



Another Month in Honduras...

Human Rights Monitor – October 2019

There was mainly one topic of interest this month regarding Honduras, nationally and internationally: the trial against Tony Hernández, former National Party congressman and brother of president Juan Orlando Hernández. After two weeks on trial, the jury found him guilty on all four accounts. The trial was accompanied by anti-JOH protests in Honduras which only grew in force after the verdict. But while this occupied the headlines, another two indigenous Garífuna, another member of the LGBTQ community, another journalist and another campesino activist were murdered in October. Moreover, the trial against the intellectual authors in the Berta Cáceres case was suspended once more. Welcome to another months in Honduras.

In solidarity,

Daniel Langmeier

Honduras Forum Switzerland

Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	3
Human Rights and Their Defenders.....	4
Assassinations.....	4
Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment.....	5
Indigenous Peoples.....	6
The Case of Berta Cáceres.....	6
LGBTQ.....	7
Assassinations.....	7
Freedom of Expression and Journalists.....	7
Assassinations.....	8
Violence against Women.....	8
Political Prisoners.....	8
Extractive Industries.....	10
Mining.....	10
The Guapinol Case.....	10
Corruption and Its Enemies.....	10
The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies.....	11
Corruption on Wheels.....	11
Impunity Pacts.....	12
The Case against the Former First Lady Rosa Elena de Lobo.....	12
State Security Forces.....	12
Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations.....	13
Assassinations.....	13
Penitentiary System.....	13
Militarization.....	14
International Community.....	15
US.....	15
Drug Trafficking.....	15
The Tony Hernández Trial and its Aftermath.....	15
Varia.....	22
JOH.....	22
Migration.....	23
Penal Code.....	24
Poverty.....	24
Political Reforms.....	24
And Light at the End of a Month.....	24

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
FOSDEH	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
UFECIC	Anti-Corruption Unit of the Attorney General's Office
UNAH	National Autonomous University of Honduras
ZEDE	Zone for Employment and Economic Development

Human Rights and Their Defenders

In October, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, presented his newest report to the UN focusing on HRDs and impunity. In the case of Honduras, it highlights the lack of coordination between the protection mechanisms and investigative bodies and the general focus on material authors of crimes as seen in the case of Berta Cáceres. He concludes: "This is insufficient to combat impunity and is problematic, as it does not identify powerful groups which may be behind human rights violations. Such failure also increases mistrust of justice systems."¹

There was also a new report by the IACHR on the situation of human rights in Honduras. "This report is based on observations made during the in loco visit to the country conducted from July 30 to August 3, 2018, along with other visits by the IACHR and its Thematic Rapporteurships, in the framework of the monitoring tasks the Commission carries out to fulfill its mandate, using various mechanisms at its disposal including hearings, precautionary measures, petitions, and cases. (...) Honduras is facing critical levels of impunity and provides inadequate, insufficient assistance to victims and their families. The lack of access to justice has led to a structural impunity that perpetuates serious human rights violations—and, in some cases, encourages repeated instances of those violations. Civil society organizations told the IACHR of the existence of what they see as “selective justice.” They argue that this system acts late and fails to respond effectively to human rights violations, and also favors the interests of actors linked to public, political, and economic power. Various challenges persist that weaken independence and impartiality, including the lack of enough safeguards to ensure the independence of judge supervision mechanisms. The Supreme Court continues to exercise excessive control of the system to both appoint and remove judges."^{2 3}

Assassinations

The campesino activist Marcos Tulio Cruz Cruz was found murdered with signs of torture in Sonaguera, Colón, on October 9. The evening before, two heavily armed men in military uniform had stormed his house threatening his mother and daughter, hitting his brother and taking him with them. Another brother of his, Rigoberto Durán Cruz, was an active member of the Human Rights Observatory of the Aguán and COPA, but had to withdraw after persecution and death threats. He continued, though, to support victims of violence on an individual level. As a possible act of repercussion, they murdered his brother.^{4 5} OACNUDH lamented his murder.⁶

Last month, several Garífuna activists were murdered. Tragically, this continued in October. Unknown assailants came to the house of the teacher Maria Digna Montero in Cusuna near Iriona,

1 <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/159>

2 https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/245.asp

3 Report in Spanish: <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/Honduras2019.pdf>

4 <http://cespad.org.hn/2019/10/09/alerta-asesinado-encuentran-a-campesino-secuestrado-por-hombres-vestidos-de-militares/>

5 <https://madj.org/index.php/2019/10/10/asesinado-en-un-basurero-encuentran-a-lider-campesino-que-habia-sido-raptado-en-colon-honduras/>

6 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1182325304578252801>

Colón and killed her.⁷ She was part of the Intercultural Bilingual Education working group of OFRANEH.⁸ The latter published a press release denouncing that in the last two months, six Garífuna women have been murdered without any substantive investigation by the authorities.⁹ OACNUDH again lamented her murder and demanded a thorough investigation.¹⁰ Less than a week later, the indigenous Garífuna Oscar Francisco Guerrero Centeno was murdered. He was part of a group of people supporting the family of the recently murdered Garífuna activist Mirna Suazo after they received threats.¹¹ This year alone, 17 indigenous Garífuna were murdered, six of them women community leaders.¹²

Attacks, Criminalization and Harassment

On October 10, the human rights defenders Wilmer Donacio Rivera Cabrera from Zacate Grande was arrested based on a ten-year old arrest warrant for public disobedience.¹³ Three days later, it was the turn of campesino leader Héctor Orlando Velásquez. He was arrested in Siguatepeque for usurpation, the main crime to criminalize land defenders.¹⁴ Accompanied by COFADEH, they succeeded to get him alternative measures to imprisonment the same day and he can await his hearing outside prison walls.¹⁵ Also in Siguatepeque, in El Achotal, indigenous Lenca campesino Pedro Amaya was arrested but he was not released the same day, but rather sent to the Támara prison. COPINH denounced that he had previously been criminalized and sentenced to four years in prison for working the land.¹⁶

On October 23, HRDs from Zacate Grande held a protest rally outside the MP in Nacaome against their criminalization.¹⁷ They were able to celebrate a partial success, when the campesino leader Héctor Orlando Velásquez had the charges against him definitively dropped (see above). At the same time, three more campesinos of the same group still have alternative measures to imprisonment and are awaiting trial.¹⁸

In May 2017, the police agent Daniel Torres heavily beat the human rights defender Pedro Joaquín Amador. Having waited for over two years for a trial, the initial hearing against Torres was again postponed this month to 2020 because the his lawyer...mixed up some dates.¹⁹ Postponed was also the initial hearing of the 12 defenders in resistance against a hydroelectric project by Hidrocep.²⁰

7 <https://twitter.com/baraudawaguchu/status/1183149252219936769>

8 <http://im-defensoras.org/2019/10/alertadefensoras-honduras-asesinan-a-la-defensora-garifuna-maria-digna-montero-integrante-de-ofraneh/>

9 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2019/10/13/pronunciamiento-exterminio-de-las-liderezas-y-miembrxs-de-las-comunidades-garifunas/>

10 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1183873192236113922>

11 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2019/10/20/nuevo-asesinato-de-defensor-del-territorio-garifuna/>

12 <https://criterio.hn/narcotrafico-y-crimen-organizado-atacan-los-pueblos-garifunas-de-honduras-miriam-miranda/>

13 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-defensores-de-zacate-grande-denuncian-nueva-persecucion-judicial/>

14 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/lider-campesino-es-capturado-en-siguatepeque/>

15 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/13/cofadeh-logra-liberacion-de-lider-campesino/>

16 <https://copinh.org/2019/10/denuncia-a-prision-companero-por-cultivar/>

17 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/mirada-al-sur/1253-zacate-grande-exige-cese-a-la-criminalizacion-de-las-y-los-defensores-del-territorio>

18 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/libertad-definitiva-para-lider-campesino-logra-cofadeh/>

19 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2588-los-retrasos-de-la-justicia-posponen-juicio-contra-policia-que-agredio-defensor-de-dhh>

20 <https://madj.org/index.php/2019/10/31/suspenden-audiencia-por-la-causa-pajuiles-en-honduras/>

Indigenous Peoples

Another two indigenous Garífuna were murdered this month, please see above for more details.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights presented a demand at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights regarding the case of Honduran Miskito divers. "The IACHR concluded that the State violated the rights to personal integrity of 34 Miskito divers who suffered accidents due to the deep dives that caused them to suffer from decompression sickness".²¹

The COPINH community in Río Blanco lived through another difficult month. On October 21, COPINH denounced that the Madrid family destroyed one hectare of maize with the dangerous pesticide Paraquat. "We demand that the MP, the National Police and the Special Prosecutor of Ethnicity take action once and for all in the face of these attacks against the integrity of our community in Río Blanco, since these attacks jeopardize their food sovereignty and with that The life of community families."²² Five days later, there was another attack by the Madrid family against COPINH members. They threatened with arms a solidarity mission traveling to Río Blanco. In total, there have been eleven attacks since April against the Río Blanco community.²³

The Case of Berta Cáceres

"43 months have passed since the murder of our compañera Berta Cáceres, 43 months of not giving up in this search for justice. 43 months of resisting this system that tries to hide the truth and keep murderers in impunity. 43 months of rebellion, dignity and struggle."²⁴ Almost one year has passed since the conviction of the material authors of Berta's assassination without there being a sentence and the wait for the prosecution of the intellectual authors also continues.²⁵

On October 7, the MP presented a challenge at the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court against a ruling by an appeals court from this August to drop the charges against two police investigators accused of tempering with evidence.²⁶ Also this month, the trial against David Castillo was scheduled to continue.²⁷ Prior to the hearing, the MP published a press release presenting Castillo as guilty.²⁸ On the day of the hearing, COPINH sent out an alert that armed men threatened and hit members of COPINH demanding justice for Berta outside the court. They even stole some of their belongings such as blankets. The police stood nearby and did not do anything.²⁹ Later inside the court room, it was prohibited to take notes even though it was a public hearing.³⁰ And then, minutes before the hearing was supposed to begin, COPINH denounced that the defense of David

21 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2582-caso-fue-traspasado-a-la-corte-idh-cidh-senala-que-el-estado-de-honduras-violo-el-derecho-a-la-vida-de-buzos-miskitos>

22 <https://copinh.org/2019/10/familia-madrid-envenena-maiz-rio-blanco/>

23 <https://copinh.org/2019/10/ataques-rio-blanco-2019/>

24 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1179442996602949632>

25 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1189311158668451840>

26 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/145-septiembre2019/4894-mp-presenta-accion-constitucional-de-amparo-contr-resolucion-que-anula-proceso-contr-policias-involucrados-en-el-caso-berta-caceres>

27 <https://copinh.org/2019/10/10-octubre-audiencia-castillo/>

28 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/4911-coimputado-confeso-que-presidente-de-desa-pago-por-asesinato-de-berta-caceres>

29 <https://copinh.org/2019/10/cronologia-de-hoy/>

30 <https://twitter.com/COPINHHONDURAS/status/1182339497163399169>

Castillo would not attend. "We understand that the only strategy that the defense has at this time is to delay the process against Castillo since the evidence is against him is clear".³¹

The Berta Cáceres case is also being investigated from a corruption angle called the Gualcarque Fraud case (see previous monitors). Soon, it will be decided, if the case will be elevated to a public hearing.³² On October 30, a judge denied to change the measures imposed on five of the accused.³³

LGBTQ

The Committee for Sexual Diversity held a press conference this month and demanded the recognition of same-sex marriage.³⁴ Meanwhile in the US: "US immigration officials deleted surveillance footage of a transgender asylum-seeker who died while in custody last year, according to internal emails reviewed by BuzzFeed News. Attorneys say the evidence was crucial in a pending wrongful death lawsuit. (...) The Honduran native died in ICE custody on May 25, a little over two weeks after she requested asylum, on May 9, at the San Ysidro port of entry that connects San Diego to Tijuana. Hernández had traveled to the border as part of a caravan of Central American immigrants in the spring of 2018 that drew the ire of President Trump. The New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator said her cause of death was multicentric Castleman disease due to complications of AIDS."³⁵

Assassinations

On October 7, another and unnamed member of the LGBTQ community was found assassinated in Puerto Cortés.³⁶

Freedom of Expression and Journalists

In a survey, six out of ten Honduran journalists said that they were victims of online threats and harassment.³⁷ Using online tools, such as the transparency portal of the Institute of Access to Public Information also leads to physical harassment and persecution.³⁸ The controversial cybersecurity bill - the National Law on Cybersecurity and Protection Measures in the Face of Acts of Hate and Discrimination on the Internet and Social Networks - is currently in its final debate in Congress. Journalists and HRDs see in it another attack on freedom of expression.³⁹ The Inter-American Press Society (SIP) warned this month that journalists continue to face threats for their work in Honduras.⁴⁰

31 <https://copinh.org/2019/10/comunicado-castillo-criminal-dilatacion-demuestra-su-vinculacion/>

32 <https://www.proceso.hn/nacionales/9-nacionales/en-tres-dias-decidiran-si-elevan-a-juicio-oral-caso-fraude-sobre-gualcarque.html>

33 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/niegan-cambio-de-medidas-a-imputados-en-caso-fraude-sobre-el-gualcarque.html>

34 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/contexto/item/2591-comite-de-la-diversidad-sexual-demanda-del-estado-de-honduras-el-reconocimiento-del-matrimonio-igualitario>

35 <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/adolfoflores/ice-surveillance-video-transgender-asylum-seeker>

36 <https://tiempo.hn/puerto-cortes-hallan-sin-vida-y-con-senales-de-tortura-a-miembro-de-la-comunidad-lgtbi/>

37 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/seis-de-cada-10-periodistas-hondurenos-ha-sido-victimas-de-amenaza-digital-segun-encuesta.html>

38 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2578-periodistas-tienen-temor-a-ser-perseguidos-si-usan-el-portal-de-solicitud-de-informacion-del-iaip>

39 <https://criterio.hn/ley-de-ciberseguridad-de-honduras-es-ambigua-y-se-enmarca-en-el-odio/>

40 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/la-sip-advierte-que-ejercer-el-periodismo-en-honduras-sigue-siendo-peligroso.html>

The mining company Inversiones Los Pinares publicly threatened the journalist César Obando Flores for his coverage of repression suffered by local inhabitants opposing the mining project at the hands of soldiers protecting the mining company.⁴¹ Journalist, Santiago López, denounced that the MP and other public institutions would not act upon a death threat received by him in September.⁴² He is from Copán, where two journalists were murdered in the last two months (see below). The bike of the journalist Santiago López was set on fire outside his house on October 21. He had been receiving threats for the previous two weeks, but he did not receive any attention by the MP.⁴³

Assassinations

The TV presenter Kerin Francisco Cerna Hernández was shot dead in Copán Ruinas.⁴⁴ He has been critical of the JOH regime and the behavior of the National Police. It was also the second murder from this region of Honduras in less than two months.⁴⁵

Violence against Women

Human rights defender and representative of a group of religious women for the right to decide, Ana Ruth Cárcamo, denounced that defenders from Guatemala were denied entry into Honduras to participate at an event on women's rights.⁴⁶ During the event, Cárcamo explained how the situation for Honduran women and girls regarding violence and insecurity is the worst of all Central American countries.⁴⁷ "In Honduras, where all forms of termination of pregnancy are penalized, survivors of sexual violence are forcibly made into mothers. 819 girls between 10 and 14 years became mothers, according to data from the Secretary of Health in 2017, all of them as a result of a sexual rape. The Honduras legislation says that any sexual act with children under 14 years constitutes a violation and in most cases the aggressors are adult men, relatives or acquaintances of the victims."⁴⁸

Political Prisoners

Last month, the political prisoner was finally released. ContraCorriente spoke with him after his release.⁴⁹ Others, such as Gustavo Adolfo Cáceres Ayala and Rommel Herrera Portillo remain imprisoned. In the case of Rommel, "[s]tate agencies such as the National Commission for the Prevention of Torture, Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CONAPREV) and the Mario Mendoza Psychiatric Hospital have provided evaluations and recommendations regarding the

41 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1066-nuevamente-minera-ataca-a-medio-de-comunicacion>

42 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1070-periodista-cuestiona-falta-de-accion-tras-interponer-denuncia-por-amenazas>

43 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2590-flojera-del-estado-hondureno-podria-propiciar-un-desenlace-fatal-contrala-vida-del-periodista-santiago-lopez>

44 <https://confidencialhn.com/de-varios-impactos-de-bala-matan-a-presentador-de-television-en-copan/>

45 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1069-joven-comunicador-es-asesinado-en-copan>

46 <https://criterio.hn/autoridades-niegan-entrada-a-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-en-aduana-con-el-salvador/>

47 <https://criterio.hn/situacion-de-violencia-y-vulnerabilidad-de-la-mujer-en-honduras-es-la-mas-alta-de-c-a/>

48 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/36-ninez-y-juventud/1241-legislacion-hondurena-fuerza-la-maternidad-infantil>

49 <https://contracorriente.red/2019/10/01/edwin-espinal-han-sido-diez-anos-de-persecucion/>

detention of [him], from which it can be concluded that on the one hand, the young teacher should not be deprived of his freedom in a maximum security prison and on the other hand, he should receive psychological treatment in conditions of freedom."⁵⁰ On October 3, a hearing took place to revise his pre-trial detention.⁵¹ Outside the MP, the National Committee for the Liberation of the Political Prisoners held a protest demanding his and Gustavo's freedom.⁵² During the hearing, a judge ordered a psychological evaluation about his health.⁵³ Two weeks later, Rommel was allowed to leave the maximum-security prison after a doctor found he suffers from a severe depression. He was transferred to a psychiatric hospital.⁵⁴

On October 24, The National Committee for the Freedom of the Political Prisoners published a press release denouncing that the MP has lost all objectivity when it comes to the political prisoners and it lacks independence. "On several occasions, for 20 months, we have been denouncing the use of vague and ambiguous criminal figures, who do not meet the requirements of international human rights law, to criminalize political opponents, who express their critical opinions against him who assumed power through weapons. (...) [W]e denounce that once again family members and human rights defenders who are part of this committee are subject to a smear campaign, since October 17, 2019. Linking them to drug trafficking cartels."⁵⁵

October ended with the public hearing of the political prisoner Gustavo Adolfo Cáceres - almost two years after his arrest.⁵⁶ The hearing started at 10am and then the MP immediately asked for its suspension because two witnesses did not show up. There were two contradicting testimonies by the police agents who arrested Gustavo in December 2017. A psychologist testified that Gustavo suffers from brain damage resulting in him behaving like a child between six and nine years. Gustavo himself also testified and his defense team requested an end to pre-trial detention, but this was denied. The hearing continues on November 11.⁵⁷ Defensores en Línea spoke with the lawyer Omar Menjívar, part of the defense team of the political prisoner Gustavo Adolfo Cáceres. Menjívar denounces that the MP should have never gone after Gustavo as the event for which he is accused does not even constitute a crime.⁵⁸

50 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/la-tolva-mecanismo-de-castigo-del-regimen-para-los-opositores-politicos/>

51 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/hoy-se-revisaran-medidas-en-el-caso-de-rommel-herrera-portillo/>

52 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/mp-debe-presentar-desistimiento-en-el-caso-judicial-del-presos-politico-gustavo-caceres/>

53 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/en-espera-la-libertad-de-rommel/>

54 <https://criterio.hn/envian-a-hospital-siquiatrico-a-joven-acusado-de-incendiar-embajada-de-ee-uu/>

55 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/ministerio-publico-roba-articulos-decomisados-a-los-presos-politicos/>

56 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/con-innumerables-injusticias-sufridas-el-presos-politico-gustavo-caceres-se-enfrenta-a-un-juicio-desigual/>

57 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/en-noviembre-continuara-juicio-contras-el-presos-politico-gustavo-caceres/>

58 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/mp-nunca-debio-ejercer-la-accion-penal-contras-el-presos-politico-gustavo-caceres/>

Extractive Industries

Mining

FOSDEH challenged the fiscal benefits granted to the extractive industry.⁵⁹ Equally no seeing the benefits of mining, but rather its downsides, the people of Gualaco, Olancho declared their municipality free of mining.⁶⁰ After some months of partial quiet, the mining company MINOSA started again its attempt to exhume a graveyard in Azacualpa, Copán, to mine for more gold.⁶¹

The Guapinol Case

For months, one of the most problematic mining cases in Honduras is Guapinol. Even though, the environmental defenders from Municipal Committee for the Defense of Commons and Public Goods of Tocoa received two human rights awards this month (see Light at the End of the Tunnel section below), their criminalization continues. Seven of them are held in pre-trial detention in the maximum security prison La Tolva even though a judge ordered their transfer.⁶² This month, the judge reissued the order, demanding their transfer to the prison in Olanchito.⁶³ ⁶⁴ Protesters outside the National Penitentiary System demand their transfer.⁶⁵

Various international human rights organizations wrote an open letter (with several embassies in the cc) to the National Penitentiary Institute.⁶⁶ ⁶⁷ The defense of the seven criminalized defenders from Guapinol presented their third Habeas Corpus to the Constitutional Chamber for illegal detention.⁶⁸ And then, on October 31, after two court orders, three Habeas Corpi and an international campaign, the seven defenders from Guapinol were finally transferred from La Tolva to the Olanchito jail.⁶⁹ The demand for their freedom continues and just yesterday, US Senator Jeff Merkley expressed grave concern regarding their security and the fact that they are being criminalized.⁷⁰

Corruption and Its Enemies

The CNA informed about a 72.2 million Lempiras corruption case involving the mayoralty of La Ceiba.⁷¹

59 <http://www.fosdeh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/posicionamiento-fosdeh-fiscalidad.pdf>

60 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/en-cabildo-abierto-gualaco-se-declara-libre-de-mineria/>

61 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/denuncias/item/2589-honduras-aura-minerals-minosa-esta-por-volver-a-exhumar-ilegamente-cadaveres-del-camposanto-de-azacualpa>

62 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn/autoridades-penitenciarias-se-niegan-a-cumplir-traslado-de-defensores-del-rio-guapinol/>

63 <https://twitter.com/Conexihon/status/1187138868753117187>

64 <https://twitter.com/COPINHONDURAS/status/1187155514012196864>

65 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/tv/1254-el-pueblo-de-guapinol-exige-frente-al-instituto-nacional-penitenciario-que-trasladen-a-las-y-los-defensores-que-se-encuentran-recluidos-por-defender-el-rio>

66 https://www.cejil.org/sites/default/files/honduras_2019.10.25_carta.pdf

67 <https://www.cejil.org/es/100-organizaciones-nacionales-e-internacionales-urgen-revisar-medidas-guapinol-garantizar-que>

68 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn/por-detencion-ilegal-en-la-tolva-presentan-habeas-corpus-en-favor-de-defensores-del-rio-guapinol/>

69 <http://elpulso.hn/defensores-de-guapinol-son-trasladados-de-carcel/>

70 <https://criterio.hn/senador-jeff-merkley-preocupado-por-defensores-de-guapinol/>

71 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1331172-466/cna-denuncia-desv%C3%A1do-de-72-millones-de-lempiras-en-alcald%C3%ADa-de-la>

The Onslaught against the Anti-Corruption Bodies

This month, the MACCIH handed over its next progress report, the seventh, to the OAS.⁷² OACNUDH congratulated Ana María Calderón for her work at the MACCIH.⁷³

With the fate of the MACCIH still unclear, there were several calls for the renewal of its mandate this month. The UK praised its work and asked for the extension of its mandate.⁷⁴ The Spanish ambassador asked for its renewal.⁷⁵ So did the US chargé d'affaires after a meeting with the MACCIH⁷⁶ and US Congressman Eliot Engel.⁷⁷ The Coalition for the Renewal of the MACCIH demanded that JOH immediately renews the agreement the agreement with the anti-corruption body.⁷⁸ The demand was accompanied by a report on "why the MACCIH was born and why it needs to continue".⁷⁹

CESPAD published a chronology of some of the MACCIH's achievements as the start of "a series of publications and public events to contribute to the public discussion about the great corruption and its relation to the violation of human rights in the context of the renewal of the MACCIH's mandate".⁸⁰ The series included an analysis on the complex relationship between the MACCIH and civil society⁸¹ as well as the link between the trial and the renewal of the MACCIH. "The previous point leads to the conclusion that the "Tony Hernández" case and the interests of the US government could be creating an adverse context for the renewal of the MACCIH agreement. In this context, the mobilization of citizens and civil society organizations are decisive to ensure that MACCIH continues in the country."⁸² In the last analysis published this month, CESPAD showed that the three state powers in Honduras are actively working against a renewal.⁸³

Corruption on Wheels

The initial hearing in the newest MACCIH corruption case Corruption on Wheels took place this month.⁸⁴ A judge opened trial against all of the accused.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, they can await trial outside prison unlike all the criminalized HRDs and political prisoners mentioned in these pages.⁸⁶

72 <https://www.proceso.hn/politica-nacional/36-proceso-electoral/vocera-de-la-maccih-entrega-septimo-informe-a-secretaria-general-de-la-oea.html>

73 <https://twitter.com/ONUDDHH/status/1186401824573661185>

74 <https://twitter.com/UKinHonduras/status/1179493339349032960>

75 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/diplomacia-espanola-celebra-dia-nacional-de-espana-y-pide-continuidad-de-la-maccih.html>

76 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1186824077341855745>

77 <https://twitter.com/HouseForeign/status/1188908349586317312>

78 <http://cespad.org.hn/2019/10/11/ciudadania-demanda-al-presidente-herandez-renovar-el-convenio-de-la-maccih/>

79 <http://www.fosdeh.com/2019/10/porque-nacio-la-maccih-y-porque-debe-continuar/>

80 <http://cespad.org.hn/2019/10/12/cronologia-debe-extenderse-el-mandato-de-la-maccih/>

81 <http://cespad.org.hn/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AC-CESPAD2019.pdf>

82 <http://cespad.org.hn/2019/10/16/coyuntura-el-caso-tony-herandez-y-la-renovacion-del-mandato-de-la-maccih/>

83 <http://cespad.org.hn/2019/10/28/coyuntura-blindajes-dilaciones-y-artimanos-los-tres-poderes-del-estado-contra-la-continuidad-de-la-maccih/>

84 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/este-martes-es-la-audiencia-inicial-en-caso-corrupcion-sobre-ruedas.html>

85 <https://twitter.com/UFECIC1/status/1187142955724881922>

86 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/en-libertad-se-defenderan-implicados-en-caso-corrupcion-sobre-ruedas.html>

Impunity Pacts

In the last years, Congress had several attempts at granting itself impunity for corruption. They had another go this month. This time it took the form of the Special law for the management, allocation, execution, liquidation and accountability of public funds for social, community, infrastructure and social programs.^{87 88} The two underlying decrees were published in record speed in La Gaceta.^{89 90} The MACCIH denounced that it would further deteriorate their working conditions.⁹¹ The US-based organization WOLA denounced it as a "serious backlash in the fight against corruption in Honduras".⁹² The CNA filed a constitutional challenge.⁹³ Shortly afterwards, the MP also challenged it.⁹⁴

The Case against the Former First Lady Rosa Elena de Lobo

The defense team of the former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla de Lobo challenged the 58-year prison sentence against her last month (see September monitor).⁹⁵

State Security Forces

Only 5% of the money collected through the security tax in the last seven years were used for violence prevention.⁹⁶

The former head of forensic medicine Julissa Villanueva was cited by the MP four times to give declarations on various subjects. Villanueva had been very vocal about the irregularities around the death of the regional ATIC head Sherill Yubissa Hernández, a death presented as a suicide by ATIC and in September by the MP as well, but denounced as a murder by Villanueva (see previous monitors).^{97 98} She was also cited for comments made about the lack of judicial independence during a visit of a UN Special Rapporteur, which is especially problematic – criminalized for taking to UN entities. She sent out a message of strength after receiving these citations and stated that she would not be intimidated.⁹⁹ With the support of CIPRODEH, she challenged the citations.¹⁰⁰ Family members of Sherill Yubissa Hernández, meanwhile, demanded to see the documents of the

87 <http://www.fosdeh.com/2019/10/comentarios-tecnicos-del-fosdeh-sobre-el-nuevo-fondo-de-desarrollo-departamental/>

88 <https://tiempo.hn/cn-aprueba-polemica-ley-especial-fondo-departamental/>

89 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1329231-466/publican-en-la-gaceta-decretos-que-blindan-a-diputados-ante-requerimientos>

90 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/transparencia/1261-en-vigencia-decretos-legislativos-que-otorgan-la-inmunidad-parlamentaria>

91 <https://www.oas.org/es/sap/dsdme/maccih/new/docs/MCH-017.MACCIH-expresa-su-preocupacion-por-contenidos-de-la-Ley-de-reactivacion-del-Fondo-Social-Departamental.pdf>

92 <https://www.wola.org/es/2019/10/ley-reactivacion-fondo-social-departamental-lucha-corrupcion-honduras/>

93 <https://criterio.hn/cna-interpone-recursos-de-inconstitucionalidad-contr-el-codigo-penal-y-ley-del-fondo-departamental/>

94 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/5018-ministerio-publico-presenta-recurso-de-inconstitucionalidad-contr-decreto-legislativo-que-reactiva-el-fondo-social-departamental>

95 <https://confidencialhn.com/presentan-casacion-a-favor-de-rosa-de-lobo-por-causa-caja-chica-de-la-dama/>

96 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3575-apenas-5-del-tason-para-prevenir-la-violencia-en-honduras>

97 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/07/ministerio-publico-acorralla-con-citatorios-a-exdirectora-de-medicina-forense/>

98 <https://tiempo.hn/al-menos-cuatro-citatorios-recibio-la-doctora-julissa-villanueva/>

99 <https://tiempo.hn/julissa-villanueva-fiscal-general-creo-que-me-va-a-intimidar/>

100 <http://ciprodeh.org.hn/index.php/noticias-principales/466-se-presenta-queja-por-limitaciones-arbitrarias-a-la-libertad-de-expresion-por-parte-de-las-autoridades-del-ministerio-publico-contr-la-servidora-julissa-villanueva>

investigation by the MP in her death. Both the family members and Villanueva have received death threats for insisting on Hernández having been murdered.¹⁰¹

An active member of the police force, who belonged to the MS-13 Mara was sentenced to over 11 years in prison for extortion.¹⁰² Five Military Police agents were arrested for allegedly selling drugs they themselves have stolen from a drug bust.¹⁰³ 21 police officials and agents, 15 of which belong to the National Anti-Mara and Pandilla Force (FNAMP), were arrested accused of various crimes, among them torture.¹⁰⁴

Post-Electoral Human Rights Violations

Pasos de Animal Grande wrote a summary of a recent forum on the ongoing impunity for the human rights violations during the post-electoral repression in 2017.¹⁰⁵

Assassinations

A member of the Armed Forces was sent to jail to await accused of homicide.¹⁰⁶ The MP requested 20 years in prison for two former member of the Armed Forces found guilty of double homicide.¹⁰⁷ And a former police agent was sentenced for the murder of three people.¹⁰⁸

Penitentiary System

On October 8, the general director of the National Penitentiary Institute (INP) Rosa Irene Gudiel Ardón said that at least 5000 inmates with sentences of less than 5 years may be released by the end of the year.¹⁰⁹ One inmate did not want to wait and fled during a medical visit to the hospital.¹¹⁰ At the women's prison, meanwhile, inmates denounced that they had to hand over all their electronic devices.¹¹¹ CPTRT denounced this as a human rights violation.¹¹² Six prison guards at the maximum-security prison El Pozo were arrested with 245'000 Lempiras in their possession.¹¹³ They were released the next day¹¹⁴, but a week later, they were suspended.¹¹⁵

101 <https://tiempo.hn/familia-sherill-yubisa-exigen-al-mp-reabrir-el-caso/>

102 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/4915-fiscales-antiextorsion-logra-condena-de-expolicia-y-pide-se-senale-audiencia-preliminar-contr-emp-leado-judicial>

103 <https://www.proceso.hn/caliente/12-caliente/capturan-a-policias-militares-por-desviar-cocaina-decomisada-en-choluteca.html>

104 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/4970-21-agentes-del-orden-son-acusados-por-violacion-a-los-derechos-humanos>

105 <http://www.pasosdeanimalgrande.com/index.php/en/amenazas-a-la-libertad-de-expresion/item/2597-inconformidad-del-proceso-electoral-del-2017-fue-castigada-con-persecucion-judicial>

106 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/145-septiembre2019/4898-a-las-celdas-del-primer-batallon-envian-a-militar-por-homicidio-de-un-ciudadano>

107 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/4902-mp-solicita-20-anos-de-prision-contr-dos-exmilitares-condenados-por-doble-de-asesinato-y-asociacion-ilicita>

108 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/5015-mas-de-73-anos-de-reclusion-solicita-el-mp-contr-expolicia-miembro-de-una-banda-de-asaltantes>

109 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/al-menos-5-mil-privados-de-libertad-podrian-quedar-en-libertad-este-ano-segun-inp.html>

110 <https://confidencialhn.com/custodios-penitenciarios-se-dejan-quitar-reo-que-era-trasladado-hospital-mario-mendoza/>

111 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/13/privadas-de-libertad-denuncian-que-les-quieren-quitar-sus-aparatos-electricos/>

112 <https://tiempo.hn/defensora-ddhh-disposicion-del-inp-violacion-derechos-privados-libertad/>

113 <https://radiohn.hn/capturan-a-seis-agentes-penitenciarios-que-pretendia-introducir-lps-245000-a-el-pozo-i/>

114 <https://hch.tv/2019/10/15/en-libertad-quedan-policias-penitenciarios-a-quienes-decomisaron-lps-250-mil/>

115 <http://www.proceso.hn/mas-noticias/32-m%C3%A1s-noticias/agentes-penitenciarios-que-intentaron-ingresar-l-245-000-a-el-pozo-serian-destituídos.html>

Four inmates were in total murdered inside Honduras' prison (see also the section on the Tony Hernández trial).¹¹⁶ In a shootout, six inmates were injured in the El Porvenir prison¹¹⁷, one of them later died¹¹⁸. La Prensa reported that in the two so-called maximum security prisons El Pozo and La Tolva, 10 inmates had so far been murdered, i.e. in a bit more than two years. During the same period, an additional three inmates were murdered in the Támara prison.¹¹⁹

Militarization

Radio Progreso wrote an interesting short analysis of the role of the Armed Forces in Honduras. "Despite their ineptitude and alleged complicity in the face of deforestation and drug trafficking, the military is rewarded by the de facto regime of Juan Orlando Hernández with enormous resources diverted from the limited public funds which should strengthen the professional citizen security organizations. and precarious other important sectors such as health and education. According to a study prepared by the International Institute for Peace Research in Stockholm, Sweden, military investment in Honduras exceeds that of 46 countries in the world (...) In Central America, Honduras is also the country with the greatest military investment, which reaches 364 million dollars. (...) If Honduras is not a country at war and the military has shown that they are only effective in giving coups, endorsing electoral fraud and systematically violating human rights, it is clear that the regime gives them so many resources to buy their will and comply with its role as guard dogs of the dictatorship."¹²⁰

The Armed Forces are also under pressure for their involvement in forcing through extractive industry projects. "Little more than a year has passed after a group of senior military commanders surrounded the indigenous community of Reitoca, south of Francisco Morazán, mounting a strong repressive operation against the villagers, who oppose the launch of the hydroelectric dam by the company Promotora de Generación de Energía Limpia SA (PROGELSA), a project built without the consultation of the community. After a series of attacks, the residents filed complaints at the Special Prosecutor's Office for Ethnicities and Heritage, but the Ministry of Defense began a process of concealment and protection of the identities of senior military officials responsible for the operation carried out on January 30, 2018."¹²¹

The National Party, meanwhile, attempts to reintroduce mandatory military service¹²², ignoring the points made above as well as the troublesome history of this in Honduras¹²³.

116 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1329718-410/muerto-herido-deja-conato-amenazamiento-tolva-moroceli-el-paraiso-honduras>

117 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/reos-heridos-en-balacera-en-carcel-de-el-porvenir.html>

118 <http://elpulso.hn/un-muerto-tras-motin-en-carcel-de-el-porvenir/>

119 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1330916-410/el-pozo-la-tolva-mataron-diez-presos-menos-anos-criminalidad-violencia-honduras>

120 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/ineptos-y-con-dinero/>

121 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/transparencia/secretividad/1243-con-ley-de-secretos-encubren-militares-agresores-de-indigenas-en-reitoca>

122 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1248-insisten-en-barbarie-de-retornar-al-servicio-militar-obligatorio>

123 <http://www.conexihon.hn/index.php/dh/1266-diputado-nacionalista-ignora-historica-lucha-que-deroga-servicio-militar-obligatorio>

International Community

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a \$59.5 million loan to Honduras to combat poverty.¹²⁴ The same month, the IDB presented a national strategy for the Honduran government on combating money laundering and financing terrorism.¹²⁵ The German, Canadian and US embassies visited the MP together with USAID, US State Department representatives (INL) and the Honduran organization Association for a More Just Society (ASJ).¹²⁶

US

A DEA delegation arrived for a one-week visit in Honduras, according to the police, it was for training purposes.¹²⁷ ¹²⁸ Later, there was also a visit of a delegation by the US State Department.¹²⁹ For the role of the US in the Tony Hernández trial and its aftermath, please consult the section below.

Drug Trafficking

The sentenced Honduran drug trafficker Juan Ramón Matta Waldurraga, who declared himself guilty, was released in the US for time served.¹³⁰

The Tony Hernández Trial and its Aftermath

After months of raising expectations, the trial against Tony Hernández started on October 1. While not directly accused, JOH was always present and in preparation of the start of the trial, Expediente Público published a two-part investigation into JOH and his links to criminal structure. The first article focuses on JOH's planes, possible bought with drug money,¹³¹ and the second article focuses directly on Tony Hernández and his government accomplices¹³².

On the first day, the 18 jurors were selected and sworn in and the prosecutor and the defense gave their opening statements. The prosecutor mentioned both Tony Hernández and JOH as being involved in drug trafficking, highlighting that JOH should be seen as a co-conspirator. He said that JOH had received millions of dollars of bribes including from El Chapo, which Tony Hernandez helped deliver to his brother.¹³³ The trial was covered widely by the national and international press focusing on the part of JOH receiving drug money.¹³⁴ ¹³⁵ InSight Crime titled its coverage "The US

124 <http://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/el-bid-presta-a-honduras-59-5-millones-de-dolares-para-reducir-la-pobreza.html>

125 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/gobierno-recibe-del-bid-estrategia-nacional-contralavado-de-activos-y-financiamiento-al-terrorismo.html>

126 https://twitter.com/MP_Honduras/status/1187142655253405696

127 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1326270-466/secretar%C3%ADa-de-seguridad-aclara-con-qu%C3%A9-fin-aterriz%C3%B3-avioneta-de-la-dea>

128 <https://confidencialhn.com/lega-avion-de-la-dea-a-honduras-la-policia-asegura-que-es-para-capacitar-personal/>

129 <https://tiempo.hn/lisandro-rosales-departamento-estado-honduras/>

130 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1323987-466/eeuu-matta-waldurraga-libre-tras-condena-de-dos-a%C3%B1os-que-ya-cumpli%C3%B3>

131 <https://expedientepublico.org/aeronaves-de-la-familia-herandez-alvarado-una-historia-de-sociedades-criminales/>

132 <https://expedientepublico.org/presuntos-complices-de-tony-una-historia-de-beneficios-y-corrupcion-entre-el-gobierno-de-honduras/>

133 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/2/day-1-juan-antonio-tony-herandezs-trial-in-new-york>

134 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/02/joh-obtuvo-1-millon-de-el-chapo-confirma-publicacion-de-la-corte/>

135 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/el-chapo-entrego-1-millon-a-tony-herandez-para-su-hermano-el-presidente-hondureno-segun-fiscal-de-nueva-york>

Drug Trial Evidence That Could Topple the President of Honduras" focusing on "evidence and players in the trial that could end a presidency".¹³⁶ They also wrote that "prosecutors won't be afraid to also point the finger at President Hernández for his alleged role in his brother's drug conspiracy"¹³⁷. JOH tried to challenge this by alleging unconvincingly in a press release that the prosecutor never really said that he, JOH, received anything.¹³⁸ Journalist Jeff Ernst tweeted: "Either all the journalists who were present at the court are liars, or it is true that the prosecutor said that President Hernandez had received millions of dollars from drug traffickers."¹³⁹

On Day 2¹⁴⁰, prosecutors presented evidence from a supposed 'drug ledger' seized last year which allegedly documents part of the cocaine dealing by Tony Hernández. The notebooks also detail payments to "JOH".¹⁴¹ There was also a testimony by the drug trafficker 'El Rojo' who told the court that he trafficked 140 tons of cocaine with Tony Hernández. Honduras Culture and Politics did the math. "140 metric tons is 140,000 kilograms of cocaine. Cocaine sells for a mean street price of \$14,500 per kilogram in San Diego, CA 140,000 kilograms at \$14, 500 per kilogram is more than \$2.03 billion."¹⁴² JOH allegedly received \$40'000 from El Rojo for his congressional campaign.¹⁴³ In a conversation with Radio Progreso, political analyst Raúl Pineda stated that the main objective of the investigation by the US prosecutors is JOH and that there will be another trial, one against JOH, after the end of his presidency.¹⁴⁴

On Day 3¹⁴⁵, the interrogation of Víctor "El Rojo" Diaz Morales continued. According to him, JOH and Pepe Lobo received \$100'000 in 2009 for their election campaigns in response to protection of his drug trafficking business and protection from extradition.¹⁴⁶ He also mentioned further drug traffickers giving money to JOH. There was also a focus on Tony Hernández's middle-man, Mario José Calix Hernandez. He "is charged in three counts in a separate Superseding Indictment" and he is a "[f]ormer vice mayor of Gracias, Lempira (JOH's home town)" (...) Mario José Calix Hernandez is not only Tony Hernandez's middle-man but he is also, just like Tony Hernandez, a man connected to powerful individuals in the Honduran government".¹⁴⁷ In Honduras, the former Attorney General Edmundo Orellana commented that JOH would not necessarily be prosecuted, but given the seriousness of what had been said, it would be very unlikely that the US federal justice system was not evaluating the start of a lawsuit against him.¹⁴⁸

136 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/us-drug-trial-evidence-could-topple-president-honduras/>

137 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/alleged-el-chapo-bribe-honduras-president-sets-stage-us-drug-trial/>

138 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1323600-466/joh-casa-presidencial-ningun-fiscal-acuso-juicio-de-tony-hermandez>

139 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1179540662720647168>

140 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/4/day-two-tony-hermandez-trial-in-new-york>

141 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/prosecutors-present-drug-ledger-with-notes-of-drug-shipments-that-allegedly-mention-the-president-of-honduras-and-his-brother>

142 <https://hondurasculturepolitics.blogspot.com/2019/10/tony-hermandez-trial-day-2-some-basic.html>

143 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/03/joh-recibio-40-mil-dolares-de-el-rojo-para-campana/>

144 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/el-objetivo-de-la-investigacion-de-fiscalia-en-eeuuno-es-tony-sino-joh/>

145 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/4/day-three-president-juan-orlando-hermandez-joh-brother-tony-hermandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

146 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/narcotraficante-cuenta-como-pago-100-000-para-financiar-campanas-de-presidentes-hondurenos>

147 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/4/state-sponsored-drug-trafficking-who-is-tony-hermandez-middle-man-mario-jose-calix>

148 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/04/no-se-descarta-que-joh-sea-enjuiciado-en-los-estados-unidos/>

Due to the weekend, the trial rested and Univision published "the 10 most astonishing revelations" of the trial so far, e.g. the alleged attendance of JOH at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa together with two drug traffickers.¹⁴⁹

Day 4¹⁵⁰ started with an expert testimony on Honduras by the historian Darío Euraque. Then it was time of one of the key witnesses, Alexander Ardón, the former mayor of El Paraíso, Copán and confessed drug trafficker.¹⁵¹ Ardón described the meeting in which 'El Chapo' Guzmán gave \$1 million to JOH's 2013 presidential campaign and he spoke of further payments to JOH, the former president Lobo and other politicians - \$2 millions in 2009, \$1.5 million in 2013. "All payments Ardón made to politicians were in exchange for protection "against prosecution and law enforcement," according to the prosecution. In fact, no investigation was ever opened against Ardon in Honduras even though his participation in drug trafficking has been widely known throughout the country since at least 2011."¹⁵² Ardón also said that he bribed three Nationalist congressmen from Copán so that they would vote for JOH to become president of Congress in 2010.¹⁵³ Due to this newest revelations, OFRANEH wrote: "Everything seems to indicate that in the last decade the drug cartels and political parties have merged in Honduras, the strong rumors have been confirmed by the South Court of the District of New York, where relatives of the last two presidents parade at the same time as the list of those involved is growing, highlighting the existing complicity between organized crime and political parties, a situation that has apparently been treated with enormous benevolence by the US authorities."¹⁵⁴ JOH held a press conference in Honduras denying the testimony of Ardón.¹⁵⁵

On Day 5, the testimony of Alexander Ardón continued. Ardón explained how JOH was informed and approved the \$1 million from Chapo Guzmán. Ardón additional testified that he supported JOH's campaign in the departments Lempira and Copán with \$500'000 and \$1.6 million respectively.¹⁵⁶ New revelations from Ardón are linked to the Honduran police. According to him, in 2014, the then head of police Ramón Sabillón was fired by JOH to protect his brother.¹⁵⁷ ¹⁵⁸ Radio Progreso spoke with the former police commissioner Aldo Oliva about Ardón's testimony and his interpretation. Oliva agreed and he highlighted the role of the purging committee in getting rid of police officials who came into the way of JOH and his brother.¹⁵⁹ Ardón also testified to have supported the National Party, i.e. Lobo and then JOH, in electoral frauds.¹⁶⁰ Last but not least, day 5

149 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/las-10-revelaciones-mas-asombrosas-conocidas-hasta-ahora-sobre-el-caso-de-narcotrafico-contra-tony-herandez>

150 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/7/day-four-honduran-president-juan-orlando-herandezs-joh-brother-tony-herandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

151 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/sigue-el-juicio-del-hermano-del-presidente-hondureno-testigos-claves-declaran-en-el-caso-de-narcotrafico-contra-tony-herandez>

152 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/juicio-en-nueva-york-testigo-cooperante-describe-pago-de-1-millon-de-el-chapo-guzman-para-la-campana-del-presidente-de-honduras>

153 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3552-alexander-ardon-ayudo-en-cuatro-fraudes-electorales-al-partido-nacional>

154 <https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2019/10/07/honduras-la-farsa-de-la-guerra-contra-las-drogas-y-la-narcodemocracia/>

155 <https://tiempo.hn/joh-lo-declarado-por-el-delincuente-ardon-es-cien-por-ciento-falso/>

156 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/ex-alcalde-afirma-que-joh-utilizo-dinero-del-narcotrafico-para-sus-campanas/>

157 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3554-joh-destituyo-a-director-de-policia-para-protger-a-tony-chande>

158 <https://tiempo.hn/dia-5-ardon-revela-la-trama-del-despido-del-general-sabillon-y-la-captura-de-los-valle-valle/>

159 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/comision-depuradora-jugo-papel-importante-en-la-separacion-de-oficiales-que-obstaculizaban-operaciones-del-cartel-de-los-herandez-excomisionado-aldo-oliva/>

160 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3552-alexander-ardon-ayudo-en-cuatro-fraudes-electorales-al-partido-nacional>

of the trial also revealed that CC-5 (co-conspirator 5) is the Secretary of Energy Roberto Ordóñez.¹⁶¹

In preparation of Day 6¹⁶², Univision published who is who guide.¹⁶³ Before the day in court started, a juror was dismissed - probably because a photo was taken of them.¹⁶⁴ Journalist Jeff Ernst reported that four Mexican came to the court the day before intimidating people with "their presence and behavior".¹⁶⁵ The trial continued. The defense interrogated the DEA agent who was present during Tony Hernández's arrest and the former extradited police officer, Geovani Rodriguez, started his testimony.¹⁶⁶

On Day 7¹⁶⁷, the testimony of Geovani Rodriguez continued and the testimony of Devis Maradiaga Rivera, one of Los Cachiros, began. The latter said that he handed over \$50'000 to Tony Hernández in 2014 to help him launder the money through the JOH regime. Maradiaga Rivera has audio and video files of the meeting. He also said that he communicated with JOH through an intermediary.¹⁶⁸ According to his testimony, he also received protection from the Nationalist congressman Oscar Najera. He also bribed the police, prosecutors, judges and politicians, including \$250'000 to JOH directly and an unspecified amount to the current Minister of Security Julián Pacheco Tinoco.¹⁶⁹

Due to the weekend and a holiday on October 14, the trial went on a short break. In the meantime, the prosecutor and the defense of Tony Hernández came to an agreement to show the complete video of his arrest.¹⁷⁰ And in Honduras, the MP published an emphatic press release presenting itself as a successful anti-drug trafficking body.¹⁷¹ Criterio summarized this effort as the MP "defending itself like a cat belly up".¹⁷² ConfidencialHN called it a PR stunt to wash the image of Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla.¹⁷³

Then, on October 15, the trial continued. On Day 8¹⁷⁴, there were three more witnesses. According to them, Tony allegedly lied to the DEA and the US Government when he met with them in October 2016. He lied about his relationship with drug traffickers including Leonel Maradiaga Rivera, Don H, El Rojo, Mario Calix Hernandez and others.¹⁷⁵ These were the last witnesses and a verdict was

161 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/08/juicio-en-nueva-york-cc-5-es-roberto-ordonez/>

162 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/10/day-six-honduran-president-juan-orlando-herandez-johs-brother-tony-herandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

163 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/who-is-who-in-the-drug-trafficking-trial-against-tony-herandez-brother-of-the-president-of-honduras>

164 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1182350014011588608>

165 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/118246489749959065>

166 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/10/expolicia-confeso-implica-mas-a-tony-herandez-en-negocio-del-narcotrafico/>

167 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/11/day-seven-honduran-presidents-brother-tony-herandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

168 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/11/tony-herandez-fue-grabado-por-lider-de-los-cachiros-cuando-hacia-pacto-con-ellos/>

169 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/juicio-a-tony-herandez-testigo-cooperante-habla-de-susuesto-complot-para-asesinar-al-presidente-de-honduras>

170 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/13/fiscalia-y-defensa-de-tony-herandez-acuerdan-presentar-video-completo-de-su-arresto-en-miami/>

171 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/4931-comunicado-la-verdad-en-los-hechos>

172 <https://criterio.hn/ministerio-publico-de-honduras-se-defiende-como-gato-panza-arriba/>

173 <https://confidencialhn.com/ministerio-publico-busca-justificar-planchones-al-emitir-orden-de-captura-contra-capos-presos-en-ee-uu/>

174 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/15/day-eight-honduran-president-juan-orlando-herandez-johs-brother-tony-herandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

175 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/dia-clave-para-tony-herandez-el-juicio-llega-a-su-fin-y-el-jurado-decidira-el-veredicto>

expected soon. Back in Honduras, the JOH regime and the National Party tried everything to shift attention away from the trial.^{176 177}

On Day 9¹⁷⁸, trial concluded with the closing statements by the prosecution and the defense. The next day, the jury deliberated and no verdict was reached.¹⁷⁹ JOH, meanwhile, continued to claim his and his brother's innocence and presents all the evidence against them as lies. The JOH regime even sent a letter to the US State Department protesting that Honduras is being presented as "a sophisticated state-sponsored organization that distributed cocaine for years" in the trial.¹⁸⁰ And then, on Day 11, the jury came to a conclusion.

GUILTY

Tony Hernández was found guilty on all four accounts. "Former Honduran Congressman Tony Hernández Convicted In Manhattan Federal Court Of Conspiring To Import Cocaine Into The United States And Related Firearms And False-Statements Offenses".¹⁸¹ He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. He is due to be sentenced January 17.¹⁸² JOH reacted on Twitter, denouncing the decision, rejecting any future action trying "to sully the name of Honduras" based on this verdict. He also presented his government as an ongoing strong ally to fight drug trafficking.¹⁸³

Throughout the trial, protests had taken place in Honduras¹⁸⁴ and, as usual, were repressed.^{185 186} In Congress, Libre congresswo/men demanded the resignation of JOH.¹⁸⁷ Pinu joined in the demand.¹⁸⁸ The Social Citizen Platform demanded that the MP emit an arrest warrant against JOH for drug trafficking, illicit association and money laundering.¹⁸⁹ Radio Progreso called for a investigation into the Honduran banking system for money laundering linked to drug trafficking.¹⁹⁰

The trial also brought forward further problems in Honduras. "The trial against Juan "Tony" Antonio Hernández, accused of large-scale drug trafficking, places on the discussion table the role of the media and their journalists in the coverage of or approach to issues related to drug trafficking and organized crime. (...) [J]ournalists and researchers Claudia Mendoza and Wendy Funes point out that the press failed to talk about drug trafficking and its implications for journalism, while the government and drug trafficking co-opted the media for their business with narco-politics."¹⁹¹ In a

176 <https://criterio.hn/partido-nacional-pone-en-practica-la-caja-china-en-el-congreso/>

177 <https://criterio.hn/la-recesion-economica-anunciada-por-el-gobierno-podria-ser-una-caja-china/>

178 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/16/day-nine-honduran-president-juan-orlando-hermandez-johs-brother-tony-hermandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

179 <http://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2019/10/17/day-ten-honduran-president-juan-orlando-hermandez-johs-brother-tony-hermandez-on-trial-in-new-york>

180 <https://criterio.hn/cancilleria-envia-nota-de-protesta-al-departamento-de-estado-por-alusiones-en-el-juicio-a-tony-hermandez/>

181 <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/former-honduran-congressman-tony-hermandez-convicted-manhattan-federal-court-conspiring>

182 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/jury-finds-tony-hermandez-brother-of-honduran-president-guilty-of-drug-trafficking>

183 <https://twitter.com/JuanOrlandoH/status/1185241024475598848>

184 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/berta-oliva-vamos-a-seguir-caminando-hasta-lograr-sacar-la-dictadura/>

185 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1181321918890295296>

186 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/agentes-tigres-atacan-a-estudiante-que-se-manifesto-contra-joh/>

187 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/08/diputados-de-libre-exigen-salida-de-joh/>

188 <https://criterio.hn/2019/10/10/bancada-del-pinu-se-suma-a-libre-para-pedir-juicio-politico-para-joh/>

189 <https://criterio.hn/piden-orden-de-captura-contra-gobernante-de-honduras-por-narcotrafico/>

190 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/se-debe-abrir-investigacion-al-sistema-financiero-hondureno-por-senalamiento-de-lavado-de-activos-del-narcotrafico-coinciden-analistas/>

191 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/narcotrafico-coopto-a-la-prensa-hondurena-entrevista/>

second article, Radio Progreso investigated the link drug trafficking - judicial system, i.e. how the former controls the latter.¹⁹²

Javier Suazo published an important article on the role of the IMF in all of this. "The IMF is silent about corruption in the country, and continues to support the execution of the economic stabilization and structural adjustment policy of the illegitimate government of Juan Orlando Hernández (JOH), regardless of costs for the country and population in the future. But also, it is silent about the allegations of drug trafficking and money laundering, where senior government officials, deputies, businessmen, soldiers and leaders of trade organizations are involved. For the IMF, a country is trusted if it complies with the recommended policies, regardless of whether this is a Narco State."¹⁹³

After the verdict, protests grew in force. Libre which had previously announced to await the end of the trial joined in.¹⁹⁴ Major highways were blocked in several parts of the country.¹⁹⁵ The general coordinator of COFADEH, Bertha Oliva, reacted by saying that that "now the time came of those offended by the violence unleashed by drug trafficking, it is the turn of the Honduran people to demand the exit of the usurper of power".¹⁹⁶ But the usurper of power reacted once more with state violence to the protests.¹⁹⁷ There were reports of live fire on protesters¹⁹⁸ and journalists were again among the targets.^{199 200 201} The social²⁰² and political opposition²⁰³ did not back down²⁰⁴ and the later even announced the creation of a opposition coalition to get rid of JOH.²⁰⁵ A delegation even traveled to the US to denounce the situation in Honduras.^{206 207} But not just the social and political opposition are repressed in Honduras. All the TIGRES agents and officials who refused to further repress the Honduran people in December 2017 were fired.²⁰⁸ Former president Pepe Lobo reappeared on social media demanding the creation of a congressional commission to investigate the people mentioned in the Tony Hernández trial especially emphasizing the role of JOH.²⁰⁹

Reactions to the trial did not just come from Honduras, but also from the US. Four US congresswo/ men, Jan Schakowsky, Hank Johnson, Pramila Jayapal and Mark Pocan, issued a joint statement. "The Trump Administration must end its support of the repressive and corrupt Honduran regime of Juan Orlando Hernández. (...) The Trump Administration must immediately stop funding the corrupt

192 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn.net/estructuras-criminales-controlan-la-justicia-en-honduras-entrevista/>

193 <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/202619>

194 <https://criterio.hn/libre-convoca-a-protestas-permanentes-para-sacar-del-poder-a-juan-herandez/>

195 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1185367921129742336>

196 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/bertha-oliva-es-el-turno-de-los-ofendidos-y-de-las-ofendidas-es-el-turno-del-pueblo-hondureno/>

197 <https://tiempo.hn/movilizacion-de-la-oposicion-es-desalojada-con-masivo-gas-lacrimogeno/>

198 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1185584261509681152>

199 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1071-periodista-afectada-por-gas-lacrimogeno-lanzado-en-represion-a-protestas>

200 <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/portada-alertas/1072-represion-a-protestas-luego-de-fallo-condenatorio-contr-ex-diputado>

201 <https://tiempo.hn/protestas-tegucigalpa-farmacias-quemadas-personas-heridas-periodistas-golpeados/>

202 <https://criterio.hn/plataforma-llama-a-la-unidad-a-los-hondurenos-para-exigir-la-renuncia-de-herandez/>

203 <https://tiempo.hn/crean-la-coalicion-de-unidad-opositora-y-llaman-a-todos-los-sectores-a-unirse/>

204 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3570-insurreccion-de-hondurenos-empezo-a-cobrar-fuerza-hoy-en-varias-ciudades>

205 <https://criterio.hn/se-reunen-mel-zelaya-luis-zelaya-y-salvador-nasralla-sera-la-articulacion-de-la-oposicion/>

206 <https://hondudiario.com/2019/10/22/comision-de-oposicion-viaja-a-washington-para-exponer-problematca-del-pais/>

207 <https://tiempo.hn/washington-senadores-de-eeuu-escuchan-a-dirigentes-de-la-oposicion/>

208 <http://www.web.ellibertador.hn/index.php/noticias/nacionales/3587-depuracion-cancelan-policias-por-negarse-a-reprimir-hondurenos>

209 <https://criterio.hn/pueblo-hondureno-tiene-derecho-a-saber-si-joh-usa-su-cargo-como-escudo-pepe-lobo/>

Honduran police and military and stop celebrating President Hernández as a friendly ally and partner in the drug war. (...) We need to condemn the Honduran government's continued use of live bullets and poisonous tear gas to disrupt opposition protests and call for an end of its criminalization of dissent by grassroots environmental defenders - such as those from Guapinol. That is why 74 Members of Congress and counting support H.R. 1945, the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act, which calls for an immediate suspension of U.S. funding for Honduran security forces until their government investigates, and brings to justice, perpetrators of violence and unrest in Honduras."²¹⁰ US Senator Ben Cardin commented: "Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez's alleged connections to narco-trafficking are extremely concerning given the outcome of this trial. Hondurans are demanding accountability. To preserve the rule of law & regional stability, they must be heard."²¹¹ At the same time, some observers such as InSight Crime doubted that the conviction will suffice for the US to stop seeing JOH as an ally.²¹² ²¹³ And as to confirm this, the US embassy praised the "close relationship and collaboration" between the Honduran and US government.²¹⁴ But the US itself is split on Honduras. Representing the Judicial Power, Prosecutor Emil Bove described Honduras as a state where drug traffickers linked to JOH and the National Party are fully protected from investigations and arrests. At the same time, representing the State Department, chargé d'affaires Colleen Hoey offered JOH a photo op just a day after the trial ended.²¹⁵

As the protests in Honduras continued, Radio Progreso explained what kind of government Honduras needs. One which does not lie, which does not understand electoral politics as a business, which respects the democratic rules and the rule of law, etc.²¹⁶ Javier Suazo, meanwhile, presented the challenges ahead for the new opposition coalition. "The leaders of the opposition to the dictatorship of the national party led by JOH, must make an effort to show these types of economic actors the benefits of a democratic transition for the country, with JOH outside the government; but more than that, involve them in the construction of a new, more participatory and equitable development model."²¹⁷

Less than two weeks after the guilty verdict, the US wanted to return to the status quo ante. The US embassy once more met with JOH²¹⁸ and Michael Kozak, Acting Assistant Secretary Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs at the State Department, called the JOH regime a "reliable partner".²¹⁹ But then something happened which once more highly questioned the viability of this "reliable partner.

210 <https://schakowsky.house.gov/press-releases/schakowsky-johnson-jayapal-and-pocan-issue-statement-on-honduras/>

211 <https://twitter.com/SenatorCardin/status/1187814172714848257>

212 <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/tony-herandez-conviction-honduras/>

213 <http://elpulso.hn/los-testimonios-en-la-corte-no-son-suficiente-para-incriminar-a-un-presidente-entrevista-a-steve-dodley-de-insight-crime/>

214 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1185615263443701771>

215 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/america-latina/como-queda-el-presidente-de-honduras-tras-la-condena-a-su-hermano-por-narcotrafico-en-eeuu>

216 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn/el-gobierno-que-hoy-necesitamos/>

217 <https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/202806>

218 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1187833930537426944>

219 <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1329579-410/honduras-socio-confiable-departamento-estados-unidos-michael-kozak->

On October 26, Nery Orlando López Sanabria (who used another name, Magdaleno Meza Funez) was murdered in the maximum-security prison El Pozo.²²⁰ He was a partner of no other than Tony Hernández.²²¹ The so-called "narcolibretas" used in the trial as proof belonged to him. In it, he mentioned JOH various times.²²² His lawyer had denounced previous murder attempts against his client while in prison. He holds the JOH regime responsible for the murder.²²³ A video showing the extremely violent murder of López Sanabria soon made the rounds - it seems as if the prison guards knew about what was going to happen.²²⁴ Prison authorities suspended the director and announced an investigation.²²⁵ Then, the Military Police took over control.²²⁶ Critics immediately denounced this as a show for the public. The important question is the clearly visible selective murder of a former associate of Tony Hernández.²²⁷ Two days later, the MP announced that they have identified four suspects of the murder.²²⁸ The faculty of law and social science professors at the UNAH, meanwhile, wrote an open letter to Attorney General Óscar Chinchilla asking for an investigation into JOH and drug trafficking.²²⁹

Throughout this time, the protests against the JOH regime continued. Then, on October 28, leader of the teacher's federation COPEMH and member of LIBRE Jaime Rodríguez disappeared.²³⁰ A day later, he was found alive. "Rodríguez was assaulted last night, tortured & left to die on banks of Choluteca river in Tegucigalpa. He has a deep wound in his neck. This is a military-style operation similar to those used in 1980s".²³¹ ²³² The Human Rights Roundtable held a press conference denouncing possible additional attacks on the social and political opposition.²³³ A day later, indigenous Miskito Libre coordinator in Gracias a Dios, Buenaventura Calderón, and his wife Maribel Bolian were shot dead in Puerto Lempira.²³⁴

Varia

JOH

This month, the main focus on the JOH regime will be dealt with in the above section on the Tony Hernández trial.

220 <https://www.univision.com/univision-news/latin-america/accused-drug-trafficker-murdered-in-prison-hit-was-alleged-partner-of-brother-of-honduran-president>

221 <https://criterio.hn/en-carcel-de-honduras-asesinan-a-socio-del-narcotraficante-tony-hernandez/>

222 <https://twitter.com/jeffgernst/status/1188178716188434432>

223 <https://tiempo.hn/abogado-reo-el-pozo-responsables-german-mcneil-gobierno/>

224 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/1329819-466/video-as%C3%AD-mataron-dentro-de-el-pozo-i-a-magdaleno-meza-narco>

225 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1329880-466/intervienen-c%C3%A1rceles-el-pozo-i-y-ii-y-suspenden-a-sus-directores>

226 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1329958-466/polic%C3%ADa-militar-asume-control-de-el-pozo-i-y-la-tolva-tras>

227 <https://radiohm.hn/criticos-intervencion-de-carceles-es-puro-show-el-asesinato-de-magdaleno-meza-es-selectivo/>

228 <https://www.mp.hn/index.php/author-login/146-octubre2019/5012-requerimiento-fiscal-para-responsables-de-asesinato-en-carcel-de-ilama-santa-barbara>

229 <https://criterio.hn/profesores-de-derecho-piden-a-fiscal-que-investigue-a-joh-y-si-no-puede-que-renuncie/>

230 <http://defensoresenlinea.com/alerta-familia-denuncia-desaparicion-del-lider-social-jaime-rodriguez/>

231 <https://twitter.com/hondurassol/status/1189380944743911424>

232 <https://hch.tv/2019/10/29/aparece-amarrado-golpeado-pero-con-vida-el-dirigente-magisterial-jaimerodriguez/>

233 <https://criterio.hn/mesa-de-derechos-humanos-alerta-potenciales-atentados-contra-miembros-de-la-oposicion/>

234 <https://www.proceso.hn/actualidad/7-actualidad/asesinan-de-varios-disparos-a-dirigente-de-libre-y-a-su-esposa-en-gracias-a-dios.html>

Migration

Last month, the US and the JOH regime signed various migration agreements which continued to make headlines in October. "Thick mist surrounds the so-called immigration agreement that the US and Honduras signed a few days ago in the name of the consolidation of cooperation and bilateral relations. It was an agreement imposed by the northern country as part of its anti-immigrant policies in order to stop the massive irregular migration of citizens of the world who are looking for better opportunities for their families and others fleeing violence and forced displacement. Foreign Minister Lisandro Rosales said, in the few statements he has offered on the subject, that Honduras is the only country that has signed four agreements on: Border Security, Biometric Information, Migration, Employment and Investment. That is why they qualify it as a comprehensive agreement. He announced that the action plan will be built within the next two months. With this agreement, which citizens are completely unaware of, but knowing the interests of the United States, they continue to take a wrong look at the issue of migration."²³⁵ The US, meanwhile, published a fact sheet on the agreements.²³⁶ On this occasion, it makes sense to highlight an OpEd by Oscar Chacón, a co-founder and executive director of Alianza Americas, who visited Honduras as part of a delegation in August. "Over and over again, during our visits, I heard similar accounts of persecution and violence at the hands of the government. Then, last month, I was horrified to hear the Trump administration announce a new migration cooperation agreement with Honduras that would force asylum-seekers to seek protection there."²³⁷

As a consequences of these agreements, Trump tweeted on October 16: "Guatemala, Honduras & El Salvador have all signed historic Asylum Cooperation Agreements and are working to end the scourge of human smuggling. To further accelerate this progress, the U.S. will shortly be approving targeted assistance in the areas of law enforcement & security."²³⁸ Secretary of State Pompeo published a press release saying that "the State Department informed Congress of my intention to resume specific US foreign assistance funds for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras".²³⁹ ²⁴⁰ The next day, Mick Mulvaney, chief of staff of Donald Trump, admitted that the government withheld financial aid for El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to force them to limit the number of migrants arriving in the US.²⁴¹

New reports were published in October on the grave situation of Central American migrants. "New Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) investigation finds highly consistent accounts and medical evidence of targeted violence in Mexico and Central America; U.S. policies compound asylum seekers' trauma."²⁴² "Advocates have sounded the alarm about the dangers of Remain in Mexico program as report reveals at least 340 instances of rape, kidnapping, torture and other violent

235 <https://wp.radioprogreso.hn/acuerdo-migratorio/>

236 <https://twitter.com/USAenEspanol/status/1181289087900229632>

237 <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/10/15/honduras-migration-crisis-violence-donald-trump-column/3974297002/>

238 <https://twitter.com/usembassyhn/status/1184601794799964161>

239 <https://medium.com/@USAenEspanol/ee-uu-reanuda-asistencia-exterior-espec%C3%ADfica-para-el-salvador-guatemala-y-honduras-1ed1e4f806d>

240 <https://tiempo.hn/eeuu-reanuda-asistencia-economica-a-honduras/>

241 <https://www.univision.com/noticias/politica/el-gobierno-admite-que-retuvo-dinero-al-triangulo-norte-a-cambio-de-endurecer-sus-leyes-migratorias-es-eso-ilegal>

242 <https://phr.org/news/the-scars-match-the-stories-asylum-seekers-medical-evaluations-corroborate-violence-and-persecution/>

attacks" against people returned from the US to Mexico.²⁴³ "Since January, the U.S. government has ordered 16,000 migrants under 18, including nearly 500 infants, to wait with their families in Mexico for U.S. immigration court hearings".²⁴⁴ "The American Civil Liberties Union said Thursday that the Trump administration separated 1,556 more immigrant children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border than has previously been disclosed to the public. The majority of the children were ages 12 and under, including more than 200 considered "tender age" because they were under 5 years old."²⁴⁵ At the same time, deportations continue. In September, a record number of Hondurans, 87'337, were deported by air, land and sea. The previous record was from 2014.²⁴⁶

Penal Code

The National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA) together with other organizations filed a complaint at UFECIC denouncing acts of corruption during the approval of the new Penal Code.²⁴⁷ On October 16, civil society organizations handed over more than 7000 signatures demanding that the new Penal Code won't come into force next month.²⁴⁸ At the end of the month, the Supreme Court recommended that the new Penal Code remains in "vacatio legis" for six more months.²⁴⁹ It remains to be seen if it comes into force on November 10 or not.²⁵⁰

Poverty

The prices of food items of the basic goods basket further increased in October.²⁵¹ At the same time, Radio HRN reported that the informal economy in Honduras had increased by 160% in the last 15 years.²⁵²

Political Reforms

CESPAD published an analysis of the lack of reform regarding the financing of political parties.²⁵³

And Light at the End of a Month

"Long live solidarity, the rebellious embrace and the struggle for life! Long live the hope and rebellion of the communities, to whom the present prize we receive today corresponds!, shouted out members of the Municipal Committee for the Defense of Commons and Public Goods of Tocoa, upon receiving the [Letellier-Moffitt Human Rights] award granted by the Institute for Policy

243 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/oct/10/us-migrants-return-mexico-border-towns-violent-crimes>

244 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-babies-exclusive-idUSKBN1WQ1H1>

245 https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/aclu-says-1500-more-migrant-children-were-taken-from-parents-by-trump-administration/2019/10/24/d014f818-f6aa-11e9-a285-882a8e386a96_story.html

246 <http://elpulso.hn/en-septiembre-se-rompio-record-de-hondurenos-deportados/>

247 <https://tiempo.hn/cna-denuncia-supuesta-corrupcion-legislativa-al-aprobar-el-codigo-penal/>

248 <https://criterio.hn/codigo-penal-creado-por-delincuentes-para-proteger-delincuentes/>

249 <https://tiempo.hn/pleno-de-la-csj-seis-meses-mas-a-la-vacatio-legis-del-nuevo-codigo-penal/>

250 <https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1330653-466/congreso-nacional-anuncia-ampliacion-de-la-vacatio-legis-del-codigo-penal>

251 <http://elpulso.hn/el-precio-de-la-canasta-basica-al-alza-el-salario-estancado/>

252 <https://radiohrn.hn/en-160-se-ha-elevado-empleo-en-economia-informal-en-ultimos-15-anos/>

253 <http://cespad.org.hn/2019/10/15/coyuntura-financiamiento-politico-las-reformas-electorales-olvidadas-y-espacio-privilegiado-de-las-redes-de-corrupcion/>



Studies in Washington, United States."²⁵⁴ The same social movement also received the National Carlos Escaleras Award for leading the struggle against the mining project by Inversiones Los Pinares in Guapinol.²⁵⁵²⁵⁶

254 <https://wp.radioprogreso.net/con-gratitud-y-compromiso-recibe-premio-letelier-moffitt-comite-ambienta-de-tocoa/>

255 <https://wp.radioprogreso.net/entregan-premio-nacional-carlos-escaleras-a-comite-municipal-de-defensa-de-los-bienes-comunes-y-publicos-de-tocoa/>

256 <https://wp.radioprogreso.net/senador-y-congresista-de-estados-unidos-respaldan-lucha-en-defensa-del-rio-guapinol/>

Another Month at the Honduras Forum Switzerland

Past Activities:

-

Upcoming Activities:

-

Subscribe to this monthly report: foro_honduras_suiza@riseup.net

Subscribe to our daily press overview: daniellm@bluewin.ch

Become a member: info@honduras-forum.ch

Support our work: IBAN: CH54 0900 0000 8003 3036 3

<http://honduras-forum.ch/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Honduras-Forum-Schweiz-753337355053820/>