreso-aprueba-fondos-investh-amates-aguan-obras-corrupcion>

60 <https://www.reporterosdeinvestigacion.com/2020/09/17/en-medio-del-covid-19-seguro-social-hizo-compras-por-l-265-6-millones-favorecieron-a-empresas-relacionadas-con-invest-h/>

61 <https://tiempo.hn/adolfo-facusse-junta-interventora-de-invest-h/>

62 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1308048543391846400>

63 <https://tiempo.hn/cna-irregularidades-compra-de-mascarillas-de-invest-h/>

64 <https://criterio.hn/seis-meses-y-once-informes-de-corrupcion-y-el-ministerio-publico-no-ha-emitido-ningun-requerimiento-cna/>

65 <http://elpulso.hn?p=48257>

66 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1310578293951823874>



set up in Villanueva. The CNA denounced the high purchase price and the bad quality.<sup>67</sup> "[A] canvas tent instead of a mobile hospital; installation on muddy ground; irreparable damage to the structure; 3 out of 4 air conditioners not working".<sup>68</sup>

FOSDEH denounced that the inaction by MP and TSC in relation to the corruption of INVEST-H and COPECO could be classified as complicity.<sup>69</sup> Former president of the Central Bank of Honduras (BCH), Hugo Noé Pino, sees one important reason for the various corruption cases during the pandemic in the non-renewal of the MACCIH which gave a carte blanche to the corrupt.<sup>70</sup>

## Mobile Hospitals

The CNA published its tenth investigation into corruption during the pandemic, the second on the mobile hospitals. They highlighted the problematic state the mobile hospitals are in and warn that they even offer a risk for patients. The equipment of the mobile hospital does not fit the purpose and the construction violates international norms.<sup>71</sup> The Medical Association of Honduras (CMH) agreed with the CNA.<sup>72</sup>

Invest-H had to admit that the two mobile hospitals are not completely water proof, rain water can enter.<sup>73</sup> Contracorriente, meanwhile, spoke with German Pérez (GP), who was invited by the Presidential Designate, María Antonia Rivera, to visit the facilities of the mobile hospital in San Pedro Sula, along with other representatives of civil society, in order to learn about the progress of the project. Perez pointed out that Invest-H assured that the missing equipment is on its way, but they did not give a date. He denounced that the purchase of the mobile hospitals was a hasty decision.<sup>74</sup> As a response to the corruption scandal around the mobile hospital, Invest-H sent a delegation to Turkey to inspect the construction of the remaining 5 mobile hospitals. The travel costs were 300'000 Lempiras.<sup>75</sup>

On March 18, the JOH regime bought the first two out of seven mobile hospitals. They are still not operational - the date was postponed again this month, for a fourth time.<sup>76</sup> The JOH regime continued to defend their purchase without convincing anyone according to Criterio.<sup>77</sup> Mid-September, the Health Secretariat and the intervention body of Invest-H held a press conference and said that they were still testing the equipment of the two hospitals and they could not give an exact date when this would be finished.<sup>78</sup> But at the same press conference, they somehow could promise that all seven hospitals (five are still being produced in Turkey or on the way) would be operational

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67 <https://criterio.hn/copeco-pago-mas-de-5-5-millones-de-lempiras-en-carpa-de-lona-con-pretensiones-de-hospital-movil/>

68 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1310612202320285697>

69 <https://criterio.hn/como-complicidad-podria-catalogarse-la-inactividad-del-mp-y-tsc-frente-a-la-corrupcion-de-invest-h-y-copeco/>

70 <https://proceso.hn/con-salida-de-la-macch-se-dio-via-a-libre-a-la-corrupcion-segun-economista/>

71 <https://twitter.com/cnahonduras/status/1302981166597902337>

72 <https://confidencialhn.com/colegio-medico-afirma-que-hospitales-moviles-no-cumplen-con-la-funcion-para-atender-covid19/>

73 <https://confidencialhn.com/investh-admite-que-hospital-movil-de-san-pedro-sula-presenta-filtraciones-de-agua/>

74 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/09/04/con-el-dinero-invertido-en-hospitales-moviles-ya-se-hubiera-construido-un-hospital-de-verdad-german-perez-de-la-andi/>

75 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1407430-466/viaje-turquia-invest-hospitales-moviles>

76 <http://elpulso.hn?p=47963>

77 <https://criterio.hn/pese-a-corrupcion-secretario-de-la-presidencia-defiende-a-capa-y-espada-compra-de-hospitales-moviles/>

78 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2256-gobierno-pide-paciencia-hospitales-se-pudren-y-hondurenos-insisten-y-el-dinero>

in November.<sup>79</sup> This become more unlikely again, when on September 25, the intervention body of Invest-H announced that they identified a problem in the air conditioning system at the mobile hospital in San Pedro Sula.<sup>80</sup>

According to Libre congressman and former public prosecutor Jari Dixon, the MP would have sufficient proof to charge those responsible for the mobile hospital corruption scandal.<sup>81</sup>

## Poverty

This month, Honduras commemorated the Day of the Honduran Child. COIPRODEN rightly asked if this should be celebrated as 77% of Honduran children live in poor households. Almost 4000 children tested positive for COVID-19 and 21 died. Over one million Honduran children are without access to education.<sup>82</sup> MADJ added to this the difficult situation of children in communities under siege by extractive projects and criminalized by the JOH regime.<sup>83</sup> FOSDEH fears that up to three out of every four Hondurans will be below the poverty line by 2021.<sup>84</sup> "The COVID-19 pandemic will increase inequality, the number of unemployed and poor in Honduras, especially in the Dry Corridor, where more than 1.6 million people suffer from food insecurity, the humanitarian organization Oxfam warned."<sup>85</sup>

## Education

On September 17, UNAH announced to suspend 1200 teachers basing this on the PCM 021-2020 decree and giving the corona pandemic as an excuse.<sup>86</sup> Its labor union denounced the decision.<sup>87</sup> According to the lawyer Fausto Cáliz, the decision by UNAH is illegal.<sup>88</sup>

## Economy

The transport sector held strike actions on September 6.<sup>89</sup> "The measure is intended to pressure government authorities, the Multisectoral Table and the National Risk Management System (Sinager) to create a "negotiating table" where they can expose the problems afflicting the industry in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic."<sup>90</sup> The protest became a two-day event<sup>91</sup>, but then they were successful in forcing the JOH regime to the table.<sup>92</sup> The agreement found included support for the

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79 <https://proceso.hn/siete-hospitales-moviles-estarian-habilitados-en-noviembre-segun-interventora-de-invest-h/>

80 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=48330>

81 <https://confidencialhn.com/dixon-dice-que-fiscalia-tiene-pruebas-para-presentar-requerimientos-por-compra-de-hospitales-moviles/>

82 <https://tiempo.hn/coiproden-se-puede-celebrar-77-ninos-hogares-pobres/>

83 <https://madj.org/index.php/2020/09/10/el-dia-del-nino-y-la-nina-en-los-hogares-de-las-personas-criminalizadas-en-honduras/>

84 <https://criterio.hn/en-2021-tres-de-cada-cuatro-hondurenos-seran-pobres-fosdeh/>

85 <https://www.elpais.hn/2020/09/26/oxfam-dice-que-la-pandemia-amenaza-con-aumentar-la-pobreza-y-agudizar-el-hambre-en-honduras/>

86 <https://tiempo.hn/sitraunah-denuncia-despido-arbitrario-mas-mil-trabajadores-1/>

87 <https://confidencialhn.com/suspenden-a-unos-mil-empleados-de-la-unah-sindicato-denuncia-que-son-despidos-encubiertos/>

88 <https://criterio.hn/anunciado-despido-de-docentes-por-hora-en-la-unah-seria-ilegal/>

89 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2228-se-recruedece-insatisfaccion-social-en-honduras>

90 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1406539-466/paro-transporte-honduras-nivel-nacional-pandemia>

91 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/transportistas-no-logran-acuerdos-y-seguiran-en-las-calles/>

92 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2232-honduras-transporte-operara-al-100-de-capacidad-salvese-quien-pueda>

support for the companies and drivers, but also allowed them to go back to 100% capacity, which given the situation in Honduras may be quite problematic.<sup>93</sup> The Honduran Institute for Terrestrial Transport (IHTT) later claimed that they had not allowed the transport sector to go back to 100% capacity.<sup>94</sup> But this was a lie and capacity went up to 100% again. "During 6 months of the health emergency in Honduras, public transportation was paralyzed, but this week it was enabled at 100 % of its capacity. The risk of contagion in the poor condition of the transportation system stands in contrast to the calamity that thousands of transporters have been condemned to in the midst of the pandemic. The reopening of transportation has been done without hearing scientific opinion in a country that continues to have high rates of contagion."<sup>95</sup> On September 26, over 100 vehicles for public transport have been decommissioned for violating biosafety rules.<sup>96</sup>

The informal economy has grown to over 2 million people during the pandemic according to FOSDEH.<sup>97</sup> The external debt, meanwhile, has grown 19.5% compared to last year, it reached almost \$11 billion.<sup>98</sup> Carlos Madero, Secretary of Work and Social Security, announced that the unemployment rate could grow from 5.7% to 13%.<sup>99</sup> Maybe money from the BCIE could help alleviate this a bit, assuming it goes to the right people. On September 18. the BCIE informed to have disbursed \$35.5 million for micro-, small- and medium-sized companies in Honduras.<sup>100</sup>

"Honduran maquila workers held a virtual conversation about the working conditions of workers in times of pandemic, where they questioned the multiple violations of their rights, as well as the inadequacy of the Law to assist the productive sector and workers in the face of the effects of the pandemic caused by Covid-19, which contemplated the allocation of a bonus to workers suspended during the pandemic."<sup>101</sup> On September 25, 16 different public unions protested outside the Ministry of Labor denouncing that day laborers were not included in the wage increase.<sup>102</sup>

## Human Rights and Their Defenders

This November, Honduras will sit the Universal Periodic Review at the UN human rights council. Pasos de Animal Grande denounced: "The Honduran State will have an enormous delay in complying with the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review, UPR, of 2015, among them those related to the freedom of expression and the protection of the people who practice journalism

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93 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2232-honduras-transporte-operara-al-100-de-capacidad-salvese-quien-pueda>

94 <https://confidencialhn.com/instituto-del-transporte-aclara-que-aun-no-se-autoriza-circulacion-de-unidades-con-el-100-por-ciento-de-capacidad/>

95 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/09/15/a-pesar-del-riesgo-transporte-publico-se-reanuda-en-honduras/>

96 <https://criterio.hn/decomiso-de-mas-de-100-unidades-confirma-que-transportistas-incumplen-medidas-de-bioseguridad/>

97 <https://confidencialhn.com/fosdeh-senala-que-comercio-informal-en-honduras-subio-a-mas-de-dos-millones-de-personas/>

98 <https://proceso.hn/la-deuda-externa-hondurena-suba-a-10795-millones-de-dolares-un-195-mas-que-en-2019/>

99 <https://www.latribuna.hn/2020/09/19/ministro-del-trabajo-carlos-madero-tasa-de-desempleo-subira-de-5-7-a-13/>

100 <https://tiempo.hn/bcie-fondos-para-mipymes-financiamiento-honduras/>

101 <https://criterio.hn/bono-de-auxilio-del-gobierno-no-se-cumple-a-cabalidad-denuncian-trabajadoras-de-la-maquila/>

102 <https://confidencialhn.com/sindicalistas-protestan-en-la-secretaria-de-trabajo-por-falta-de-aumentos-salariales/>

in the country."<sup>103</sup> The next Universal Periodic Review cycle for Honduras will start with a pre-session this October 13.<sup>104</sup>

The so-called Follow-Up Board for the Compliance with the Judgments and Resolutions of the IACtHR held an online webinar to discuss and analyze the cases in front of the Inter-American Human Rights System involving Honduras. The State of Honduras has been sentenced in 13 cases, 11 are still in the follow-up stage, i.e. they have not been complied with yet.<sup>105</sup> <sup>106</sup> CODEH criticized that the Attorney General's Office (PGR) demanded the withdrawal of 14 protective measures granted by the IACHR.<sup>107</sup> In a second case involving the IACHR, the latter just announced to have approved an "agreement for a friendly settlement regarding case 12,891, Adán Guillermo López Lone and others, signed on June 19, 2019, between the Honduran State and Mrs. Bertha Oliva de Nativí, Coordinator of the Committee of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH), the petitioner organization representing the victims. On April 27, 2006, the IACHR received a petition presented by the Committee of Families of Detained Persons of Honduras, alleging the international responsibility of the Honduran State for the facts related to the search of the home of Mr. Rafael Rivera Torres, as well as for the arbitrary detention and subsequent torture and cruel treatment, inhumane and degrading acts suffered by the victims Adán Guillermo López Lone, Edwin Dagoberto López Lone, Gilda María Rivera Sierra, Ana Suyapa Rivera Sierra, Marlén Irasema Jiménez Puerto and Milton Danilo Jiménez Puerto, as well as the sexual violence suffered by Gilda María Rivera Sierra and Marlene Irasema Jiménez Puerto, in acts deployed by State agents on the 27th of 1982."<sup>108</sup>

OFRANEH's Miriam Miranda, Juan López from the Municipal Committee of Tocoa, and Padre Melo were invited to speak about the human rights situation in Honduras in front of the Foreign Relations Committee at Congress.<sup>109</sup>

## Assassinations

A lawyer working for a local government in Santa Cruz de Yojoa. Cortés, the 35-year old Julio Andrés Pineda Díaz, was murdered.<sup>110</sup> He was also activist with A World Without War and Violence and was the spokesperson in the 2017 Central American Peace March. He would have run in the coming elections as part of a worldwide movement to have peace activists elected.<sup>111</sup> <sup>112</sup>

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103 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/monitoreo-de-compromisos-internacionales/item/2972-el-examen-es-en-noviembre-honduras-llegara-con-recomendaciones-incumplidas-al-epu-2020>

104 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/monitoreo-de-compromisos-internacionales/item/2977-honduras-estara-en-el-banquillo-el-13-de-noviembre-proximo-para-ser-evaluado-por-el-consejo-de-derechos-humanos-de-la-onu>

105 <https://www.defensoresonline.com/inicia-los-seminarios-virtuales-para-analizar-sentencias-internacionales-y-deudas-pendientes-en-honduras/>

106 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2976-mesa-de-seguimiento-a-las-sentencias-de-la-corteidh-senalan-que-el-estado-de-honduras-pretende-siempre-evadir-la-responsabilidad>

107 <https://proceso.hn/codeh-cuestiona-peticion-de-la-pgr-ante-la-cidh-de-suspender-medidas-cautelares/>

108 <https://www.defensoresonline.com/la-cidh-aprobo-acuerdo-de-solucion-amistosa-en-el-caso-12-981-adan-guillermo-lopez-lone-y-otros/>

109 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/activistas-hondurenos-se-reunen-con-congresistas-de-estados-unidos/>

110 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1406206-466/muerto-y-atado-hallan-cad%C3%A1ver-de-abogado-que-laboraba-en-alcalde%C3%ADa-de>

111 <https://criterio.hn/secuestran-torturan-y-asesinan-pacifista-miembro-de-un-mundo-sin-guerras-y-sin-violencia/>

112 <https://www.defensoresonline.com/encuentran-a-joven-defensor-asesinado-y-con-signos-de-tortura-en-santa-cruz-de-yojoa/>

The 38-year old campesino leader Jairo Enrique Sales was shot dead by various assailants in Villanueva, San Pedro Sula.<sup>113 114</sup>

On September 27, two assailants murdered the social activist and environmentalist José Antonio Teruel together with his wife Francisca Aracely Zavala and his brother-in-law Marco Tulio Zavala. This took place in the community San Fernando in Olancho.<sup>115</sup> OACNUDH lamented the assassinations and demanded an swift, impartial and effective investigation.<sup>116</sup>

MADJ commemorates the two indigenous Tolupán leaders José Salomón Matute and his son Juan Samael Matute who were murdered 19 months ago, 19 months without any justice.<sup>117 118</sup>

## Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

Students movements have been targeted with violence and criminalization by the JOH regime and 2014 was a very grim year in this respect. The aftermaths are still felt today and in the case of three criminalized students, Pasos de Animal Grande uncovered troubling new information. "Three years in prison, forced labor in jail, suspension of rights and payment for alleged damages that the authorities of the National Autonomous University of Honduras, UNAH, never accredited, was the sentence that was hidden for three years by the Fourth Chamber of the Court of Judgment of Tegucigalpa, against the students at that time, Cesario Padilla, Sergio Ulloa and Moisés Cáceres, condemned for the crime of illegal detention of public property, actions promoted by the former rector Julieta Castellanos."<sup>119</sup> Faculty members at the UNAH spoke out against the conviction.<sup>120</sup> While the JOH regime successfully criminalizes student activists, it fails to bring to justice those responsible for attacks on students and human rights defenders. "An open process for concealment and usurpation for exercising their work as human rights defenders are the consequences of a selective justice system that released the torturing officers and kept open a criminal process against three defenders, who could go as far as an oral and public trial for exercising their right to defend human rights, said Ariel Diaz, who on September 8, 2017 was tortured and imprisoned for protecting students who were peacefully demonstrating at the National Autonomous University of Honduras, UNAH."<sup>121</sup>

"The legal representative of the Liberty and Refoundation Party (LIBRE), Benedicto Santos, was the target of an attack this Sunday, as he was moving from the La Guadalupe community in Reitoca to Tegucigalpa. The events occurred at about 12:52 noon in front of the base where the Battalion of

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113 <https://confidencialhn.com/matan-a-dirigente-campesino-en-la-zona-norte-de-honduras/>

114 <https://tiempo.hn/matan-presidente-de-campesinos-en-dos-caminos/>

115 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/asesinan-al-ambientalista-jose-antonio-teruel-a-su-esposa-y-cunado/>

116 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1310694748106219520>

117 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1309564409380048901>

118 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1309601186354466816>

119 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2960-tres-anos-despues-de-esconder-condena-tribunal-de-sentencia-mostro-sus-garras-contralos-estudiantes-cesario-padilla-sergio-ulloa-y-mois-es-caceres>

120 <https://tiempo.hn/ocho-claustros-profesores-unah-pronuncian-sentencia-ex-estudiantes/>

121 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2966-a-tres-anos-de-actos-de-barbarie-policia-en-la-unah-estado-nos-ha-castigado-por-ser-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-y-dejo-en-libertad-a-los-oficiales-torturadores>

the now disappeared Centauros, now known as the police base, was located a mile from the center of Lepaterique. Santos received a bullet graze to the right buttock when his vehicle was hit by two shots from the driver's side, which he called an attack by the state."<sup>122</sup> Human rights defender from Zacate Grande, Pedro Canales, denounced that his dog was shot dead as an act of intimidation against him. "It's really a difficult situation for me and the family, because pets have been a part of our security, at least we consider it like this. Already in 2016 they killed two dogs and then in 2018 another, and last year they also killed in the same way a puppy and then today with "Cinnamon", we are very sad to see how cruel they are with these animals".<sup>123</sup> <sup>124</sup> The coming days, there were additional reports of threats against Canales and ADEPZA.<sup>125</sup> Also in the south, in Choluteca, Defensores en Línea denounced a new attempt of criminalization of social leader and Catholic priest Florentino Hernández.<sup>126</sup>

The Networks of Women Human Rights Defenders has registered 17 attacks against WHRDs so far this year.<sup>127</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

On September 5, OFRANEH sent out an alert: "In this moment, Nat't police are getting ready to evict members of Trujillo community from their own territory. There is an ancestral title since 1901 for Garifuna of Trujillo & now they are accused of being invaders! We demand respect for our ancestral titles".<sup>128</sup> <sup>129</sup>

## Forced Disappearance

With a big street painting in Tegucigalpa, OFRANEH demands to know the whereabouts of the forcefully disappeared young men from the Garífuna community Triunfo de la Cruz.<sup>130</sup> On September 8, Jair Meza, spokesperson of the National Police, claimed that they are awaiting arrest warrants for those involved in the forcefully disappearance of the five young men from the Garífuna community Triunfo de la Cruz.<sup>131</sup> The following days, nothing happened and the feeling of sadness and powerlessness grew in Triunfo de la Cruz.<sup>132</sup> By the end of the month, the DPI once again claimed to have leads and to have made progress.<sup>133</sup>

On September 12, Pasos de Animal Grande reported that "[t]he Honduran State is said to have sent the report requested by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) on the adoption of

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122 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/frente-a-base-policial-atentan-contr-el-abogado-benedicto-santos/>

123 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/nuevo-ataque-contr-pedro-canales-defensor-de-la-tierra-y-los-territorios/>

124 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2981-yo-se-quien-te-va-a-volar-la-cabeza-le-dice-emisario-a-pedro-canales-lider-de-adeza>

125 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/28/alerta-amenazan-a-muerte-a-pedro-canales-defensor-de-las-tierras-de-zacate-grande/>

126 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/se-reanuda-persecucion-judicial-contr-sacerdote-florentino-hermandez/>

127 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2985-honduras-pandemia-persecucion-y-campanas-sucias-contr-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos>

128 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1302753497926918144>

129 <https://criterio.hn/mirian-miranda-denuncia-intento-de-desalojo-contr-garifunas/>

130 <https://criterio.hn/persecucion-y-violencia-respuesta-del-estado-de-honduras-a-comunidades-indigenas-y-negras-que-defienden-sus-territorios/>

131 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/instante/policia-a-la-espera-de-ordenes-de-captura-en-caso-secuestro-de-garifunas/>

132 <https://radioprogreso.hn.net/portada/zozobra-tristeza-e-impotencia-se-vive-en-triunfo-de-la-cruz-por-secuestro-de-garifunas/>

133 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1410334-466/rapto-cuatro-lideres-garifunas-dpi-pistas-avances>

adequate measures to find the whereabouts of the Garífunas who have been missing since July 18 of this year. The document was due to be sent on August 24. However, the content of the state's response has not been made public and the relatives and the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras, OFRANEH, are not aware of its content either."<sup>134</sup> The International Federation for Human Rights denounced that the State of Honduras "fails in its obligation to investigate and find the four Garifuna defenders who disappeared two months ago".<sup>135</sup> At the end of the month, OFRANEH and the Garífuna people protested in San Pedro Sula demanding the return of the forcefully disappeared young men.<sup>136 137</sup> The next day, protests continued in Trujillo.<sup>138</sup>

## The Case of Berta Cáceres

EU parliamentarian Miguel Urbán Crespo sent a message of solidarity to COPINH and demands justice for Berta.<sup>139</sup> On September 4, COPINH announced that a bail hearing has been scheduled for David Castillo the coming week.<sup>140</sup> But once again, it was postponed.<sup>141</sup> COPINH reacted with a press release. "Today, the defense of Mr. David Castillo has presented a recusal against the Tribunal that is hearing the case for the murder of Berta Cáceres. This is another delaying maneuver in the legal process that is being developed by the defense team of one of the perpetrators of the crime."<sup>142</sup> COPINH also published a newsletter on the trial highlighting that the pre-trial detention of Castillo had not run out. "Although the Honduran Code of Criminal Procedure states that after two and a half years the accused must be released, Article 181 establishes that: "Within this period, the time that the delays produced by the defense have lasted, which have been declared without place, shall not be counted". Criminal Procedural Code, Art. 181, para. 6. This implies that the multiple delays caused by his defense in the process must be taken into account when tallying the time that Castillo has been in jail. For example, there have been four separate occasions that the preliminary hearing was suspended due to dilatory action by his legal defense team before it finally ended on 21 August."<sup>143</sup>

While the process against David Castillo continues, there is also an ongoing corruption case linked to Agua Zarca. The MP published an update this month. "The Special Prosecutor's Office for Ethnic Groups and Cultural Heritage will appear next Monday, September 7, at the initial hearing against Raúl Pineda Pineda and Plutarco Mejía Cardona, ex-mayor and ex-vice mayor of San Francisco de Ojuera, Santa Bárbara, respectively, for the crime of abuse of authority in the irregular and unconsulted granting of the municipal construction permit for the "Agua Zarca" hydroelectric

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134 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2967-estado-de-honduras-habria-enviado-informe-sobre-desaparicion-de-garifunas-a-la-corteidh>

135 <https://www.fidh.org/es/region/americas/honduras/honduras-el-estado-incumple-su-obligacion-de-investigar-y-encontrar-a>

136 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1309518021506076673>

137 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1309930592839053313>

138 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1310244665472569345>

139 <https://twitter.com/MiguelUrban/status/1301289421099225093>

140 <https://copinh.org/2020/09/convocan-a-audiencia-en-el-caso-contradavid-castillo/>

141 <https://tiempo.hn/berta-caceres-defensa-de-roberto-castillo-recusa-a-tribunal-de-sentencia/>

142 <https://copinh.org/2020/09/david-castillo-the-intellectual-co-author-who-wants-to-evade-justice/>

143 <https://copinh.org/2020/09/newsletter-9-cause-berta-caceres/>

project on the Gualcarque River, territory of the Lenca indigenous community."<sup>144</sup> On September 28, COPINH held a press conference on this case.<sup>145</sup>

On September 9, COPINH denounced a defamatory attack by the defense team of David Castillo. "The attack against COPINH, against the Court of Judgment and against the international community, undertaken by the lawyer Ritza Antúnez and Juan Sánchez Cantillano, is part of the strategy of disinformation to Honduran society and the international community, with the intention of provoking impunity in the case."<sup>146</sup> Mid-September, COPINH announced that a hearing is scheduled for Monday, September 21 to determine whether David Castillo, would be released or not from pre-trial detention.<sup>147</sup> In preparation, COPINH explained again that his pre-trial detention has not run out due to the delaying tactics of his defense team. According to COPINH, they unjustifiably delayed the process already by 1 year, 4 months and 10 days.<sup>148</sup> And the delaying continued as the defense team did not show up and the judge suspended the hearing - even though the law would have allowed for the hearing to take place without the defense present.<sup>149</sup> The bail hearing was then rescheduled for September 28.<sup>150</sup>

And on this date, there were finally some good news. The court responsible for the process against David Castillo decided by unanimous vote to declare the request to change the pre-trial detention measures to be without merit.<sup>151</sup> In the same case, COPINH's Berta Zúniga denounced: "BAC Credomatic, the Bank of Jacobo Atala, is offering to post a bond for David Castillo for Lps. 4,000,000.00 in customs review measures Why? they fear he will talk about their involvement in the crime of #BertaCaceres Very scandalous".<sup>152</sup>

Apart from the Berta Cáceres trial, there is still the ongoing Gualcarque Fraud corruption case. COPINH denounced this month that they and the Río Blanco community were being excluded from the case.<sup>153</sup>

## LGBTQ

El Tiempo reported that a member of the LGBTQ community was attacked by a man with a machete in San José, Comayagua. The authorities later rejected receiving the complaint about the attack.<sup>154</sup>

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144 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/161-septiembre2020/6251-a-audiencia-inicial-exalcalde-de-san-francisco-de-juera-santa-barbara-por-caso-agua-zarca>

145 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1310347803785396224>

146 <https://copinh.org/2020/09/copinh-in-response-to-the-defamation-of-david-castillos-defense/>

147 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1307004297150824448>

148 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1308122541039513600>

149 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1308147642011127809>

150 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1309190866318307328>

151 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1310647013843832832>

152 <https://twitter.com/BerthaZuniga1/status/1310609451645366276>

153 <https://copinh.org/2020/09/copinh-denounces-the-illegal-exclusion-of-the-gualcarque-fraud-case-the-origin-of-bertha-caceres-murder/>

154 <https://tiempo.hn/comayagua-hieren-a-miembro-lgtb-autoridades-se-niegan-a-recibir-denuncia/>



## Freedom of Expression and Journalists

Journalist Santiago López, correspondent for TV HCH, had three attacks in the last two weeks, from intimidation to punctured tires.<sup>155</sup> Police agents harassed the journalist Bartolo Fuentes while he was reporting on an anti-corruption protest in El Progreso, Yoro.<sup>156</sup> C-Libre denounced that a resolution of the Court of Criminal Appeals put the life and integrity of journalist César Omar Silva at risk, after partially upholding an appeal filed by the lawyer of Abelardo Mendoza, who had assaulted the journalist while he had been making his television program, in February 2018.<sup>157</sup> Back in 2015, journalist Dunia Montoya was brutally attacked by police agents covering a protest. Only one police agent was later accused and he now could only be convicted for injuries. The MP has requested the minimum sentence.<sup>158</sup>

200 former employees of El Tiempo demand justice for their unjustified dismissal.<sup>159</sup> Radio America, a radio station belonging to "Grupo America", fired all its employees as a result of the economic impact of the epidemic by COVID-19.<sup>160</sup> C-Libre denounced that the photojournalist Orlando Sierra working for French Press Agency (AFP) was launched a tear gas canister against his body when he was covering the violent repression of the independence day protests.<sup>161</sup> "The journalist Thelma Mejía received threats this Sunday, September 27, after publishing on her twitter account a message of solidarity with her colleague Anastasia Mejía, who is facing a process of criminalization in Guatemala."<sup>162</sup>

"In the nine months of 2020, the Association for Democracy and Human Rights, (ASOPODEHU), has documented 65 cases of violence against media workers".<sup>163</sup> C-Libre documented even 82 attacks, 19 by state security forces.<sup>164</sup> The month ended with an attack against journalists Wilmer Montoya (Channel 6) and Fernando Lanza (CHTV) by police agents.<sup>165</sup>

## Assassination

On September 27, there was an attack on the life of journalist Luis Almendares, he was shot several times in Comayagua. He was transferred to a hospital, but the wounds were too grave and he died there.<sup>166</sup> "Almendares had already denounced death threats and has been protected by human rights organizations since he has received threats of lawsuits by the Municipal Corporation of Comayagua and the Chamber of Commerce of that city, according to reports he has made in his program and

155 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2961-horas-despues-de-que-policias-llegaron-a-su-casa-llantas-de-vehiculo-del-periodista-santiago-fueron-ponchadas>

156 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/policia-ataca-al-periodista-bartolo-fuentes-mientras-transmitia-en-directo/>

157 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1249-corte-de-apelaciones-deja-en-indefension-a-periodista-hondureno>

158 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2968-con-manos-de-seda-mp-y-poder-judicial-para-castigar-a-policia-torturador-de-la-periodista-dunia-montoya>

159 <https://criterio.hn/200-exempleados-de-diario-de-tiempo-exigen-justicia-por-despido-injustificado/>

160 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1243-radioemisora-emplea-despidos-masivos-tras-afectaciones-economicas-por-covid-19>

161 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1256-policia-dispara-directamente-contrafotoperiodista-internacional>

162 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1260-mujer-periodista-amenazada-de-muerte-en-su-cuenta-de-twitter>

163 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2973-policia-ataca-otra-vez-a-corresponsal-de-afp-en-honduras-durante-cobertura-de-manifestacion>

164 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/libertad-de-expresion/1728-onu-pide-libertad-para-periodistas-encarcelados-por-su-labor>

165 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1257-policias-agreden-e-impiden-labor-de-periodistas-en-la-ceiba>

166 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2983-periodista-luis-almendares-muere-tras-atentado>

social networks."<sup>167</sup> The Platform for Freedom of Expression criticized the JOH regime, calling it "a death foretold in the face of the State's lack of political will to protect those of us who practice journalism and defend freedom of expression".<sup>168</sup> OACNUDH tweeted: "OACNUDH deeply regrets the murder of journalist Luis Almeyda and expresses its concern about the persistent violence against journalists. To date, there have been three communicators murdered in Honduras in 2020."<sup>169</sup>

As a response, the Journalist Association of Honduras withdrew from the Protection Mechanism for journalist, HRDs, and judicial workers. "We have participated in several meetings of the Protection Mechanism and we regret that in the meetings we have had to deal with this specific issue, there has been a total absence of the heads of the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Defense, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary, the National Police and the Armed Forces".<sup>170</sup>

## Violence against Women

Congress approved a bill presented by congresswoman Olivia Zúniga Cáceres called "Special Measures, Dissemination, Prevention and Care of Violence Against Women".<sup>171</sup> CESPAD published report on violence against women in Honduras and the lack of an adequate response by the State.<sup>172</sup> "The lack of research, budget and exhumation of corpses as scientific evidence, are one of the factors that generate a slow process in the resolution of cases of femicide in the country, detailed this Friday the general coordinator of the Center for Women's Studies in Honduras (CEMH), Suyapa Martínez."<sup>173</sup>

"Between July and August 2020, a total of 15 girls were victims of sexual violence in Honduras, according to media monitoring conducted by the Center for Women's Rights (CDM). (...) "According to the registry, twelve of the aggressors were unknown to the victims, but were known to the family members because they are owners of grocery stores or evangelical pastors," she said, stressing that it is necessary to demand justice for the victims and also access to health services to avoid complications from sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Between July and August, 33 femicides were registered in Honduras, four of these deaths were caused by multiple homicides. The victims were mostly young people between the ages of 10 and 39. "This shows that staying home was never a safe place for most women," said CDM's Helen Ocampo."<sup>174</sup> Criterio published an additional article focusing on the situation of migrant women.<sup>175</sup>

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167 <https://criterio.hn/intentan-asesinar-al-periodista-luis-almeyda-de-comayagua/>

168 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2984-fuertes-criticas-al-estado-de-honduras-de-la-plataforma-por-la-libertad-de-expresion-ante-crimen-de-luis-almeyda-y-ataques-a-periodistas-en-la-ceiba>

169 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1310674146897133569>

170 <https://confidencialhn.com/colegio-de-periodistas-se-retira-del-mecanismo-de-proteccion-tras-asesinato-de-excorresponsal-de-radio-globo/>

171 <https://tiempo.hn/ley-integral-emergencia-violencia-hacia-mujeres-ya-vigencia/>

172 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/02/y-despues-de-las-patadas-y-de-los-punetazos-que-sigue/>

173 <https://confidencialhn.com/feministas-cuestionan-falta-de-investigacion-de-fiscalia-por-crimenes-contra-las-mujeres/>

174 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/alarmando-incremento-de-violaciones-sexuales-en-menores-hondurenas/>

175 <https://criterio.hn/pandemia-aumenta-factores-de-riesgo-que-enfrentan-mujeres-migrantes/>

## Protection Mechanism

"Repeated mistreatment and lack of respect for their work as human rights defenders and representatives of human rights organizations in Honduras were denounced on September 24, 2020 by Councilmembers [at the Protection Mechanism] Donny Reyes and Dina Meza, who repeatedly requested that the State grant safe conduct to human rights defenders to carry out their work in the country, but there are only ever different excuses for denying it."<sup>176</sup>

## Extractive Industries

CESPAD published an article on the opportunities and challenges for socio-environmental organizations in Honduras regarding the Escazú Agreement. "The Escazú Agreement focuses on citizen participation and is outlined as a legal instrument that seeks to resolve socio-environmental conflicts and will ensure that communities are compensated for damages. It is framed in principles and postulates that socio-environmental movements have questioned in recent decades, such as "the notion of sustainable development", "corporate responsibility" and "green capitalism", that is, they question the narratives imposed from business visions, through the recognition of all community actors and the work of territorial defense and the right to a healthy environment."<sup>177</sup> Criterio reported that there is so far no sign that the JOH regime would sign the Escazú Agreement while at the same time, it is quite apt at handing out concessions for extractive projects.<sup>178</sup> OACNUDH reminded the State of Honduras not to stay behind regarding the agreement.<sup>179</sup>

CESPAD also published an important analysis on the use of state security forces as private security guards for extractive projects and the lack of legality for this.<sup>180</sup>

Widespread criticism erupted this month regarding the approval of a thermal energy project.<sup>181</sup> The Electrical Energy Regulatory Commission (CREE) criticized that Congress approved them unlawfully.<sup>182</sup> OFRANEH denounced that the energy project in question is located between two protected areas and two Garífuna communities, which were not consulted.<sup>183</sup> <sup>184</sup> <sup>185</sup> According to MADJ, this decision by Congress showed the priorities of the ruling class during the pandemic.<sup>186</sup>

FOSDEH has compiled an atlas of extractive concessions on indigenous and black territories. "The Territories at Risk II research[1] shows how, in practice, indigenous and black peoples are being impacted by the implementation of extraction and development projects. The rights to life, physical

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176 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2978-concejales-por-las-organizaciones-de-ddhh-ante-el-consejo-nacional-de-proteccion-denuncian-malos-tratos-de-la-viceministra-de-derechos-humanos>

177 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/01/5336/>

178 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-lenta-para-firmar-acuerdo-de-escazu-pero-eficiente-en-concesiones-extractivistas/>

179 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1309245663457271808>

180 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/04/de-militares-y-policias-a-guardias-de-seguridad-de-empresas-mineras-e-hidroelectricas/>

181 <https://criterio.hn/ecodidio-consideran-comunidades-instalacion-de-termica-en-la-ceiba/>

182 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47567>

183 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1301882718641414145>

184 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1301989132407898113>

185 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/09/07/laeisz-termicas-toxicas-y-el-secuestro-de-la-atlantida/>

186 <https://madj.org/index.php/2020/09/04/extractivismo-y-generacion-de-energia-las-prioridades-de-la-gestion-de-la-pandemia-en-honduras/>

integrity, health, non-discrimination, consultation and consent, cultural identity, information, and participation, among others, are affected."<sup>187</sup> On September 24, MADJ denounced that Congress continues to sell off Honduras' rivers by approving another hydroelectric project on the Ulúa River.<sup>188 189</sup>

## Guapinol

A year ago yesterday, seven water defenders from Guapinol were sent to pre-trial detention and an eighth one has been in jail even since December 2018.<sup>190</sup> On this occasion, US congresswoman Jan Schakowsky tweeted: "Today marks 1 year in jail for the #Guapinol water defenders. The Honduran Government must end their arbitrary detention & protect them from the threats they face for speaking out against illegal mining."<sup>191</sup> "One year after the deprivation of liberty of Guapinol River defenders, OACNUDH calls on the relevant authorities to review the precautionary measure of preventive detention imposed in this case, in accordance with the State's international obligations."<sup>192</sup> The Municipal Committee for the Defense of the Commons and Public Goods also held a press conference this month denouncing the ongoing criminalization of Guapinol defenders.<sup>193</sup>

This month, a hearing took place in the criminalization case against human rights defender from Guapinol, Jeremías Martínez.<sup>194 195</sup> OACNUDH observed the hearing and also highlighted the need for a public and transparent process.<sup>196 197</sup> The same day, "Roberto Herrera Cáceres, National Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras, said (...) that it is no longer justified for a National Court to hear the case of the Guapinol defenders and that it should already be in the hands of an ordinary court of law with due judicial guarantees, otherwise the fundamental rights of eight Guapinol defenders imprisoned between 2018 and 2019 may be being violated."<sup>198</sup>

On September 25, OACNUDH welcomed that the court revoked the preventive detention of the Guapinol defender Jeremías Martínez.<sup>199</sup> But the struggle continues and Radio Progreso took a closer look at the suffering of the family members of the criminalized defenders.<sup>200</sup> EU Parliamentarian Tilly Metz tweeted: "Today on #WorldRiversDay I send all my support to the @guapinolre and all environmental defenders in the world who are imprisoned and attacked for

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187 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/atlas-de-las-concesiones-en-territorios-indigenas-y-negros-en-la-republica-de-honduras/>

188 <https://twitter.com/MovAmplioHn/status/1309206920746733568>

189 <https://criterio.hn/congreso-nacional-aprueba-en-segundo-debate-nuevo-contrato-de-generacion-hidroelectrica/>

190 <https://radioprogresohn.net/instante/defensores-del-rio-guapinol-cumplen-ano-en-prision/>

191 <https://twitter.com/janschakowsky/status/1300799590585831427>

192 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1302067951005315078>

193 <https://radioprogresohn.net/noticias-nacionales/denuncian-persecucion-politica-contra-defensores-del-rio-guapinol/>

194 <https://twitter.com/guapinolre/status/1308509020446175232>

195 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/39-conflictos/1730-liberacion-inmediata-para-defensores-de-guapinol-encarcelados-hace-un-ano-de-forma-arbitraria>

196 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1308965046614196225>

197 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1308821502993797121>

198 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2975-ombudsman-hondureno-caso-de-guapinol-deberia-ya-ser-conocido-por-un-juzgado-de-letras-ordinario>

199 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1309511423190609923>

200 <https://radioprogresohn.net/pt/en-crisis-economica-y-emocional-estran-familias-de-presos-por-defender-rio-guapinol/>

defending their water, land and rivers. I propose #Guapinol defenders & Berta Cáceres for the @Europarl\_EN's #SakharovPrize!"<sup>201 202</sup>

At the end of the month, CESPAD published a report on the situation in Guapinol<sup>203</sup> and the Freedom for Guapinol campaign published an important update on the judicial process against the Guapinol defenders.<sup>204</sup>

## ZEDEs

ContraCorriente published an important article on the planned ZEDE, i.e. charter city, on Roatán. "Islas de la Bahía is the tourist destination par excellence for both Hondurans and foreigners and is also the designated territory for the creation of Próspera, an Employment and Development Zone (ZEDE). This initiative was launched in May 2020, as the Honduran population focused on surviving the third month of confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic."<sup>205</sup> Local inhabitants are on alert regarding Próspera.<sup>206</sup>

On September 19, a video made the rounds on social media in which the inhabitants of the Crawfish Rock community were being threatened by the CEO of Próspera of dispossession and where his body guards intimidated inhabitants.<sup>207 208</sup> According to OFRANEH, the JOH regime is violating the 1864 treaty between Honduras and England with this planned ZEDE.<sup>209</sup> OFRANEH also denounced the lack of a consultation of the black community living in Crawfish Rock.<sup>210 211 212</sup> OFRANEH called the whole thing a "return of the domination of European chiefs and American kings to the north shore of Honduras".<sup>213</sup> Inhabitants of the Bahía Islands also traveled to Tegucigalpa to protest outside the MP against the ZEDE in their area.<sup>214</sup>

In the program Cuarto Poder (Fourth Power) Libre congressman Jari Dixon and the president of the Federation of Patrons of the Bay Islands (FEPAlB), Miguel Tejada, presented the ZEDEs as a result of deals by corrupt politicians.<sup>215</sup> El Libertador presented some of the illustrious, i.e. very problematic, people behind the ZEDE in Roatán.<sup>216</sup> The problems with the ZEDEs also reached

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201 <https://twitter.com/MetzTilly/status/1310116214115569664>

202 <https://criterio.hn/en-honduras-mucha-gente-esta-en-prision-por-defender-su-tierra-expresa-eurodiputada/>

203 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/29/el-sol-el-aguao-un-fusil-en-la-frente/>

204 <https://www.guapinolresiste.org/post/update-on-the-judicial-process-of-the-guapinol-river-defenders>

205 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/09/03/roatan-una-micro-nacion-a-la-venta/>

206 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47521>

207 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1307333591622397952>

208 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2257-el-colmo-gringos-quieren-robar-tierra-a-islenos-de-honduras>

209 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1307469820460441600>

210 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1307655167697981441>

211 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1307670424948441088>

212 <https://twitter.com/ofraneh/status/1307716012746461189>

213 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2020/09/28/1956/>

214 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2288-honduras-defensores-de-soberania-realizan-planton-contra-zedes>

215 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=48278>

216 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2270-una-racista-y-activistas-de-joh-rigen-ciudad-modelo-en-roatan-honduras>

more mainstream media outlets. El Tiempo published an interview with Pablo Kummetz from DW Spain. He warns that the State of Honduras voluntarily renounces its sovereignty.<sup>217</sup>

ContraCorriente investigates who is responsible for regulating the ZEDEs. "Over the weekend in Roatan, there was a protest against the "Honduras Próspera" project, the Special Employment and Development Zone (ZEDE) that began to be developed on the island last May. A conflict has broken out and so far the Committee for the Adoption of Best Practices of the ZEDE, better known as CAMP, is conspicuous by its absence. Only four politicians and government officials stand out on this 21-person committee, the remaining members being well-known political strategists, businessmen, bankers and foreign activists. To date, at least two people on this committee have died and there is no known restructuring of the committee."<sup>218</sup>

At the end of the month, PINU congressman Luis Redondo presented a bill which would derogate the Organic Law of the Special Development Zones.<sup>219</sup> But at the same time, there was talk about a second ZEDE in Choloma called Ciudad Morazán.<sup>220</sup>

## Corruption and Its Enemies

"The Public Prosecutor's Office has not carried out an investigation on its own initiative for more than 10 years; all the cases of great impact have not been initiated by the Public Prosecutor's Office, but most or all - for example, the case of the IHSS and Pandora - were reported by the media, independent journalists or by the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA), Honduran lawyer and former prosecutor Omar Menjívar told Criterio.hn. (...) Although the Maccih had no fangs to bite, i.e., the power to prosecute, it had helped to create the Special Fiscal Unit Against Impunity and Corruption (Ufecic), but they were eliminated together by the Government of Honduras and the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Specialized Fiscal Unit Against Corruption (Uferco) was created. "The Maccih was suppressed, Ufecic was dismantled and the name was changed to Uferco, with the same prosecutors. The truth is that these prosecutors do not have the same support, since Ufecic already operated basically with the technical backing of the Maccih, providing it with at least 20 or 25 forensic auditors, key to the investigation of this type of crime. Ufecic no longer has this technical staff; it's like having your arm cut off. That's a problem," states Menjívar."<sup>221</sup>

An investigation by ConfidencialHN and Radio Globo found irregularities in the management of the social program Crédito Solidario (Solidarity Credit).<sup>222</sup> In the second part, they focused on its

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217 <https://tiempo.hn/zedes-honduras-renuncia-voluntariamente-a-su-soberania-dice-analista/>

218 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/09/28/quienes-deben-regular-los-proyectos-zede-en-honduras/>

219 <https://criterio.hn/presentan-iniciativa-de-ley-para-derogar-ciudades-modelo/>

220 <https://criterio.hn/en-choloma-buscan-organizarse-contr-zede-que-quita-soberania-a-su-territorio/>

221 <https://criterio.hn/hace-10-anos-que-el-ministerio-publico-no-investiga-de-origen-un-caso-de-alto-impacto/>

222 <https://confidencialhn.com/ejecutivos-de-credito-solidario-de-joh-sustrajeron-mucho-dinero-usando-a-supuestos-beneficiarios/>

links to JOH and his wife Ana Rosalinda García Carías.<sup>223</sup> They latter also published a third<sup>224</sup>, fourth<sup>225</sup> and a fifth part.<sup>226</sup>

El Heraldo reports on irregularities at the National Agriculture University (UNA). They found steep salary increased handed out in a very selective manner and even retroactive.<sup>227</sup>

## Pandora

Josué Fernando Suárez Ramírez, accused in the Pandora corruption case, had confirmed his participation and offered proof regarding the involvement of others, but the MP instead only went after him.<sup>228</sup> Even worse, an appeals court granted an additional two accused in the Pandora case to leave their pre-trial detention after dismissing the case against them (see also previous Monitor).<sup>229</sup>

## IHSS

The Supreme Court orders the re-trial of the former IHSS director Mario Zelaya and the administrative manager José Ramón Bertetty. They had been declared innocent in the IHSS corruption case.<sup>230</sup>

## Red de Diputados

In the Red de Diputados corruption case, an appeal court admitted an injunction from the Public Prosecutor's Office to reopen the case which had been inactive for several years.<sup>231</sup>

## State Security Forces

### Repression

Libre congressman Rony Martínez presented a bill prohibiting the use of tear gas against protesters.<sup>232</sup> The JOH regime announced today that by mid 2021, it will have a "National Registry of Detentions", in compliance with the Amicable Solution Agreement in the Dixie Miguel Urbina case and the sentence in the Juan Humberto Sanchez case, which demanded the state to create such a registry.<sup>233</sup> Defensores en Línea denounced that the police did not want to receive a complaint by Anderson Lesbi Padilla Chicas who was attacked by police agents during the social protests on

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223 <https://confidencialhn.com/estafa-sobre-dos-ruedas-joh-y-su-esposa-hacen-negocios-con-fallido-proyecto-credibici/>

224 <https://confidencialhn.com/colaboradores-de-credito-solidario-recurrieron-al-lavado-de-dinero-para-aparentar-negocios-legitimos/>

225 <https://confidencialhn.com/uferco-apunta-sus-dardos-ante-masivos-actos-de-corrupcion-en-credito-solidario/>

226 <https://confidencialhn.com/las-munecas-de-la-mafia-de-credito-solidario-prestaron-sus-nombres-para-sustraer-dinero/>

227 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1409884-466/fiesta-sin-1%C3%ADmites-con-el-dinero-de-la-universidad-de-agricultura-en>

228 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-se-ensana-contra-el-unico-imputado-que-reconocio-el-desfalco-del-caso-pandora/>

229 <https://tiempo.hn/pandora-corte-apelaciones-dicta-sobreseimiento-definitivo/>

230 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1407056-466/sala-penal-ordena-repetir-juicio-en-el-que-fueron-absueltos-zelaya-y>

231 <https://radioprogreso.hn/instante/de-nuevo-a-tribunales-implicados-en-el-caso-corrupcion-red-de-diputados/>

232 <https://tiempo.hn/diputado-presenta-proyecto-ley-prohibir-gas-lacrimogeno-necesita-medicamentos/>

233 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/honduras-anuncia-un-registro-nacional-de-detenciones-como-respuesta-a-demandas-dictadas-por-el-sistema-interamericano-de-ddhh/>

September 15.<sup>234</sup> On September 29, state security forces violently evicted protesters with tear gas in the south of Tegucigalpa; the participants demanded that the mayor's office pave the access road to their neighborhoods.<sup>235</sup>

## Assassinations

COFADEH requested before a court in Catacamas, Olancho, the exhumation of Rinel Elicerío Argueta Oliva, murdered by TIGRES agents and agents of the National Preventive Police, which occurred in the municipality of San Esteban this June.<sup>236</sup> A judge later granted this.<sup>237</sup> The same day, the MP and COFADEH, in a preliminary hearing held in the Courts of Catacamas, Olancho, formalized an accusation against the four police officers who were found responsible for his death.<sup>238</sup> The exhumation took place on September 23.<sup>239</sup>

A member of the Armed Forces was charged with murder.<sup>240</sup> ATIC arrested a sub-inspector of the National Police accused of murdering a 20-year old this May.<sup>241</sup>

## Penitentiary System

JOH militarized the prison with the promise that they will keep orders. This month, Lieutenant Colonel Jaime Orlando Espinoza López was separated as the director of the Támara prison.<sup>242</sup> "This event occurred after EL HERALDO disclosed how the officer, along with other prison officials, using a court ruling on a 2017 case being heard in the La Ceiba courts, released prisoner Hosmin Steven Medina Rodríguez or Osmin Steven Rodríguez Medina, against whom two courts in 2003 and 2004 in this capital imposed five sentences totaling 101 years in prison."<sup>243</sup>

In a joint press release, OACNUDH and the IACHR expressed concerns about the situation of inmates in Honduras.<sup>244</sup> Inmates at the women's prison in Támara denounced abuses by the prison's director Kelly Vanessa Amador Espinoza.<sup>245</sup>

## Militarization

CESPAD published an analysis highlighting the armed forces as "Key Players in Democratic Reversals".<sup>246</sup>

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234 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/denuncia-contra-policias-no-fue-aceptada-en-el-core-7/>

235 <https://proceso.hn/policia-desaloja-a-manifestantes-en-carretera-que-conduce-al-sur-del-pais/>

236 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/cofadeh-solicita-exhumacion-de-cuerpo-de-joven-asesinado-por-policias-en-olancho/>

237 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/el-22-de-septiembre-exhumaran-cuerpo-de-rinel-argueta-para-obtener-nuevos-elementos-de-prueba/>

238 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/mp-y-cofadeh-formalizan-acusacion-contra-cuatro-policias-responsables-de-dar-muerte-a-una-persona-en-san-esteban-olancho/>

239 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/para-obtener-pruebas-que-apoyen-la-investigacion-medicina-forense-exhumo-cuerpo-de-rinel-argueta-asesinado-por-policias/>

240 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/161-septiembre2020/6312-requerimiento-fiscal-para-militar-por-homicidio-de-poblador-de-omoa>

241 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/161-septiembre2020/6320-atic-captura-a-subinspector-de-policia-por-homicidio-de-joven>

242 <https://tiempo.hn/suspenden-coronel-jaime-espinoza-director-penitenciaria-tamara/>

243 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1407297-466/destituyen-al-director-de-la-penitenciaria-C3%ADa-de-t%C3%A1mara-por-fuga-de-reo>

244 <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2020/221.asp>

245 <https://confidencialhn.com/privadas-de-libertad-de-la-pnfas-denuncian-abusos-por-las-autoridades-penitenciarias/>

246 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/09/analisis-los-militares-protagonistas-clave-de-los-retrocesos-democraticos/>



## International Community

Proceso Digital reported that the JOH regime will re-start various road infrastructure projects thanks to a \$1 billion loan from the BCIE.<sup>247</sup> Talks began regarding this with Invest-H, ignoring that this entity has been highlighted in various corruption cases during the pandemic.<sup>248</sup> The JOH regime received some \$20 million from Mexico for the project Sembrando Vida, "a project that seeks the conservation of the environment by planting timber and fruit trees".<sup>249</sup> The IMF will send a technical delegation to Honduras on October 19.<sup>250</sup>

"President Donald Trump's candidate Mauricio Claver-Carone won the election to lead the Inter-American Development Bank, placing an American at the head of the important lender as he looks to counter China's influence in the hemisphere. (...) Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee that would need to approve a U.S. capital increase for the bank, criticized the nomination of Claver-Carone. Leahy said in June that his presidency could jeopardize U.S. support for the bank and warned that Claver-Carone's adversarial relationship with the governments of Venezuela and Cuba could polarize the IDB."<sup>251</sup>

JOH confirmed in a talk with Israel's president Netanyahu to open an embassy in Jerusalem by the end of the year, i.e. move the one from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.<sup>252 253</sup>

## US

El Heraldito interviewed the former acting US Secretary of State Thomas A. Shannon about US-Honduran relations and how they could change under Biden.<sup>254</sup>

Some 60 soldiers assigned to the 480th Military Police Company, 92nd Brigade of the Puerto Rico National Guard arrived this month at Soto Cano Air Base in Comayagua, central Honduras.<sup>255</sup>

After Tweets by the US embassy in support of the Judicial Power and the MP, ConfidencialHN criticized it as an attempt of white-washing of the record of the Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla.<sup>256</sup>

## EU

El Libertador printed a statement from the Ambassador of the European Union in Honduras, Jaime Segura Socias, on the Honduran-EU relation.<sup>257</sup>

247 <https://proceso.hn/honduras-reactivara-proyectos-viales-con-prestamo-de-mil-millones-de-dolares-de-parte-del-bcie/>

248 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-dialoga-con-interventora-de-investh-para-asignacion-mil-millones-de-dolares-en-carreteras/>

249 <https://criterio.hn/donan-41-millones-de-dolares-a-honduras-y-el-salvador-por-acuerdos-suscritos-con-gobierno-mexicano/>

250 <https://proceso.hn/hasta-el-19-de-octubre-arribara-a-honduras-mision-tecnica-del-fmi/>

251 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-12/trump-s-candidate-elected-to-lead-latin-america-development-bank>

252 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1307775009922973696>

253 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1409813-466/presidente-hernandez-confirma-que-honduras-abrira-embajada-en-jerusalen-este-año>

254 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1408224-466/thomas-shannon-biden-entender-la-importancia-de-centroamerica>

255 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2247-en-mes-patrio-marines-de-ee-uu-haran-operativos-en-honduras>

256 <https://confidencialhn.com/ee-uu-ignora-masiva-corrupcion-del-regimen-y-reafirma-su-apoyo-a-fiscal-general-oscar-chinchilla/>

257 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2265-opinion-exclusiva-la-union-europea-socio-principal-de-honduras>

## Drug Trafficking

The Pro Honduras Network highlighted new drug trafficking links of JOH based on US court documents in the case of Fredy Nájera Montoya. "Approximately between 2013 and 2014 Fabio Lobo and Fredy Nájera received shipments with large quantities of drugs that would later be sent to the Sinaloa Cartel and for that purpose they used the port located in Puerto Cortés as a reception point. The documents state that to move said drugs through Honduras they received help from Juan Orlando Hernández, later the Sinaloa Cartel paid them 1 million dollars that was divided among those who facilitated the transportation and protection of the shipment. (It should be noted that this amount is not the same million dollars reported in the case of Juan Antonio Hernandez.)"<sup>258</sup> On September 16, Geovanny Fuentes Ramírez had his day in US courts, on the day of the now postponed sentencing of Tony Hernández. The Pro Honduras Network reports that Ramírez' case will be linked with the one against the former police agent and cousin of JOH, Mauricio Hernández Pineda.<sup>259</sup>

The head of the Armed Forces, Tito Livio Moreno, sent out a warning against people linking them and their members to drug trafficking.<sup>260</sup> Former congressman Jari Dixon Herrera won't be intimidated and said that they are not only involved in drug trafficking but also in corruption networks.<sup>261</sup> According to the authorities, they have destroyed 30 drug plane landing sites so far this year.<sup>262</sup> The National Police, meanwhile, claimed that Honduran farmers were forced to grow coca and marijuana by organized crime.<sup>263</sup>

On September 23, a drug plan seized in Honduras in 2010 crashed in Colombia and people wonder how it ended up there.<sup>264</sup> Libre congressman and former public prosecutor Jari Dixon sees it as further proof that Honduras is governed by a narco-government.<sup>265</sup> The same day, "Facebook permanently closed the personal account of Gabriela Amador, who serves as Executive Director of our organization, after the bots paid by the Narco Party that governs Honduras systematically began a massive campaign of denunciations against her personal profiles and the information portals of Pro Honduras Network. With this action, several sectors involved in corruption and drug trafficking intend to censor our denunciations and the right to free speech guaranteed by the violated constitution that governs Honduras."<sup>266</sup>

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258 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2020/09/15/juan-orlando-herandez-ayudo-a-transportar-cargamentos-de-cocaina-del-cartel-de-sinaloa/>

259 [https://twitter.com/Prohn\\_Honduras/status/1306253835854319617](https://twitter.com/Prohn_Honduras/status/1306253835854319617)

260 <https://confidencialhn.com/moreno-dice-que-no-permitira-senalamientos-de-narcotrafico-y-delincuencia-organizada-contra-ffaa/>

261 <https://criterio.hn/fuerzas-armadas-no-solo-están-involucradas-en-narcotrafico-sino-en-redes-de-corrupcion-jari-dixon/>

262 <https://proceso.hn/suman-30-pistas-del-narcotrafico-destruidas-este-ano-en-honduras/>

263 <https://proceso.hn/campesinos-hondurenos-son-obligados-a-sembrar-coca-y-marihuana-revela-la-policia/>

264 <https://confidencialhn.com/como-salio-de-honduras-narcoavioneta-confiscada-en-2010-se-accidente-en-un-aeropuerto-de-colombia/>

265 <https://criterio.hn/avioneta-accidentada-en-colombia-confirma-que-honduras-es-dirigida-por-un-narcogobierno-jari-dixon-herrera/>

266 <https://prohondurasnetwork.com/2020/09/24/bots-que-trabajan-para-sectores-involucrados-con-el-narcotrafico-realizan-ataque-masivo-que-busca-cerrar-los-portales-de-informacion-de-pro-honduras-network/>

## Tony Hernández

Tony Hernández' legal team successfully requested yet another postponement of his sentencing, this time to November 10.<sup>267</sup>

"A judge issued a warrant for the arrest of former Captain Santos Rodríguez Orellana, accused of 15 counts of slander by the Minister of Defense and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces, retired General Fredy Santiago Díaz Zelaya. (...) Rodríguez Orellana gave statements affirming that Díaz Zelaya had participated in the construction of clandestine tracks for drug trafficking and was part of criminal structures, for which reason his defense pointed out that such assertions are false and damage the image, honor and integrity of the person he represents."<sup>268</sup> "On October 21, 2016, the Armed Forces dishonorably separated Captain Rodríguez Orellana from active duty, arguing that the military man was being investigated by the United States for alleged ties to organized crime, something that was never confirmed by the U.S. embassy. The separation of the military institution took place after the military man denounced that Juan Antonio "Tony" Hernández, used his influence to traffic drugs to the United States using the helicopters of the Armed Forces."<sup>269</sup> On September 24, Orellana rejected the conciliatory process by the Secretary of Defense Fredy Díaz Zelaya. According to Orellana, the truth cannot be reconciled and he continues to stay firm that the Armed Forces have trafficked drugs.<sup>270</sup>

## Varia

### JOH

Last month, the JOH regime announced a controversial nomination for CONAPREV (see previous monitor). Now, "OACNUDH urges the State of Honduras to comply with its international obligations in designating the persons who make up the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (@CONAPREV) to guarantee their personal and institutional independence."<sup>271</sup> This may be an other indicator of what has been highlighted in a recent report by Article 19. It showed how the measures taken by President Juan Orlando Hernández have authoritarian attitudes, encouraging abuse by the police and military forces, and put a dam on access to information, making the work of the press more difficult.<sup>272</sup> Later in September, a coalition of human rights organizations rejects the nomination of Germán McNeil in a joint press release. He "served as deputy director of the National Penitentiary Institute, whose mandate was characterized by escapes, murders, allegations of torture and cruel treatment against persons deprived of liberty and their families that remain uninvestigated to date, and by systematic disregard for CONAPREV recommendations."<sup>273</sup>

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267 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1407530-466/postergan-sentencia-tony-herandez-noviembre-kevin-castel>

268 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/tribunal-emite-orden-de-captura-contra-capitan-santos-rodriguez-orellana/>

269 <https://criterio.hn/emiten-orden-de-captura-contra-capitan-santos-rodriguez-orellana/>

270 <https://criterio.hn/la-verdad-no-se-concilia-ffaa-han-traficado-drogas-capitan-rodriguez-orellana/>

271 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1300956145822072832>

272 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2959-informe-articulo-19-honduras-tiene-una-historia-larga-de-violencia-contra-la-prensa>

273 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/preocupacion-y-rechazo-al-nombramiento-de-german-macneil-rueda-como-comisionado-de-conaprev/>

According to a new report by ASJ, both impunity levels and the homicide rate had increased in 2019 compared to the previous year.<sup>274</sup> "At least 89.9 percent of the population considers Honduras to be an unsafe country, and 55 percent say that the municipality in which they live is unfavorable in terms of security, according to data collected in the fourth Citizen Perception Survey on Insecurity and Victimization in Honduras."<sup>275</sup>

September is also the month of Honduras' independence day. But there was not much to celebrate, rather there were widespread calls for protest.<sup>276</sup> <sup>277</sup> The protest then took place but they were met with violent repression.<sup>278</sup> "Marcela Licon, Irma López and Elizabeth Medina, from Human Rights Without Borders (DHFH), were attacked by the National Police when they were evacuating elderly people affected by tear gas. The officers pushed them against the wall, insulted them, and beat them to remove the cell phones where they were documenting the violence, assaulting two elderly men, a private guard, and young people they had detained."<sup>279</sup> "Cristian Esteban Espinoza Meza, 26 years old and being treated in the public hospital in Tegucigalpa after being sprayed by a police water tank mixed with chemicals."<sup>280</sup> <sup>281</sup> OACNUDH reminded the JOH regime that "the use of force must be governed by the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, prevention and non-discrimination".<sup>282</sup> The next day, there was widespread condemnation of the newest state repression and calls for an investigation into the responsible state security forces.<sup>283</sup> <sup>284</sup> COFADEH documented the arrest of at least 15 young protesters.<sup>285</sup>

The day of the independence day repression, a new report by BuzzFeed News further undermined the legitimacy of the JOH regime. "Facebook ignored or was slow to act on evidence that fake accounts on its platform have been undermining elections and political affairs around the world, according to an explosive memo sent by a recently fired Facebook employee and obtained by BuzzFeed News. The 6,600-word memo, written by former Facebook data scientist Sophie Zhang, is filled with concrete examples of heads of government and political parties in Azerbaijan and Honduras using fake accounts or misrepresenting themselves to sway public opinion. (...) It took Facebook's leaders nine months to act on a coordinated campaign "that used thousands of inauthentic assets to boost President Juan Orlando Hernandez of Honduras on a massive scale to mislead the Honduran people." Two weeks after Facebook took action against the perpetrators in July, they returned, leading to a game of "whack-a-mole" between Zhang and the operatives behind the fake accounts, which are still active."<sup>286</sup>

274 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47517>

275 <https://criterio.hn/89-9-de-la-poblacion-opina-que-honduras-es-un-pais-inseguro-pese-al-alto-gasto-en-seguridad-y-defensa/>

276 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1305726396224794624>

277 <https://criterio.hn/cual-independencia-y-donde-esta-el-dinero-seran-las-consignas-populares-de-este-15-de-septiembre/>

278 <https://contracorriente.red/2020/09/15/manifestacion-y-represion-en-el-199-aniversario-de-la-independencia/>

279 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2969-honduras-manifestacion-del-dia-de-independencia-concluye-en-fuerte-represion-y-ataques-a-defensores>

280 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1306002506846068737>

281 <https://tiempo.hn/joven-queda-con-sus-ojos-heridos-despues-de-manifestacion/>

282 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1306006072029835266>

283 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1255-represion-policial-detenciones-y-heridos-en-manifestacion-popular-por-aniversario-de-independencia>

284 <https://criterio.hn/piden-actuar-contra-policias-y-militares-que-reprimieron-manifestacion-del-15-de-septiembre/>

285 <https://www.defensoresenlinea.com/15-jovenes-detenido-deja-la-brutal-represion-del-regimen-dictatorial-de-joh/>

286 <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/craigsilverman/facebook-ignore-political-manipulation-whistleblower-memo>

Already last month, an important pillar of JOH's and the National Party's power crumbled, they lost their grasp on the Honduran Bar Association (CAH). This month the new board of directors took office.<sup>287</sup>

## Migration

28'182 Hondurans have been deported this year until August, mostly from the US and Mexico. This is 64.4% less than in 2019.<sup>288</sup> By the end of the month, the number rose to over 30'000.<sup>289</sup> La Prensa reported on the search of disappeared Honduran migrants by their family members. "In Honduras, 499 migrants have been reported missing, of which 59 are children. Honduras is the country that reports the most missing migrants. "The forensic bank is the one that informs us when a Honduran is identified in Mexico. There are more than 500 DNA samples that have been taken from family members who do not know where their relatives are and they are crossed with the genetic profiles that are in Mexico. Many are found in clandestine graves," explained Rosa Nelly Santos of the Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Migrants."<sup>290</sup>

## Elections

The JOH regime will receive \$39.4 million from the BCIE for the ongoing elaboration of the new identity card.<sup>291</sup> Criterio published a long article on how "lack of transparency and politicization worsen the identification process in Honduras", i.e. the elaboration of a new identity card needed for the coming electoral process.<sup>292</sup> JOH also requested the accompaniment of the OAS for the coming electoral circle.<sup>293</sup>

According to the vice-president of Congress, the Nationalist Antonio Rivera Callejas, the new Electoral Law will have 450 articles, some of them transitory ones, e.g. to allow voting with the new and former ID card in the primary elections in the beginning of 2021.<sup>294</sup> This later resulted to be wrong, as the law only contained 333 articles, but some of them are transitory and would only apply to the 2021 elections. But the discussion did not take off as planned<sup>295</sup> and was delayed until just a few days before Congress was supposed to approve the law.<sup>296</sup> Before the discussion started in Congress, the former Attorney General Edmundo Orellano warns that another reelection bid by JOH is a real possibility. "For Orellana, there is no doubt that he has currently absolute control of all the organs of the State, absolutely all of them, without exception. And he puts forward two scenarios

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287 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2250-honduras-abogados-derrotan-al-partido-nacional-en-eleccion-historica>

288 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1405957-410/hondure%C3%B1os-deportados-estados-migrantes-mexico>

289 <https://elpulso.hn/?p=48291>

290 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1411290-410/de-499-migrantes-desaparecidos-en-la-ruta-migratoria-59-son-menores-honduras>

291 <https://confidencialhn.com/bcie-y-finanzas-firman-contrato-de-prestamo-para-nuevo-documento-de-identificacion-nacional/>

292 <https://criterio.hn/falta-de-transparencia-y-politizacion-salpican-proceso-de-identificacion-en-honduras/>

293 <https://tiempo.hn/joh-solicita-acompanamiento-oea-elecciones/>

294 <https://proceso.hn/nueva-ley-electoral-tiene-ocho-articulos-transitorios-para-encarar-comicios-primarios-dice-ono-rivera/>

295 <https://criterio.hn/discusion-de-nueva-ley-electoral-sera-la-proxima-semana-en-congreso-nacional/>

296 <https://proceso.hn/consensuada-nueva-ley-electoral-y-sera-entregada-este-lunes-a-la-secretaria-del-cn/>

for a possible continuity of Juan Hernández: absolute control of power through re-election or taking advantage of the pandemic to remain in office."<sup>297</sup>

On September 6, the National Electoral Council (CNE) inscribed three new parties: Salvador de Honduras (Savior of Honduras), Liberación Democrática de Honduras (Democratic Liberation of Honduras) and Todos Somos Honduras (We All Are Honduras).<sup>298</sup> There are now 14 parties in Honduras.<sup>299</sup> El Tiempo explained what the new Electoral Law would mean for small parties. If they cannot gather at least 2% of the votes, they could be canceled. But if they succeed to gain a seat in Congress, this can overturn the cancellation. Apparently, the writing allows for different interpretation and causes confusion.<sup>300</sup> El Libertador published an article on the problems with the small parties in Honduras.<sup>301</sup> The small parties sought out CONADEH denouncing that their participation in the coming elections is being obstructed.<sup>302</sup>

Before the debate started in Congress, the US embassy tweeted that the approval of the new Electoral Law "will be an important step in restoring credibility to the electoral process and the 2021 election".<sup>303</sup> Political analyst Gustavo Zelaya interpreted this as a message to the National Party to approve the law in Congress.<sup>304</sup> And the US did not mention the grave lacks of the new law, such as the missing two-round presidential election, the open question of the presidential reelection and transparency regarding party financing. The latter may even make a step in the wrong direction.<sup>305 306</sup>

On September 8, Congress started the discussion of the new Electoral Law. All 333 articles were read in Congress (virtually). La Prensa highlighted some of the new elements, e.g. an article on gender parity.<sup>307</sup> The same day, the "Youth Electoral Platform, made up of different organizations from different regions of the country, have expressed their opinion that the electoral reforms contained in the new Electoral Law should contain provisions that resolve citizens' demands, such as the second round of elections, the supervision of political financing, the updating of the National Electoral Census and the integrity of the system for the transmission of results."<sup>308</sup> The next day, Libre protested the lack of substantial improvements in the law by walking out of Congress, i.e. in times of corona, this means leaving a Zoom-Call. The head of Libre in Congress, Carlos Zelaya, denounced: "They intend to call for elections under the current law. With the census of fraud and corruption, where the dead vote, with credentials for suitcase parties [small parties in the hand of the National Party], no fingerprints, no second round, no parity and alternation".<sup>309</sup> Another day

297 <https://criterio.hn/posibilidad-de-otra-reeleccion-de-juan-hernandez-es-muy-real-edmundo-orellana/>

298 <https://criterio.hn/cne-inscribe-a-tres-nuevos-partidos-politicos-en-honduras/>

299 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47689>

300 <https://tiempo.hn/partidos-politicos-pequenos-nueva-ley-electoral/>

301 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2238-honduras-nueva-ley-deja-vestidos-y-alborotados-a-partidos-bonsais>

302 <https://www.hispantv.com/noticias/honduras/476773/crisis-politica-elecciones>

303 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/130337063389250352>

304 <https://criterio.hn/injerencia-ee-uu-da-visto-bueno-a-reformas-electorales-de-honduras/>

305 <https://proceso.hn/ley-electoral-minimiza-financiamiento-de-campanas/>

306 <http://cespad.org.hn/2020/09/08/analisis-estado-de-la-fiscalizacion-del-financiamiento-publico-y-privado-de-la-politica-en-honduras/>

307 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1407192-410/congreso-nacional-discute-dictamen-reformas-electorales>

308 <https://criterio.hn/plataforma-juvenil-se-pronuncia-porque-reformas-electorales-resuelvan-las-demandas-ciudadanas/>

309 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2237-honduras-mauricio-oliva-fallo-afirma-ex-presidente-zelaya>

later, the Liberal Party also withdrew itself from the discussion emphasizing that they would only return of the reform includes a two-round presidential election.<sup>310</sup> As a result, the approval of the law was suspended.<sup>311</sup> JOH, meanwhile, was trying to shore up the continuous support of the evangelical voters by handing out government support to pastors.<sup>312</sup> But Many priests would not be bought off by JOH.<sup>313</sup>

One article of the new Electoral Law caused quite a stir, it is one of the 19 transitory articles only applying to the 2021 elections, article 330. "The norm establishes that Hondurans will be able to go to the polls either with the current identity card or the one that is being manufactured to be the new document. In addition, the controversial "330" indicates that, in search of guaranteeing the universal right of citizenship to vote, the National Electoral Council (CNE) will approve, through regulations, a special mechanism. This system will allow citizens who do not appear on the lists to be able to choose their candidates. To do so, they will only have to verify their fingerprint electronically and register on a single list."<sup>314</sup>

On September 12, there was another demand for the postponement of the call for elections until after the Electoral Law has passed, this time by Pinu. There called also demanded the inclusion of the two-round presidential election as well as taking away the control of the pooling stations from political parties.<sup>315</sup> The Liberal Party presented a bill to Congress regarding the two-round presidential election.<sup>316</sup> The small parties, meanwhile, threatened to seek out the Supreme Court in the Electoral Law would not be reformed regarding their status.<sup>317</sup> But this may all be moot as at the same time, the call for election was officially published in La Gaceta. "The convocation occurs while Libre demands a new census, the National Party does not want to lose the voting tables and the Liberal Party demands a second round, disagreements that expose an uncertain panorama in the electoral environment and that according to analysts consulted by EL HERALDO could derive in a new political crisis. The call to go to the polls will be made with the current Electoral Law because the new one has not yet been approved and has entered into a sort of doubt due to the last positions of the majority parties."<sup>318</sup> The same day, the outgoing president of the CNE, councilwoman Rixi Moncada, made public a report detailing how the electoral frauds in 2013 and 2017 came about.<sup>319</sup>

One day after the publication in La Gaceta, the president of the CNE also called for the primary elections on TV and radio for March 14, 2021.<sup>320</sup> CNE council member Rixi Moncada denounced the call as illegal and unconstitutional given that it is based on the 2017 census.<sup>321</sup> <sup>322</sup> In an interview

310 <https://criterio.hn/partido-liberal-se-retirara-de-discusion-de-ley-electoral-si-no-aprueban-segunda-vuelta/>

311 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47829>

312 <https://tiempo.hn/joh-sobre-bono-a-pastores-acto-humanidad/>

313 <https://tiempo.hn/tres-mil-pastores-rechazan-bono-del-gobierno/>

314 <https://tiempo.hn/polemico-articulo-330-nueva-ley-electoral/>

315 <https://criterio.hn/pinu-sugiere-postergar-convocatoria-a-elecciones-primarias-hasta-que-se-apruebe-nueva-ley-electoral/>

316 <https://tiempo.hn/partido-liberal-entrega-cn-ley-segunda-vuelta-electoral/>

317 <https://criterio.hn/partidos-minoritarios-amenazan-con-acudir-a-corte-suprema-de-justicia-si-nueva-ley-electoral-no-se-reforma/>

318 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1408003-466/publican-en-la-gaceta-convocatoria-oficial-a-elecciones-primarias>

319 <https://criterio.hn/magistrada-del-cne-revela-como-se-impuso-el-fraude-electoral-de-2013-y-2017/>

320 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1408209-466/cne-convoca-oficialmente-partidos-inscritos-elecciones-primarias>

321 <https://confidencialhn.com/moncada-califica-de-ilegal-convocatoria-a-elecciones-con-censo-de-2017/>

322 <https://criterio.hn/ambiente-tenso-magistrada-del-cne-anuncia-que-no-participara-en-convocatoria-a-primarias-porque-es-ilegal-y-falsa/>

with Criterio, Mel Zelaya called it a complete violation of the rights of the Honduran people.<sup>323</sup> Salvador Nasralla called it an imposition by JOH and demands a postponement of two weeks to discuss and approve a new Electoral Law.<sup>324</sup> El Libertador spoke with political analyst Raúl Pineda Alvarado about this volatile situation.<sup>325</sup> Radio Progreso and Criterio published articles summarizing the situation.<sup>326</sup> <sup>327</sup> They are not hopeful. "The panorama for the next electoral process is not very promising according to analysts, who predict a more complex situation than in 2017, in the elections to be held in 2021."<sup>328</sup> The Armed Forces also commented on the call for elections, but they did not offer answers on what they would do in a case JOH tried to get reelected again.<sup>329</sup>

The next day, both the National and the Liberal Party called their own political movements inside the party to sign up for the coming electoral cycle. Libre, meanwhile, called for an emergency meeting to discuss the electoral fraud in the making.<sup>330</sup> UNAH also joined the debate about the electoral reforms and calls for a solution to the presidential reelection problem and speaks out in favor of a two-round presidential election.<sup>331</sup>

"The resistance to not approving the electoral reforms in the face of the next electoral contest will aggravate and prolong the social crisis in Honduras, as analyzed by the University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS) of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH)."<sup>332</sup> Libre, meanwhile, announced that they would not participate in Congress' virtual session as long as the new electoral law is not discussed.<sup>333</sup> They denounce that the National Party refuses to discuss questionable transitory articles of the new law which would allow the coming electoral process to take place with the old census and the old ID cards.<sup>334</sup> But at the same time, Libre decided to attend the primary elections, but under protest.<sup>335</sup>

On September 21, Congress called for a session the coming day to discuss the transitory articles of the new Electoral Law, these articles only apply to the next electoral cycle.<sup>336</sup> Criterio reported that Libre, the Liberal and the National Party came to an agreement to continue the discussion of the new Electoral Law.<sup>337</sup> Smaller parties fear being left out from discussions about the new Electoral Law. "PINU rejects the imposition of "copyrights" by traditional political groups, which are the product of particular and sectarian negotiations that disregard the principle of general application of laws and have exceeded their particular and extremist political ambitions by designing a three-party

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323 <https://criterio.hn/convocatoria-a-elecciones-es-falsa-y-esta-viciada-de-toda-nulidad-mel-zelaya/>

324 <https://confidencialhn.com/convocatoria-a-elecciones-es-imposicion-de-joh-nasralla-pide-postergar-llamado-por-15-dias/>

325 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/2243-entrevista-grupo-excepcionalmente-perverso-ha-secuestrado-honduras>

326 <https://radioprogreso.hn/noticias-nacionales/en-honduras-se-convoca-a-elecciones-en-medio-de-la-polemica-y-la-incertidumbre-por-la-pandemia/>

327 <https://criterio.hn/honduras-inicia-proceso-para-las-elecciones-de-2021-sin-reformas-electorales/>

328 <https://criterio.hn/tras-fracaso-del-dialogo-politico-honduras-se-condujo-a-un-nuevo-proceso-electoral-sin-reformas-profundas/>

329 <https://confidencialhn.com/jefe-militar-evade-responder-si-ffaa-actuara-por-posible-reeleccion-de-juan-orlando-hermandez/>

330 <http://elpulso.hn/?p=47914>

331 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1408957-410/unah-reeleccion-presidencial-honduras>

332 <https://tiempo.hn/iudpas-reformas-electorales-en-honduras-crisis/>

333 <https://tiempo.hn/libre-asistira-sesiones-hasta-pn-rectifique-posicion-sobre-ley-electoral/>

334 <https://proceso.hn/libre-no-esta-dispuesto-a-seguir-la-jugarreta-del-partido-nacional-dice-diputado-dixon/>

335 <https://criterio.hn/partido-libre-ira-a-elecciones-primarias-bajo-protesta/>

336 <https://proceso.hn/cn-conocera-el-miercoles-articulos-transitorios-sobre-temas-electorales-y-censo/>

337 <https://criterio.hn/tras-acuerdos-politicos-congreso-nacional-retomara-discusion-de-nueva-ley-electoral/>



law to the detriment of the principle of equality before the law and contrary to the principle of approving policies of general application, as symptomatic behavior that denies the limiting principle of democracy that minorities count."<sup>338</sup> The next day, Libre withdrew again from the discussion about the new Electoral Law as an impasse has been reached regarding the transitory articles of the law which only apply to the next electoral cycle.<sup>339</sup> They then announced protests in the form of occupations of highways as well as the offices of the RNP to demand the approval of the new Electoral Law.<sup>340 341</sup>

“The Electoral Justice Tribunal (TJE), which should have the last word on conflicts during the next elections, has no budget to work with. If the TJE cannot act, the Supreme Court of Justice dominated by nationalists will decide. The opposition says it is all a plot by the president, Juan Hernández, to manipulate the elections and remain in power at all costs”.<sup>342</sup> At the same time, labor leaders fear for the IHSS as the JOH regime seems to play electoral politics promising social security to the informal sector. In general a welcome idea, but in the current context, it is more likely that it is solely meant to bolster support for the National Party and will disappear again after the 2021 elections or bring the system to a collapse.<sup>343</sup>

## 2021 Budget

Javier Suazo published a critical analysis of the 2021 budget.<sup>344</sup> Honduras paid more than 4.4 billion Lempiras in the first seven months of 2020 only to service its debt. In one year, the debt to GDP level rose from 29% to 37%.<sup>345</sup> FOSDEH published a guide to better understand and critically accompany the budget process in Honduras.<sup>346</sup> In a second document, FOSDEH highlighted the ongoing lack of transparency by the JOH regime.<sup>347</sup>

## And Light at the End of a Month

"Happy and proud Greens/EFA nominate #Guapinol Water Defenders and Berta Cáceres for the Sakharov prize. We're sending a strong signal of support for the environmental and social movements in #Honduras"<sup>348</sup>

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338 <https://criterio.hn/pinu-reclama-participacion-en-discusion-de-nueva-ley-electoral/>

339 <https://proceso.hn/libre-se-retira-de-sesion-virtual-por-desacuerdos-en-articulos-transitorios-de-ley-electoral/>

340 <https://confidencialhn.com/libre-anuncia-protestas-en-las-calles-por-no-aceptar-que-el-oficialismo-vaya-a-elecciones-con-viejo-censo/>

341 <https://criterio.hn/libre-sigue-en-protesta-por-falta-de-acuerdos-sobre-articulos-transitorios-en-nueva-ley-electoral/>

342 <https://criterio.hn/sin-ley-y-sin-dinero-para-el-tribunal-de-justicia-electoral-honduras-a-merced-de-un-nuevo-fraude/>

343 <https://criterio.hn/demagogia-y-proselitismo-es-propuesta-de-ampliar-cobertura-del-seguro-social/>

344 <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/208968>

345 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/economia/1408964-466/deuda-prestamos-honduras-julio-2020>

346 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/guia-ciudadana-del-ciclo-presupuestario-en-honduras/>

347 <https://fosdeh.com/publicacion/transparencia-y-presupuesto-general-de-la-republica/>

348 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1306319116198912004>

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Past Activities:

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Upcoming Activities:

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