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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW  
IMMIGRATION COURT  
100 MONTGOMERY ST, SUITE 800  
San Francisco, CA 94104**

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**In the Matter of** )  
 )  
**Jose Naen Romero Ponce** )  
 )  
**In Removal Proceedings** )  
 )  
 )

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**File No. A 244-443-536**

**Immigration Judge:** Schulz, Karen W.

**Next Hearing:** May 27, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.

**RESPONDENTS' COUNTRY CONDITIONS IN SUPPORT OF ASYLUM AND  
WITHHOLDING OF REMOVAL**

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# **Exhibit 1**

**EXCERPTS FROM COUNTRY CONDITIONS REPORTS**

CC 1

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**2024 COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES: HONDURAS - U.S DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Honduras during the year.

**Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; disappearances; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including threats against media members by criminal elements.**

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses, but inadequate prosecutorial resources, a weak judicial system, political interference, and corruption were major obstacles to obtaining convictions.

Criminal groups, including local and transnational gangs and narcotics traffickers, were significant perpetrators of violent crimes and committed acts of homicide, torture, kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking, intimidation, and other threats and violence directed against human rights defenders, judicial authorities, lawyers, business community members, journalists, bloggers, women, union members, and other vulnerable populations. **The government investigated and prosecuted some of these crimes, but impunity was widespread.**

Although the law prohibited such practices, there were credible reports of abuses by members of the security forces.

The Public Ministry reported 26 cases of alleged torture by security forces, while CONADEH reported 37 cases. CONADEH

also reported two cases of rape by security forces, as well as four cases of sexual violence. The Public Ministry reported a total of 123 cases of cruel or inhuman treatment by security forces, and CONADEH reported 76 cases via the Ministry of Human Rights.

The Ministry of Human Rights reported 21 prisoners died while in custody, five of whom died because of violence. The causes of six other deaths were under investigation. CONADEH reported 14 cases of alleged torture and 21 cases of cruel and inhuman treatment of detainees and prisoners by security forces within penitentiary institutions, and another case of rape or sexual abuse of a person while in detention.

Corruption, a lack of investigative resources, and judicial delays led to widespread impunity, including for members of security forces, although justice institutions prosecuted and sentenced security forces for human rights violations.

CC 2

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## **WORLD REPORT 2025: HONDURAS - HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

As of September, UN experts have visited Honduras four times to provide technical assistance and assess the legal system and anti-corruption capabilities. They identified several laws that hinder investigations into corruption. Congress abrogated some of such laws, but a law prohibiting sanctions against legislators for actions taken “in the exercise of their duties” remained in place at time of writing.

In September, Carlos Zelaya, Castro’s brother-in-law and a congressional leader, resigned after admitting to meeting with drug traffickers in 2013. Zelaya’s son, who was minister of defense, also resigned.

A few days before Zelaya’s resignation, Castro annulled an extradition treaty with the United States, which had allowed for the extradition of Honduran nationals accused of drug trafficking, including former President Juan Orlando Hernández, who was sentenced to 45 years in prison by a US federal court in March.

Attacks on human rights defenders intensified in 2023. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in

Honduras reported that 453 human rights defenders and journalists were harassed, threatened, or intimidated in 2023 and 15 were killed.

According to government data, in 2023, 64 percent of the population lived below the poverty line (down from 73.6 percent in 2021), and 41.5 percent lived in extreme poverty (down from 53.7 percent in 2021). Honduras maintains one of the highest levels of income inequality in Latin America with a Gini index of 0.52 in 2023.

**Honduras has been for years among one of the most violent countries in the world, with police reporting 3,035 murders in 2023, a homicide rate of 31 per 100,000 people.** Between January and September, preliminary police data indicated 1,854 murders, a 26 percent drop compared to the same period in 2023.

**According to the latest data from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Honduras has the highest rate of femicides in Latin America and the Caribbean, with approximately 7 femicides per 100,000 women.**

CC 3

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### **HONDURAS: GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS DANGEROUS AND ILLEGAL TACTICS TO SILENCE THE POPULATION - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

The Honduran government is employing tactics to silence dissenting voices amid one of the worst political crises the country has faced in a decade, including other illegal and dangerous practices, such as preventing visits by lawyers and human rights activists to detained protesters, Amnesty International pointed out after a visit to Honduras following the disputed presidential election on November 26.

*“Honduras appears to be in the midst of a dangerous freefall in which ordinary citizens are falling victim to selfish and irresponsible political games,”* said Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty International.

During the curfew imposed by Honduran authorities on December 1st, security forces have operated with the highest levels of impunity.

The Military Police appear to be involved in several cases of human rights violations in the context of the demonstrations and during the curfew.

**Honduras is one of the most violent countries in the world, with a high homicide rate and widespread insecurity. There is a high level of distrust in institutions, fueled by the impunity that prevails or most crimes and recurring accusations of corruption or involvement of state agents in criminal accusations.**

Human rights defenders are particularly exposed to violence, with Honduras being one of the most dangerous Latin American countries for defenders, especially and and environmental activists.

CC 4

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**GLOBAL TORTURE INDEX 2025: HONDURAS  
FACTSHEET - WORLD ORGANIZATION AGAINST  
TORTURE (OMCT)**

Over the past 15 years, Honduras has faced a deeply complex social and political landscape. In 2009, the country experienced a coup d'état that sparked widespread protests in defence of democracy. The de facto government's response was marked by harsh repression, resulting in serious consequences for the civilian population. Today, more than a decade later—and amid an electoral process marked by controversy and uncertainty—a new government has come to power, positioning itself in opposition to those who supported the 2009 military coup and pledging to uphold the freedoms of the Honduran people. **However, since 6 December 2022, the country has been under a state of emergency, which has been renewed ten times despite the government's assurances that it would be a temporary measure. The latter suspends the rights to personal liberty and the freedoms of association, assembly and movement.**

**In this context, the practice of torture and ill-treatment has been a characteristic element of the Honduran public security**

**strategy.** From the execution of searches and arrests without warrants and the indiscriminate use of public force, to a penitentiary model based on corporal punishment as the aim of penal execution, the Honduran security model is part of the authoritarian tendency of ‘public order’—a model followed by several Latin American governments. **For 2025, the Global Torture Index classifies the country as facing a high risk of torture and illtreatment, based on data collected in 2023 and 2024.**

The UN CAT, in its concluding observations on the Third Periodic Report of Honduras, expressed concern over the militarisation of the penitentiary system. The Committee condemned the takeover of the national penal system by the Military Police of Public Order, which has imposed a prison control regime prioritising security measures and corporal punishment over respect for the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty.

**Both international bodies and civil society organisations have expressed deep concern over the high rates of impunity for the crime of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment that prevail within the Honduran judicial system. This impunity is generally manifested through prolonged delays in judicial proceedings and the authorities’ reluctance to investigate acts of torture as the criminal offence defined by law, instead often treating them as lesser offences.**

**Several factors have been identified as contributing to the inefficiency in prosecuting torture, ranging from victims’ limited opportunities to file complaints to the lack of due diligence by judicial authorities in investigating and prosecuting these crimes.**

Despite these developments, there are no specific mechanisms in domestic legislation to provide victims of serious human rights violations with means of reparation and rehabilitation beyond those contemplated in cases of past crimes. The Honduran government provides no public information on the implementation of nonrepetition mechanisms for cases of torture over the past five years.

Women in Honduras face a difficult panorama of gender-based violence. According to data from the OHCHR published in 2023, there were 280 violent deaths of women in the country, including 52 that occurred in the women’s prison (PNFAS) in June of the

same year. This reveals an ongoing trend of gender violence experienced in the public sphere being transferred to the institutional sphere.

Despite this, Honduras still lacks legislation protecting women from violence in public and institutional settings, as well as laws safeguarding gender-diverse individuals from hate crimes.

CC 5

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**VISIT TO HONDURAS: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON EXTRAJUDICIAL, SUMMARY OR ARBITRARY EXECUTIONS, MORRIS TIDBALL-BINZ - UNITED NATIONS, GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**The scars of a history of political and economic instability are visible in the deep inequalities and high levels of crime, including drug smuggling and gang violence, that permeate Honduran society. These problems, combined with entrenched corruption, excessive use of force and repressive policies, have for decades facilitated grave human rights violations committed with impunity.**

Following an exponential increase in violence in the early 2000s and an expansion in gang activity fuelled by gang members returning to Honduras, the homicide rate grew, peaking between 2011 and 2013 at 90.4 victims per 100,000 inhabitants per year, at that time the highest in the world. Despite a 17 per cent reduction in the national homicide rate as of 2023, the rate remains high, at almost 32 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. The main cause of violent death is firearm injury (accounting for 77.8 per cent of violent deaths of men and 69.3 per cent of violent deaths of women), which is attributed primarily to a lack of effective gun control by the State.

**Inherited political and security challenges, compounded by high levels of corruption, including organized crime, have had a devastating effect on the economy of Honduras, which remains one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the region.** The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic coupled with the effect of hurricanes Eta and Iota pushed the rate of extreme poverty up to 57.7 per cent in 2020.

**Honduras has the highest rate of gender-based killings of women and girls (femicides) in Latin America.** The Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that more than 8,100 women lost their lives in violent circumstances in 2002 and 2023 combined and that 400 were murdered in 2023.

[...] these positive legislative and institutional advances are undermined by other developments, such as the entry into force, in June 2020, of the new Criminal Code, which reduced the minimum sentence for femicide to 15 years. The reduction in sentences is compounded by a low prosecution and conviction rate in femicide cases, as well as procedural flaws in investigations. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur noted with concern the persistently high rate of femicide and the impunity that prevails. He also noted that the number of investigations and prosecutions in femicide cases remains unsatisfactory owing to a combination of budget, human resource and technical constraints, limited coverage of rural areas and poor inter-institutional coordination.

Indigenous Peoples and Hondurans of African descent have historically faced structural barriers that have given rise to systematic discrimination.

CC 6

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**AT LEAST 4,050 WOMEN WERE VICTIMS OF FEMICIDE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN 2022: ECLAC - UN NEWS**

In 2022, at least 4,050 women were victims of femicide (also known as feminicide) in 26 countries and territories of Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the latest data that official agencies reported to the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (GEO) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This is equivalent to one gender-related killing of a woman every two hours in the region.

**Of the 19 countries and territories in Latin America that reported the number of femicides or gender-related killings of women in 2022, the highest rates were seen in Honduras (6.0 per 100,000 women), the Dominican Republic (2.9) and El Salvador and Uruguay (1.6).** The lowest rates (meaning less than

1 victim per 100,000 women) were observed in Puerto Rico and Peru (0.9), Colombia (0.8), Costa Rica (0.7), Nicaragua (0.5), Chile (0.4) and Cuba (0.3).

Femicide is simply the most extreme expression of inequality, discrimination and the multiple forms of violence against women and girls, ECLAC reiterates. For example, according to specialized national surveys from 10 countries in the region, between 42% and 79% of women (around 2 out of every 3) have been victims of gender violence in different areas of their lives. In addition, on average, 1 in 3 women has been or currently is a victim of physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone who was, or is, their partner, which entails the risk of lethal violence, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

CC 7

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### **VIOLENCE CLAIMS THE LIVES OF 127 WOMEN IN HONDURAS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2025 - SWISS INFO**

The National Police have arrested a man in Molina de Segura (Murcia) wanted by Honduran authorities for the shooting deaths of his wife, son, and mother-in-law nine years ago. [...] Relatives discovered the bodies of his son and mother-in-law and were able to speak briefly with his wife, who was critically wounded. Before dying, she identified him as the perpetrator.

CC 8

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### **SUSPECTED ARRESTED FOR KILLING HIS EX-PARTNER AND EX-FATHER-IN-LAW IN ROATÁN - LA PRENSA**

Before allegedly killing them, he had threatened the victim via WhatsApp audio messages.

On Thursday, a suspect in the double murder of his ex-wife and former father-in-law was captured in Roatán.

According to audio recordings circulating on social media, he traveled from San Pedro Sula to Roatán with the intention of murdering the entire family.

CC 9

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**THIRD PERSON IMPLICATED IN THE PARRICIDE AND MURDER AND OF HIS MOTHER AND BROTHER IN CURARÉN IMPRISONED - PUBLIC MINISTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS**

The Women's Death Section of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Life (FEDCV) obtained in an initial hearing a formal indictment with preventive detention against José Santos Figueroa García for considering him responsible for the crimes of parricide and murder against his mother María Alejandra Martínez García (83) and his brother Pedro Figueroa Martínez (51).

Investigations determine that the victims lost their lives on March 25 of this year at about 5:00 in the afternoon in the Tacha sector of the El Anís hamlet, municipality of Curarén, department of Francisco Morazán, where two brothers and a grandson of the victim arrived at the property to kill Alejandra Martínez García and Pedro Figueroa Martínez.

Similarly, the investigations determined that the accused maintained an enmity with their mother and uncle stemming from a dispute over land inheritances.

CC 10

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**PHOTOGRAPHER ARRESTED FOR STABBING HIS EX-WIFE'S HUSBAND TO DEATH - LA PRENSA**

The detainee found out where his ex-wife was meeting with her current partner and went there to kill him.

An elderly citizen made the wrong decision to take the life of the current partner of his former housemate.

Hipólito Pavón, 64 years old, a photographer by trade, jealous of seeing his ex-partner with another man, attacked Fausto Gabriel Irías Uclés, 50 years old, with a knife on the afternoon of December 31 in the La Ronda neighborhood, in the capital.

# **Exhibit 2**

# Honduras 2024 Human Rights Report

## Executive Summary

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Honduras during the year.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; disappearances; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including threats against media members by criminal elements.

The government took credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses, but inadequate prosecutorial resources, a weak judicial system, political interference, and corruption were major obstacles to obtaining convictions.

Criminal groups, including local and transnational gangs and narcotics traffickers, were significant perpetrators of violent crimes and committed acts of homicide, torture, kidnapping, extortion, human trafficking, intimidation, and other threats and violence directed against human rights defenders, judicial authorities, lawyers, business community members, journalists, bloggers, women, union members, and other vulnerable populations. The government investigated and prosecuted some of these

crimes, but impunity was widespread.

## **Section 1. Life**

### **a. Extrajudicial Killings**

There were numerous reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year. The quasi-governmental, semiautonomous National Human Rights Ombudsman (CONADEH) reported various security forces committed six arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year. The Public Ministry reported three cases, involving at least five members of the Honduran National Police. No further information was publicly available regarding these incidents.

CONADEH reported two killings of human rights activists by unknown assailants as of October: Luis Alonso Teruel Vega, a reporter covering environmental actions, including deforestation, and Juan López, a well-known and respected environmental defender. Three arrests were made in the López case, and the investigation into additional conspirators continued as of November.

### **b. Coercion in Population Control**

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

## Section 2. Liberty

### a. Freedom of the Press

The law provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, with some restrictions, and the government generally respected this right. Although many press outlets were politically aligned, the press and prevailing democratic norms combined to promote freedom of expression, including for media members. Some media owners noted they were excluded from official events and blocked from receiving government advertising revenue as retribution for perceived antigovernment reporting.

Senior government representatives criticized civil society and members of the international community for comments perceived as critical of the government. Civil society groups reported these statements had a chilling effect on freedom of expression. CONADEH reported two cases of restrictions on the right of expression by security forces and another case related to threats or harassment against journalists and social communicators by government officials. The Special Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators, and Justice Officials reported two cases of threats against journalists.

## **Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure**

Journalists and other members of civil society reported they self-censored due to fear of criticism, harassment, and retribution by the government and its supporters. Others reported direct acts of intimidation or threats of violence from government officials or supporters for being critical of the government. Civil society organizations criticized the government's failure to investigate threats and incidents of violence adequately. CONADEH reported two cases of violent attacks and two cases of violence and slander on journalists and social communicators.

Social communicator Magaly Zelaya Ferman was assaulted by security forces while reporting on a road blockade during a protest in September.

## **Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups**

Media members and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) stated the press self-censored due to fear of retaliation from criminal groups or drug trafficking organizations, or criticism by government officials. Media also engaged in self-censorship to avoid losing lucrative advertising contracts with the government.

On March 13, the minister of security criticized a prominent NGO for its continued reporting on the state of the country and the impact of the

government's policy decisions, and announced the government had opened an investigation into the NGO and the validity of its status as an NGO.

Some journalists and other members of civil society reported threats from members of criminal groups. It was unclear how many of these threats were related to the victims' professions or activism. Several anonymous social media sites criticized journalists (as well as activists and civil society organizations) who were critical of the government or of opposition party policies.

## **b. Worker Rights**

### **Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining**

The law granted workers the right to form and join unions of their choice, bargain collectively, and strike. It prohibited employer retribution against employees for engaging in trade union activities. The law placed restrictions on these rights, such as requiring that a recognized trade union represent at least 30 workers, prohibiting foreign nationals from holding union offices, and requiring that union officials work in the same substantive area of the business as the workers they represented. The law prohibited members of the armed forces and police, as well as certain other public employees, from forming labor unions. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security also required that union leaders be employed under permanent contracts, limiting the ability of seasonal agricultural workers to exercise their right to

freedom of association.

The law required an employer to begin collective bargaining once workers established a union, and it specified that if more than one union existed at a company, the employer had to negotiate with the largest.

The law placed numerous limits on the right to strike. It allowed only local unions to call strikes, prohibited labor federations and confederations from calling strikes, and required that a two-thirds majority of both union and nonunion employees at an enterprise approve a strike. The law prohibited workers from legally striking until direct negotiations and government-accompanied mediation and conciliation had failed. The Ministry of Labor had the power to declare a work stoppage illegal and grant employers the ability to discipline employees consistent with their internal regulations, including by firing strikers. In addition, the law limited strikes in sectors the government designated as essential services but did not necessarily meet the criteria for essential services. The law required workers in public health care, social security, staple food production, and public utilities (municipal sanitation, water, electricity, and telecommunications) to provide basic services during a strike. The law also required that public-sector workers involved in the refining, transportation, and distribution of petroleum products submit their grievances to the Ministry of Labor. The law permitted strikes by workers in export-processing zones and free zones for companies that provided services to industrial parks, but it required that

strikes not impede the operations of other factories in such parks.

The government did not effectively enforce the law regarding labor rights. No information was available on whether penalties for violations of freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike were commensurate with those for analogous violations such as civil rights violations. Penalties were rarely applied against violators. Employers frequently refused to comply with Ministry of Labor orders that required them to reinstate workers who had been dismissed for participating in union activities. The Ministry of Labor could order a company to reinstate workers, but the ministry lacked the personnel and transportation resources to verify compliance. By law, the ministry could fine companies that violated the right to freedom of association. The law permitted fines, and the penalty was commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights, such as discrimination. Penalties were sometimes applied against violators, but the failure of the government to collect fines facilitated continued violations.

Workers had difficulty exercising the right to form and join unions and to engage in collective bargaining. Various NGOs reported multiple cases of workers being dismissed for being union leaders and members. Solidarity Center reported several dozen union leaders fled the country for safety concerns due to fear. Public-sector trade unionists raised concerns regarding government interference in trade union activities, including its

ignoring or suspending collective agreements and its dismissals of union members and leaders. Solidarity Center reported police agents threatened three union leaders from different organizations.

Some employers either refused to engage in collective bargaining or made it very difficult to do so. Some companies also delayed appointing or failed to appoint representatives for required Ministry of Labor-led mediation, a practice that prolonged the mediation process and impeded the right to strike. Unions also raised concerns that employers used temporary contracts to prevent unionization and to avoid providing full benefits.

The government investigated violence and threats of violence against union leaders. Impunity for such crimes was high. In June, police used a water cannon against workers protesting suspension of work contracts by Delta Corporation. Minor injuries were reported.

## **Forced or Compulsory Labor**

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

## **Acceptable Work Conditions**

### **Wage and Hour Laws**

The law provided for a minimum wage for most sectors. There were 45 categories of monthly minimum wage, based on the industry and the size of

a company's workforce; minimum wages were above the poverty income level. The minimum wage law did not cover domestic workers, most of whom were women.

The law prescribed a maximum eight-hour shift per day for most workers, a 44-hour workweek, and at least one 24-hour rest period for every six days of work. It also provided for paid national holidays and annual leave. The law required overtime pay, banned excessive compulsory overtime, limited overtime to four hours a day for a maximum workday of 12 hours, and prohibited the practice of requiring workers to complete work quotas before leaving their place of employment.

In some industries, including agriculture, domestic service, and security, employers did not respect maternity rights or pay minimum wage, overtime, or vacation. In these sectors, employers frequently paid workers for the standard 44-hour workweek irrespective of any additional hours they worked. In the security and domestic service sectors, workers were frequently forced to work more than 60 hours per week but were paid only for 44 hours. Employers frequently penalized agricultural workers for taking legally authorized days off. Employers paid the minimum wage inconsistently in other sectors. Civil society continued to raise problems with minimum wage violations, highlighting agricultural companies in the south as frequent violators.

## **Occupational Safety and Health**

Occupational safety and health (OSH) standards were appropriate for the main industries in the country, and OSH experts proactively identified unsafe conditions, in addition to responding to workers' OSH complaints. By law, workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered their health or safety without jeopardizing continued employment. Under the inspection law, the Ministry of Labor had the authority to temporarily shut down workplaces where there was an imminent danger of fatalities. Enforcement of OSH standards was particularly weak in the construction, garment assembly, and agricultural sectors, as well as in the informal economy.

## **Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement**

The Ministry of Labor was responsible for enforcing wage, hour, and OSH laws, but it did so inconsistently and ineffectively. Penalties for violations of OSH law were commensurate with penalties for similar crimes such as negligence but rarely applied against violators and rarely collected.

The law permitted fines for wage and hour violations; these were commensurate with the penalties for similar crimes, such as fraud. The government sometimes applied penalties against violators, but failure to collect fines facilitated wage and hour violations. The Ministry of Labor had an insufficient number of inspectors to enforce the wage, hour, and OSH

laws effectively. Inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions.

While all formal workers were entitled to social security, there were reports both public- and private-sector employers failed to pay into the social security system. The Ministry of Labor could levy a fine against companies that failed to pay social security obligations, but the amount was not sufficient to deter violations.

According to a 2024 World Bank survey, 58 percent of workers were in the informal economy. The government did not enforce the labor laws in this sector since these workers were not protected by the labor code.

## **c. Disappearance and Abduction**

### **Disappearance**

There were seven official reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities, according to CONADEH.

### **Prolonged Detention without Charges**

The law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements, but there were reports of arbitrary arrest and detention due to the state of exception.

Lengthy pretrial detention was a serious problem due to judicial inefficiency, insufficient resources, and other problems that delayed proceedings in the criminal justice system. The Ministry of Human Rights reported 8,945 individuals were in the prison population awaiting processing. For crimes with minimum sentences of six years' imprisonment, the law authorized pretrial detention of up to two years. The prosecution could request an additional six-month extension, but many detainees remained in pretrial detention much longer, including for more time than the maximum period of incarceration prescribed for their alleged crime. The law did not authorize pretrial detention for crimes with a maximum sentence of five years or less.

The law mandated that authorities release detainees whose cases had not yet come to trial and whose time in pretrial detention already had exceeded the maximum prison sentence for their alleged crime. Nonetheless, many prisoners remained in custody after completing their full sentences, and sometimes even after an acquittal, because officials failed to process their releases expeditiously. CONADEH reported 236 cases regarding access to justice and due process of law by security forces, and nine cases of violations of due process.

#### **d. Violations in Religious Freedom**

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom*

Report at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

## **e. Trafficking in Persons**

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

## **Section 3. Security of the Person**

### **a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

Although the law prohibited such practices, there were credible reports of abuses by members of the security forces.

The Public Ministry reported 26 cases of alleged torture by security forces, while CONADEH reported 37 cases. CONADEH also reported two cases of rape by security forces, as well as four cases of sexual violence. The Public Ministry reported a total of 123 cases of cruel or inhuman treatment by security forces, and CONADEH reported 76 cases via the Ministry of Human Rights.

The Ministry of Human Rights reported 21 prisoners died while in custody, five of whom died because of violence. The causes of six other deaths were under investigation. CONADEH reported 14 cases of alleged torture and 21 cases of cruel and inhuman treatment of detainees and prisoners by security

forces within penitentiary institutions, and another case of rape or sexual abuse of a person while in detention.

Corruption, a lack of investigative resources, and judicial delays led to widespread impunity, including for members of security forces, although justice institutions prosecuted and sentenced security forces for human rights violations.

## **b. Protection of Children**

### **Child Labor**

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

### **Child Marriage**

The minimum legal age of marriage was 18. The government did not enforce the law effectively. International NGOs reported 34 percent of girls and 12 percent of boys were married before age 18, with the practice more prevalent in rural areas. Most unions were informal rather than a formal marriage.

## **c. Protection to Refugees**

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing

protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, and other persons of concern.

### **Provision of First Asylum**

The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had a system for providing protection to refugees. Its operations to receive and process asylum applications relied on support from UNHCR. UNHCR's support focused on providing training to officers of the National Institute for Migration, supporting decisions and application of international refugee determination standards on submitted claims, and improving reception conditions for asylum seekers.

### **d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement**

The Jewish community numbered approximately 150 members. There were no reports of antisemitic incidents.

# **Exhibit 3**

# World Report 2025: Honduras | Human Rights Watch

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December 8, 2024

## Honduras

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### Events of 2024

The administration of President Xiomara Castro has made little progress in fighting corruption and restoring democratic institutions. Honduras continues to struggle with widespread corruption, a compromised judiciary, high levels of violence, and attacks against environmental defenders.

### Judicial Independence and Corruption

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In [September](#), President Castro presented to the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres a second draft agreement to create an International Commission against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (CICIH). The revised proposal would ensure CICIH's independence and autonomy, allow it to independently prosecute cases, investigate high-profile cases, propose legislative changes, and train personnel to fight corruption. However, progress on establishing the CICIH remains slow.

As of September, [UN experts](#) have [visited](#) Honduras four times to provide technical assistance and assess the legal system and anti-corruption capabilities. They identified [several laws](#) that hinder investigations into corruption. Congress abrogated some of such laws, but a law prohibiting sanctions against legislators for actions taken "in the exercise of their duties" remained in place at time of writing.

In [September](#), Carlos Zelaya, Castro's brother-in-law and a congressional leader, resigned after admitting to [meeting](#) with drug traffickers in 2013. Zelaya's son, who was minister of defense, also resigned.

A few days before Zelaya's resignation, Castro annulled an extradition treaty with the United States, which had allowed for the extradition of Honduran nationals accused of drug trafficking, including former President Juan Orlando Hernández, who was sentenced to 45 years in prison by a US federal court [in March](#).

## Human Rights Defenders

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Attacks on human rights defenders intensified in 2023. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Honduras [reported](#) that 453 human rights defenders and journalists were harassed, threatened, or intimidated in 2023 and 15 were killed.

According to OHCHR, at least four human rights defenders were killed between January and September, including [Juan López](#), an environmental defender, who was murdered in September, in the municipality of Tocoa, Colón department. [Three activists](#) working for the same environmental organization as [López](#) were killed in 2023.

The mechanism [Honduras](#) created in 2015 to protect journalists, human rights defenders, and justice officials has serious flaws: It lacks financial autonomy, qualified staff experienced in human rights issues, and trust from defenders.

## Land Rights

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Land rights and natural resource disputes remain a pressing issue in Honduras, with Indigenous peoples, Afro-Honduran communities, and peasants disproportionately affected by violence, illegal land seizures, and forced displacement.

In [September](#), Honduras' Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the laws permitting the creation of so-called Areas of Employment and Economic Development (ZEDEs), geographic areas in which private companies were granted broad governance powers, including to establish their own courts. Human Rights Watch [criticized](#) ZEDEs and called for their repeal. The court ruled that the ZEDE framework violated human rights.

[Honduras Próspera Group Inc.](#), a company which owns a ZEDE in Honduras, brought a case against Honduras before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) for the repeal of the legal framework for special economic zones. Próspera filed for damages of US\$10.7 billion, approximately 30 percent of Honduras' [2023](#) GDP. [In February](#), Honduras denounced the ICSID Convention.

## Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

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According to government data, in 2023, 64 percent of the population lived below the poverty line (down from 73.6 percent in 2021), and 41.5 percent lived in extreme poverty (down from 53.7 percent in 2021). Honduras maintains one of the highest levels of income inequality in Latin America with a Gini index of 0.52 in 2023.

Illiteracy is a significant problem in Honduras. Over 31 percent of people aged 60 and older and over 13 percent of people over 15 years old could not read or write in 2023. Only 56 percent of children between 12 and 14, and 28 percent between 15 and 17, were attending school. School attendance rates are significantly lower in rural areas.

[In July](#), Honduras co-sponsored a UN Human Rights Council [resolution](#) establishing a working group that would draft a new optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the rights to early childhood education, free pre-primary and secondary education.

## **Public Security**

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Honduras has been for years among one of the most violent countries in the world, with police [reporting](#) 3,035 murders in 2023, a homicide rate of 31 per 100,000 people. Between [January and September](#), preliminary police data indicated 1,854 murders, a 26 percent drop compared to the same period in 2023.

[According to the latest data](#) from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Honduras has the highest rate of femicides in Latin America and the Caribbean, with approximately 7 femicides per 100,000 women.

A state of emergency, adopted in December 2022 to fight extortion and related crimes, was [extended](#) 15 times and remains in place. It suspends the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly and to be informed of the reason for arrest, among others. [OHCHR](#) and the [UN Human Rights Committee](#) expressed concern about the extended use of the emergency without a comprehensive, rights-based security policy, saying it resulted in abuses.

Structural problems in the penitentiary system persist, including overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure. [As of September](#), prisons held over 19,000 detainees, 21 percent more than their capacity. Almost half of the people were in pretrial detention, [official statistics show](#). [In June](#), Castro announced the creation of a new “megaprison” for 20,000 people.

## **Migration, Asylum, and Internal Displacement**

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[As of 2023](#), there were 216,000 Honduran asylum seekers abroad, mostly in the United States and Mexico, with 84,000 others recognized as refugees.

Gang violence and other factors, including climate change, caused the internal displacement of about 247,000 people between 2019 and 2024, government [data shows](#).

## **Access to Abortion and Emergency Contraception**

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Abortion in Honduras is banned in all circumstances, including when the life of a woman, girl or pregnant person is in danger. People who have abortions, and those who provide them, face up to six years in prison.

In December 2022, President Castro approved a protocol to guide health centers in caring for survivors of sexual violence, including access to emergency contraception. The president signed an executive order in March 2023 lifting the ban on the use and sale of emergency contraception, but the Strategic Group on Emergency Contraception (Grupo Estratégico PAE), a reproductive rights group, reported that emergency contraception remains unavailable in the public health system, access is not free, and the protocol for survivors has yet to be implemented.

[In April](#), the Center for Reproductive Rights and Centro de Derechos de la Mujer, two women's rights organizations, brought a case before the UN Human Rights Committee on behalf of Fausia, an Indigenous Honduran woman who became pregnant after being raped in retaliation for her human rights work. Under Honduras' total ban on abortion and, at the time, emergency contraception, she was forced to proceed with her pregnancy and faced threats while seeking medical assistance.

## **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**

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Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in Honduras continue to suffer high levels of violence and discrimination in all areas of life, forcing some to flee. Honduras has failed to comply with key measures ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2021, including to create a legal gender recognition procedure for transgender people. Honduras does not allow same-sex marriage and lacks comprehensive anti-LGBT discrimination legislation.

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# **Exhibit 4**



# HONDURAS: GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS DANGEROUS AND ILLEGAL TACTICS TO SILENCE THE POPULATION.

Amnesty International is traveling to the Honduran capital to meet with activists and victims of human rights violations in the context of the crisis and state of emergency following the presidential elections.

11/12/2017

The Honduran government is employing tactics to silence dissenting voices amid one of the worst political crises the country has faced in a decade, including other illegal and dangerous practices, such as preventing visits by lawyers and human rights activists to detained protesters, Amnesty International pointed out after a visit to Honduras following the disputed presidential election on November 26.

*"Honduras appears to be in the midst of a dangerous freefall in which ordinary citizens are falling victim to selfish and irresponsible political games,"* said Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty International.

***"The evidence shows that there is no space for people to express their opinions in Honduras. When they do, they face the full force of the government's repressive apparatus."***

***“Stopping all illegal and excessive use of police and military force against protesters, ending arbitrary detentions, and investigating all cases of human rights violations would be a good way to begin addressing the serious events we have documented in recent days.”***

Representatives from Amnesty International visited the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa, to meet with activists and victims of human rights violations in the context of the crisis and state of emergency that followed the presidential elections on November 26. Amnesty International experts also met with members of the national police and the Public Defender's Office. During the visit, the organization's researchers documented a multitude of abuses against protesters and others.

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### **Violence against protesters**

**At least 14 people died** , many from gunshot wounds, and dozens were injured in the context of the generally peaceful demonstrations that took place after the elections on Sunday, November 26, according to information provided to Amnesty International by public officials and human rights defenders.

On December 1st, authorities imposed a curfew, which, according to most respondents, increased the risks to people's lives and safety.

A human rights defender told Amnesty International that while insults and assaults are common during protests in Honduras, in recent days the situation has become more unsafe for those walking the streets.

Security forces used tear gas, chased and arrested protesters. In some cases, they fired weapons at them. The levels of violence are comparable to what happened after the 2009 coup.

Only one police officer has been brought to trial for shooting a protester, according to information provided by the national police to Amnesty

International.

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### **Human rights violations following curfew.**

During the curfew imposed by Honduran authorities on December 1st, security forces have operated with the highest levels of impunity.

Raúl Antonio Triminio, a 39-year-old bricklayer from Tegucigalpa, was killed on the night of December 3, 2017. His family told Amnesty International that Raúl was participating in a peaceful demonstration outside his home when military police arrived, shot at the streetlights, and then shot him directly in the face. His relatives were unable to help him immediately, but were too afraid to go outside for fear of being attacked by the police. One of his sisters said: “They could have taken him to prison, not killed him. He wasn’t doing anything wrong... we just ask for justice.”

The Military Police appear to be involved in several cases of human rights violations in the context of the demonstrations and during the curfew.

**Researchers from Amnesty International also documented the case of a young man who was attacked by military police in Tegucigalpa as he tried to enter his home on his motorcycle on the night of December 3rd. According to witnesses, the police did not arrest him or attempt to detain him. They simply beat him until he was unconscious. The young man was hospitalized and remains in critical condition.**

His relatives told Amnesty International researchers that when his sisters tried to help him, military police pointed their guns at them and said they wouldn't report the incident because they knew where the sisters lived and could return to kill them. In both cases, family members had to call the national police to take the victims to the hospital, as they were afraid or unable to do so themselves.

The curfew is affecting all aspects of people's daily lives. Many have had to constantly change their routines, while others are losing hours of work or avoiding visiting family or friends. If they don't leave the streets when the curfew begins, they risk not being able to return home or being attacked in the streets.

People arrested for violating curfew are detained until 5 a.m. in police stations. During this time, they have no access to legal assistance, since neither lawyers nor human rights defenders can be contacted during curfew to visit them or to proceed legally on their behalf.

The curfew, which has been altered several times since its initial implementation in terms of duration and geographic coverage, does not conform to international legal provisions and seems too broad in light of the few violent incidents.

If the government wants to proceed with this measure, it has a duty to discuss its necessity sufficiently and adequately, following all constitutional procedures and international law, including official notifications to the Secretaries-General of the Organization of American States and the United Nations.

Under any circumstances, you must have effective safeguards in place to prevent future human rights violations, and all cases that have already occurred must be properly investigated and brought to justice.

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### **Additional information**

General elections were held in Honduras on November 26, 2017.

On November 27, in the early morning, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) announced an initial count, based on 57% of the reviewed votes, which gave a 5-point lead to the opposition candidate, Salvador Nasralla, against the lead of the President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez.

Both candidates declared themselves the winners. According to the preliminary report of the Organization of American States' electoral observation mission in Honduras, published after the elections, "the system for disseminating the results, available to the public online, was not updated [after the first announcement by the TSE] on Monday, November 27. Once the dissemination resumed, the Mission observed how the difference between the candidates was decreasing."

On the afternoon of November 29th, the TSE (Supreme Electoral Tribunal) announced a different result, indicating a victory for Juan Orlando Hernández.

**Honduras is one of the most violent countries in the world, with a high homicide rate and widespread insecurity. There is a high level of distrust in institutions, fueled by the impunity that prevails for most crimes and recurring accusations of corruption or involvement of state agents in criminal activities.**

**Human rights defenders are particularly exposed to violence, with Honduras being one of the most dangerous Latin American countries for defenders** , especially land and environmental activists.

Following the coup d'état on June 28, 2009, several states of emergency and curfews were approved, and serious human rights violations attributed to Honduran security forces were reported.

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**Learn more:**

[Countries around the world are failing to prevent the deaths and disappearances of human rights defenders.](#)

[Honduras: Lack of justice in Berta Cáceres case sends warning to activists.](#)

[Murders of environmental defenders in Honduras turn the country into a "no-go zone" for environmentalists.](#)

# **Exhibit 5**

# GLOBAL TORTURE INDEX 2025: HONDURAS FACTSHEET

## OVERALL GLOBAL TORTURE INDEX SCORE:

**HIGH RISK**

The Global Torture Index 2025 is the first analysis designed to assess the risk of torture and ill-treatment across 26 countries worldwide. This 2025 factsheet for Honduras includes an analysis of the country's overall performance, a breakdown by thematic pillars and key recommendations for driving meaningful change in the fight against torture and the promotion of human rights.

## COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS IN HONDURAS:

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Centro de Prevención, Tratamiento y  
Rehabilitación de Víctimas de la Tortura  
(CPTRT)

Cáritas de Honduras  
Arquidiócesis de San  
Pedro Sula

## AT A GLANCE

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Over the past 15 years, Honduras has faced a deeply complex social and political landscape. In 2009, the country experienced a coup d'état that sparked widespread protests in defence of democracy. The *de facto* government's response was marked by harsh repression, resulting in serious consequences for the civilian population. Today, more than a decade later—and amid an electoral process marked by controversy and uncertainty—a new government has come to power, positioning itself in opposition to those who supported the 2009 military coup and pledging to uphold the freedoms of the Honduran people. However, since 6 December 2022, the **country has been under a state of emergency, which has been renewed ten times despite the government's assurances that it would be a temporary measure.** The latter suspends the rights to personal liberty and the freedoms of association, assembly and movement.

The Honduran state has justified the ongoing suspension of constitutional guarantees as part of its fight against the criminal groups that have historically afflicted Central America. In this context, President Xiomara Castro's government has established 'special' police forces tasked with combating gangs known as Maras, whose identity is predominantly militaristic.

In this context, the practice of torture and ill-treatment has been a characteristic element of the Honduran public security strategy. From the execution of searches and arrests without warrants and the indiscriminate use of public force, to a penitentiary model based on corporal punishment as the aim of penal execution, the Honduran security model is part of the authoritarian tendency of 'public order'—a model followed by several Latin American governments. For 2025, the Global Torture Index classifies the country as facing a **high risk of torture and ill-treatment**, based on data collected in 2023 and 2024.

# GENERAL INFORMATION



**Type of government:**  
Federal Republic



**United Nations Convention Against Torture:**  
Ratified



**OPCAT ratification:**  
Ratified



**Population:**  
10,962,012



**People deprived of liberty:**  
19,978



**Prison population (per 100,000 of national population):**  
182.7



**Pre-trial detainees / remand prisoners (percentage of prison population):**  
45.44%



**Documented Detained Human Rights Defenders:**  
Lack of data



**Alerts Issued by the Observatory for Human Rights Defenders in 2024:**  
9



**Prison Occupancy level:**  
149%



**Homicide rate (per 100.000 people):**  
31.1

# THEMATIC PILLAR OVERVIEW



## I. POLITICAL COMMITMENT

**INDEX SCORE: CONSIDERABLE RISK**

Honduras has demonstrated limited political will to combat torture. Although it has ratified the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and has recently accepted the competence of the UN Committee Against Torture (UN CAT) to receive individual complaints, the security policies implemented under the state of emergency have increased the risk of torture and serious human rights violations, particularly affecting young people and those living in highly marginalised contexts.

Civil society organisations are concerned about the implementation of a highly punitive criminal policy, **such as Agreement No. CNDS-003/2024 of the National Council for Defence and Security**. This agreement orders the construction of two emergency detention centres in remote areas. This measure stands **in direct contradiction to the recommendations issued by the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) in April 2024**, which expressed concern over the proposed construction of a maximum-security prison on the Swan Islands. The remote location of such facilities, along with the transfer of individuals deprived of liberty to them, would result in prolonged isolation. It would also significantly hinder communication between detainees and their families or legal representatives, as well as impede timely and adequate access to medical care in emergencies.

The same agreement urges the National Congress to reform the regulatory framework to classify individuals linked to organised crime who commit certain offences as terrorists, and to incorporate the measure of collective prosecution into domestic legislation. These reforms constitute a threat to the right to a fair trial, the right to defence, the presumption of innocence and contributes to deteriorating prison conditions.

Honduras's National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture is represented by the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CONAPREV). However, both civil society organisations and the UN CAT have expressed their concern about the lack of resources to carry out its monitoring tasks in an optimal manner. In addition, they have denounced the lack of legal certainty in the election of its members and the obstacles that prevail for the appointment of the civil society representative to the Committee.



## II. ENDING POLICE BRUTALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE

**INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK**

Since 6 December 2022, Honduras has been under a state of emergency that has enabled violations of citizens' rights and freedoms. This policy has paved the way for the systematic abuse of power and widespread institutional violence. Under this decree, public security has been militarised, leading to the creation of a police force in which the National Police and the armed forces operate jointly, resulting in the formation of the so-called Military Police of Public Order.

Under the state of emergency, police forces have been granted broad powers to detain individuals they deem to be involved in, or associated with, criminal activity, and to conduct raids without warrants. Civil society organisations estimate that, during this period, **the National Police have carried out approximately 24,536 arrests and conducted 16,800 raids. In addition, the Military Police of Public Order have detained around 1,333 individuals, the majority of whom were minors under the age of 18.**

The detention centres operated by the National Police and the Military Police of Public Order lack adequate living conditions, and detainees may be held in isolation and incommunicado for periods exceeding 24 hours. In general, there is little control or supervision of these centres, and without a clear registry, there is considerable uncertainty as to whether all these facilities are formally established.

Civil society organisations have denounced serious human rights violations committed by both the Military Police of Public Order and the Anti-Maras and Gangs Police Directorate against Organised Crime (DIAPANCO). According to the Public Prosecutor's Office, **at least three forced disappearances and 86 complaints of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by security and military forces are being investigated in 2024.**

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has denounced the excessive use of force and the lack of protocols for the prevention and control of incidents inside prisons. **In 2024, the UN Office documented the disproportionate use of force following three serious incidents at Támara prison, including three violent deaths—two of which may amount to extrajudicial executions—and 161 cases of ill-treatment.** These incidents took place in the context of control and search operations.



## III. FREEDOM FROM TORTURE WHILE DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

**INDEX SCORE: VERY HIGH RISK**

The UN CAT, in its concluding observations on the Third Periodic Report of Honduras, expressed concern over the militarisation of the penitentiary system. The Committee condemned **the takeover of the national penal system by the Military Police of Public Order**, which has imposed a prison control regime prioritising security measures and corporal punishment over respect for the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty.

The Committee drew the Honduran State's attention to the difficult conditions of detention in the country's prisons. Specifically, it urged the State to address the following issues:

- Excessive overcrowding (149%) resulting, inter alia, from indiscriminate abuse of pre-trial detention (45.4%).
- Deficiencies in basic food services, medical and psychological care and food and medicine supplies.
- The absence of a real social reintegration policy in the Honduran prison system.
- The construction of a maximum-security prison complex on the so-called 'Isla del Cisne', whose suitability and relevance remain unclear given the country's insecurity and institutional violence.
- The overall conditions of women deprived of their liberty within the national penitentiary system, who face frequent disciplinary punishments without justification, prolonged isolation, lack of social reintegration programmes, and an absence of basic healthcare services informed by a gender perspective.
- The situation of persons belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community, who experience discrimination and ill-treatment from both the prison population and staff.

Local organisations, such as the Centre for the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and their Families (C.P.T.R.T), **have denounced the mishandling of the deaths of 46 women at the National Women's Penitentiary for Social Adaptation (PNFAS)**, who died as a result of fire and firearms attacks. Rather than improving detention conditions for women, the Honduran state responded by militarising the women's prison system and planning the construction of a maximum-security prison on Isla del Cisne.

Civil society organisations have also criticised the intensification of the penitentiary system's disciplinary regime, which is based on militarisation. They have highlighted the lack of safeguards to prevent living and security conditions that amount to torture or ill-treatment. Additionally, they have condemned the use of ill-treatment and humiliating treatment against relatives of detainees who visit the prisons. Reports received by these organisations describe invasive behaviour by prison staff, primarily towards women, including inappropriate touching, invasive searches involving complete nudity, and orders to maintain humiliating positions for extended periods.

These organisations have drawn attention to the high incidence of deaths in penitentiary detention centres. Since 2017, Caritas has denounced the occurrence of **13 massacres inside prisons, with a total of 130 victims**.



## IV. ENDING IMPUNITY

### INDEX SCORE: VERY HIGH RISK

Both [international bodies](#) and [civil society organisations](#) have expressed deep concern over the high rates of impunity for the crime of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment that prevail within the Honduran judicial system. This impunity is generally manifested through prolonged delays in judicial proceedings and the authorities' reluctance to investigate acts of torture as the criminal offence defined by law, instead often treating them as lesser offences.

Several factors have been identified as contributing to the inefficiency in prosecuting torture, ranging from victims' limited opportunities to file complaints to the lack of due diligence by judicial authorities in investigating and prosecuting these crimes. Common scenarios include:

- Prosecution authorities prioritise the accusation against a person suspected of committing a crime over their potential status as a victim of torture during detention or at any other procedural stage, which hinders the initiation of investigations into such acts.
- Victims are required to report torture to the very authorities who may have committed it, such as police forces or prosecutors.
- The burden of proof is placed on the victims and their relatives, which complicates the process and leads to further victimisation of those affected.
- Authorities accused of perpetrating torture are often not removed from their positions, enabling them to influence the investigative process and/or intimidate victims and their families.
- Acts of torture are frequently not properly detected or documented because the Istanbul Protocol is not applied diligently or promptly. Investigations often lack contextual analysis, fail to identify the appropriate criminal offences reflecting the severity of the acts, and omit characterisation of victims or examination of intellectual authorship and command chains in cases involving security forces.
- Medical personnel are insufficient in number, lack adequate training to identify and document torture, and are administratively attached to the same institutions where such acts commonly occur.
- Although a specialised human rights prosecutor's office exists to investigate torture cases, it lacks the necessary material and human resources to handle the volume of reported cases.

The UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) urged the Honduran State to take measures ensuring judicial independence so that criminal proceedings for acts of torture are conducted with greater speed and transparency. As of 2024, the Honduran government [reported](#) that 529 investigations into allegations of torture have been initiated, of which 75 have proceeded to prosecution (32 for torture and 43 for cruel treatment), with sentences obtained in only 10 cases—although no data on the outcomes of these sentences was provided.



## V. VICTIM'S RIGHTS

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**INDEX SCORE: VERY HIGH RISK**

In April 2024, a draft Law on Compliance with International Human Rights Obligations to Victims of the National Security Doctrine (1980-1993) was submitted to the National Congress to address serious human rights violations committed in that context. The adoption of this law would allow access to the right to truth, memory, justice, reparation and non-repetition for the victims.

Despite these developments, **there are no specific mechanisms in domestic legislation to provide victims of serious human rights violations with means of reparation and rehabilitation** beyond those contemplated in cases of past crimes. The Honduran government provides no public information on the implementation of non-repetition mechanisms for cases of torture over the past five years.

There is also a lack of publicly available information for victims of human rights violations regarding the services offered by the State. Torture victims have no access to protection mechanisms, and their families are not recognised as being at risk of reprisals or intimidation, leaving them vulnerable and defenceless.



## VI. PROTECTION FOR ALL

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**INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK**

Women in Honduras face a difficult panorama of gender-based violence. According to data from the OHCHR published in 2023, there were **280 violent deaths of women in the country, including 52 that occurred in the women's prison (PNFAS)** in June of the same year. This reveals an ongoing trend of gender violence experienced in the public sphere being transferred to the institutional sphere.

Despite this, Honduras still lacks legislation protecting women from violence in public and institutional settings, as well as laws safeguarding gender-diverse individuals from hate crimes. The case of [Keyla Martínez](#) is particularly notable, especially due to the reduction of the sentence originally imposed on her aggressor. Additionally, legal frameworks criminalising abortion and restricting women's right to choose have been further tightened.

The persecution of young people in Honduras is especially severe. Considering the militarisation of public security and the anti-gang measures, adolescents are frequently criminalised by law enforcement authorities operating under the state of emergency currently in force.

According to data from civil society organisations, **as of 2024, there were 1,661 children and adolescents under criminal sanctions, of whom 126 are deprived of their liberty and 1,535 are under other types of measures.** However, none of these cases benefit from formal and effective social reintegration programmes, and those deprived of their liberty often endure ill-treatment and undignified living conditions, as seen in the 'El Pocito' Pedagogical Internment Centre.

The situation faced by indigenous peoples fighting to preserve their territories and cultural identity is also deeply concerning. International organisations have urged the Honduran State to guarantee, through legal reforms, the collective physical, legal, and cultural integrity of indigenous peoples in the face of threats posed by poorly regulated business activities impacting their ancestral lands.



## VII. RIGHT TO DEFEND AND CIVIC SPACE

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**INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK**

The [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) has recognised Honduras **as one of the most dangerous countries in the Americas—and indeed the world—for human rights defenders (HRDs)**. HRDs face extreme risk due to various forms of violence perpetrated by both state and non-state actors aiming to silence their causes. Of particular concern is the high number of assassinations targeting those who defend the environment, land, and territory.

In 2024, the United Nations Office for Human Rights **recorded 284 attacks against 319 individuals and organisations, of which 219 (68.65%) were human rights defenders and 100 (31.35%) were journalists and social communicators**. The Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes against Life currently has open investigations into **at least 19 cases of murders and disappearances of human rights defenders and journalists between 2023 and 2024**.

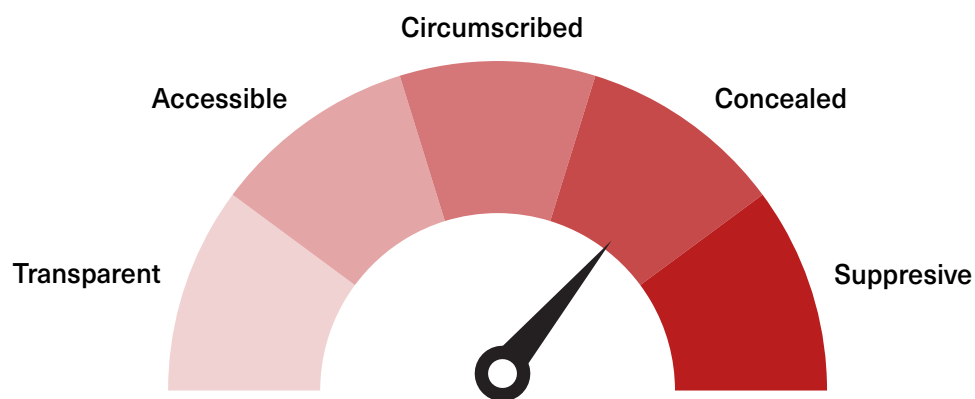
In September, [Juan López](#), an environmentalist and prominent defender of the Guapinol River against extractive projects, was murdered. His death occurred amidst ongoing attacks, threats, intimidation, and criminalisation of human rights defenders. López was a beneficiary of precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; however, these measures were not effectively implemented in Honduras. While the alleged perpetrators of the murder have been apprehended, the masterminds remain unidentified—a critical gap that hinders the right to justice, truth, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition.

# TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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The Global Torture Index rates the access to information and transparency available in each country when measuring and assessing the risks of torture and ill-treatment. It takes into account the availability of information, as well as the obstacles faced by civil society organisations in collecting data and their assessments in accessing information. Access to information must be guaranteed in every society, both in law and in practice, to ensure state transparency and accountability. It enables organisations, journalists and individuals to request data on public bodies, protocols and statistics on human rights violations. This indicator reflects the challenges in accessing information within a country, with each country and territory assigned a rating as Suppressive, Concealed, Circumscribed, Accessible or Transparent.

Honduras's score is **concealed** based on our evaluation of its current level of transparency and access to information.



# ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE IN HONDURAS: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Index includes 5 recommendations for Colombia, taken from the [Index webpage](#), which will serve as references in upcoming editions to monitor achievements within the anti-torture movement.

1. Revoke the state of emergency governing the country's public security policy as soon as possible, and establish a strategy centred on peacebuilding and the guarantee of human rights.
2. Develop and implement a programme to transfer prison administration to the National Penitentiary Institute as a civilian, autonomous, and independent body, ensuring measures to strengthen it and introduce programmes aimed at the social reintegration of persons deprived of their liberty.
3. Increase the budget allocated to the operation of the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture and take the necessary steps to appoint a representative from civil society organisations to the Committee.
4. Promptly and impartially investigate allegations of torture or ill-treatment committed by members of the security and armed forces, as well as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and deaths in police custody during the state of emergency.
5. Guarantee a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights by strengthening the National System for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, and by effectively investigating and prosecuting attacks and killings of human rights defenders and journalists.



## FURTHER RESOURCES

For further information, the complete 2025 Torture Index—including detailed data visualisations, FAQs, the methodology, and more—can be accessed on our website: <https://www.omct.org/en/global-torture-index>. Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at [tortureindex@omct.org](mailto:tortureindex@omct.org).

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# **Exhibit 6**



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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

## Visit to Honduras

### Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz\* \*\*

#### *Summary*

The secretariat has the honour to submit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, on his official visit to Honduras, which took place from 22 May to 2 June 2023. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur examined existing measures and national efforts to prevent and investigate unlawful killings, including deaths resulting from institutional violence, deaths in custody and gender-based killings.

The Special Rapporteur acknowledges the legacy of human rights violations and violence inherited by the current Government and commends the political discourse acknowledging the existing gaps and challenges as well as the willingness to address past violations and prevent their recurrence. He underscores the structural challenges that are impeding efforts to uphold the right to life, including the impunity for criminal offences and corruption that is endemic in State institutions. Despite systematic reporting of unlawful killings and State efforts to provide reparations for the families of victims, very few cases are investigated and in even fewer cases are the perpetrators prosecuted.

In his report, the Special Rapporteur offers practical and context-specific recommendations for improving the prevention and investigation of unlawful killings, enhancing accountability and effectively safeguarding the right to life, especially the lives of vulnerable persons and groups. The Special Rapporteur stands ready to assist the Government of Honduras in the effective implementation of his recommendations.

\* The present report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

\*\* The summary of this report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself is contained in the annex and is being circulated in the language of submission and English only.



## Annex

### **Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, on his visit to Honduras**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. At the invitation of the Government of Honduras, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, conducted an official visit to Honduras from 22 May to 2 June November 2023. The purpose of the visit was to obtain first-hand information on the situation with regard to extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and to identify good practices and challenges in relation to efforts to uphold the right to life. The Special Rapporteur also examined progress made towards ensuring protection for individuals and groups – especially those in vulnerable situations, as well as accountability for victims and members of their families – and preventing future attacks on the right to life in Honduras.

2. The Special Rapporteur expresses his sincere gratitude to the Government of Honduras for its invitation, for the cooperation extended to him and for the constructive dialogue that took place prior to and during the visit. He also commends the Government's openness, and its readiness to assume responsibility for past violations and address deep-rooted, structural problems in order to prevent any recurrence.

3. During the visit, the Special Rapporteur met with representatives of the executive, legislative and judicial branches, including senior government officials from the Office of the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Human Rights, as well as representatives of law enforcement agencies including the Office for Security in Police Matters, the Directorate of the National Police and the Directorate of the National Prison Institute. He also met with the President, with members of the Supreme Court, the Public Prosecution Service and specialized prosecutors' offices, including the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Offences against Life, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Protection of Ethnic Groups and Cultural Heritage, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators, and with representatives of the Specialist Criminal Investigation Agency, the Directorate General of Forensic Medicine (including its Director General) and the Special Unit for the Investigation of Violent Deaths in Bajo Aguán, attached to the Public Prosecutor's Office. Additionally, he met with the President of the National Congress and members of the parliamentary committees on human rights, constitutional affairs and justice, with the Counsel General and with representatives of national human rights institutions such as the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights and the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment.

4. The Special Rapporteur also met with relatives of victims of extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, with representatives of civil society organizations and academic institutions including the Observatory on Violence of the University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security of the National Autonomous University of Honduras and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and with several United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

5. In the capacity of forensic doctor, Mr. Tidball-Binz ran a training session and took part in a workshop organized to formulate a protocol for the investigation and prosecution of violent deaths of LGBTIQ+ persons across the country, in conjunction with the Honduras country office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and civil society organizations. The Special Rapporteur also met with

organizations representing victims killed for having defended land rights, the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples and the protection of the environment.

6. The Special Rapporteur thanks the OHCHR country office in Honduras for its invaluable support during preparations for the visit and while the visit was under way. He also expresses his deepest gratitude to the families of the victims of unlawful killings and to civil society organizations for their commitment to his work and the trust they placed in him.

7. In the course of the 12-day visit, the Special Rapporteur travelled to the cities of Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba and Trujillo, the towns of El Progreso and Tocoa and the Bajo Aguán region, where he met with local authorities, victims' families and civil society organizations. He also visited the national prison in Támara.

8. The Special Rapporteur looks forward to continuing the constructive dialogue with the Government and other stakeholders with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

## II. Background

### A. Political, economic and social context

9. The scars of a history of political and economic instability are visible in the deep inequalities and high levels of crime, including drug smuggling and gang violence, that permeate Honduran society. These problems, combined with entrenched corruption, excessive use of force and repressive policies, have for decades facilitated grave human rights violations committed with impunity.

10. In 1963, a military coup overthrew the democratically elected Government of President Ramón Villeda Morales and ushered in a series of authoritarian military Governments that, until 1981, engaged in systematic campaigns of arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial execution of political opponents in application of its national security doctrine. These campaigns were primarily carried out by special military counterinsurgency units and the infamous Battalion 3-16, a death squad under the command of military intelligence officers.<sup>1</sup> In 1981, a civilian President, Roberto Suazo Córdova, was elected in free and democratic elections. The Constitution entered into force in January 1982.

11. In 2009, a coup d'état illegally ousted the then President Manuel Zelaya. Numerous serious human rights violations were committed under the de facto Government that took control following the coup.<sup>2</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission created in 2010<sup>3</sup> determined that State agents were implicated in 12 extrajudicial killings caused by disproportionate use of force and eight homicides motivated by discrimination. The Commission issued 84 recommendations, including recommendations on justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition.

12. The Government's repressive response to the 2017 post-election protests gave rise to further human rights violations. These included excessive use of force, including lethal force, by agents of the security forces, and specifically the Public Order Military Police and the Army, which resulted in deaths and serious injuries among demonstrators, and also among bystanders, that passed without investigation and without the perpetrators being brought to justice.<sup>4</sup>

13. Following an exponential increase in violence in the early 2000s and an expansion in gang activity fuelled by gang members returning to Honduras, the homicide rate grew, peaking between 2011 and 2013 at 90.4 victims per 100,000 inhabitants per year, at that time

<sup>1</sup> E/CN.4/2003/3/Add.2, para. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.cidh.org/pdf%20files/HONDURAS2009ESP.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Executive Decree No. PCM-011-2010, art. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/HN/INFORMETEM%C3%81TICO2017Enero2020.pdf>, para. 56.

the highest in the world.<sup>5</sup> Despite a 17 per cent reduction in the national homicide rate as of 2023, the rate remains high, at almost 32 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>6</sup> The main cause of violent death is firearm injury (accounting for 77.8 per cent of violent deaths of men and 69.3 per cent of violent deaths of women), which is attributed primarily to a lack of effective gun control by the State.

14. The two main gangs are MS-13 (Mara Salvatrucha) and the 18th Street gang (Mara Barrio 18). These gangs act with brutal violence, controlling the lives of residents in the neighbourhoods where they operate, extorting “taxes”, forcing children and young persons to collect these “taxes” or sell drugs, and forcing young women, who are also often subject to rape, torture and even death in inter-gang conflicts, to carry drugs and weapons.<sup>7</sup> The gangs are also the main source of violence, including homicides, in prisons.

15. The former National Anti-Gang Task Force – a special unit of the National Police that operated from 2013 to 2022 – and other security forces working to combat gangs have engaged in deadly operations targeting vulnerable population groups such as young persons and residents of marginalized neighbourhoods that have given rise to extrajudicial killings. After its dissolution, the National Anti-Gang Task Force was replaced by the Police Directorate for Combating Gangs and Organized Crime, with the stated purpose of comprehensively addressing both ordinary and organized crime.

16. Inherited political and security challenges, compounded by high levels of corruption, including organized crime, have had a devastating effect on the economy of Honduras, which remains one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the region.<sup>8</sup> The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic coupled with the effect of hurricanes Eta and Iota pushed the rate of extreme poverty up to 57.7 per cent in 2020. Economic recovery had helped to reduce this rate to 41.5 per cent by 2023, but extreme poverty remains high, mainly owing to the absence of equitable access to land and natural resources, particularly for Indigenous Peoples, persons of African descent and campesinos.<sup>9</sup>

## B. Current structural and institutional challenges

17. Impunity is endemic in the case of femicide (90 per cent) and crimes against LGBTIQ+ persons (90 per cent), against bloggers and journalists (93 per cent), against children and adolescents (95 per cent) and against land defenders (97 per cent), among other crimes. Past violations, including the killing of protesters during the violence that erupted following the 2017 elections, remain unpunished.<sup>10</sup> In most cases of alleged human rights violations in which the security forces are implicated monitored by OHCHR, the investigations and prosecutions have failed to identify the perpetrators or establish the chain of command.<sup>11</sup>

18. Corruption in public institutions has been rampant. The country is ranked 154th out of 180 in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>12</sup> The main factors linking corruption to extrajudicial killings are: (a) the lack of accountability of police and military officers accused or suspected of homicides; (b) the corruption that affects public officials responsible for investigating, prosecuting and punishing homicides; and (c) attempts by the authorities to shield officials from accountability. In 2022, the Secretariat of the United

<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/35/23/Add.1, para. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Homicide data infographic, 2018 to 2023, available at: <https://www.sepol.hn/sepol-estadisticas-honduras.php?id=158>.

<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/35/23/Add.1, para. 23.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/country/honduras/overview>.

<sup>9</sup> See A/HRC/55/22.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.transparency.org/en/press/transparency-international-concerned-over-threats-to-civic-space-honduras>.

Nations and the Government of Honduras signed a memorandum of understanding<sup>13</sup> for the establishment of an international, independent, impartial, and autonomous mechanism to fight corruption and impunity in Honduras. Also in 2022, the State Secretariat for Transparency and the Fight against Corruption was created and a national transparency and anti-corruption strategy for the period 2022–2026 was drawn up in order to address the problem in a comprehensive manner.

### III. Legal, institutional and political framework

#### A. Ratification of relevant international and regional instruments

19. Honduras has ratified the nine core international human rights treaties and the additional protocols thereto. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 6 of which enshrines the right to life, and the Second Optional Protocol thereto, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Honduras is a party to the American Convention on Human Rights, article 4 (1) of which also enshrines the right to life and article 27 of which establishes the non-derogability of certain rights, and has recognized the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.<sup>14</sup> According to the Constitution, ratified international treaties form part of domestic law and take precedence in the event of conflict with national legislation.<sup>15</sup>

#### B. Legal framework

20. The Constitution of Honduras establishes the inviolability of the rights to life, dignity and physical, moral and psychological integrity and safeguards the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.<sup>16</sup> It also recognizes the right to petition for habeas corpus and *amparo*.<sup>17</sup> These provisions are fleshed out in the Criminal Code, which penalizes the offence of ordinary homicide in article 192 and the offence of aggravated homicide (homicide committed with brutality and premeditation) in article 193.<sup>18</sup> The Criminal Code was amended in 2011 to introduce the offences of torture, femicide, hate crime against women and against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, incitement to hatred, and discrimination through the media. Another amendment, introduced in 2012, established enforced disappearance as a specific offence.

21. The Public Prosecution Service oversees criminal investigations and proceedings before the courts and the institutions that carry out these functions, including the Specialist Criminal Investigation Agency;<sup>19</sup> the Directorate General for Forensic Medicine and close to 850 offices across the country, including 17 agencies and 11 units specialized in specific categories of crime.<sup>20</sup> Representatives of the Public Prosecution Service told the Special Rapporteur that the main challenges it faced stemmed from a lack of sufficient resources, which undermined its ability to investigate offences effectively and efficiently, to uphold human rights and to reduce crime in general. Additionally, the fact that the Directorate General for Forensic Medicine is not independent from the Public Prosecution Service undermines its neutrality. A bill to address this shortcoming is pending adoption in Congress.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2023-05-04/note-correspondents-international-independent-impartial-and-autonomous-mechanism-against-corruption-and-impunity-honduras>.

<sup>14</sup> See [http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties\\_B-32\\_American\\_Convention\\_on\\_Human\\_Rights\\_sign.htm](http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-32_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights_sign.htm).

<sup>15</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Honduras, art. 18.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, arts. 65 and 68.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, arts. 182 and 183.

<sup>18</sup> See [https://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/Cedij/Cdigos/CodigoPenalDecretoNo130-2017-fusionadoconreformas\(August2023\).pdf](https://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/Cedij/Cdigos/CodigoPenalDecretoNo130-2017-fusionadoconreformas(August2023).pdf).

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/mp-y-cn-dan-seguimiento-a-resultados-de-la-unidad-especializada-en-la-investigacion-de-muerte-de-mujeres-y-femicidios-de-la-atic/>.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.mp.hn/estructuraorganica/unidades-especializadas/>.

22. The Police Investigations Directorate is tasked with assisting prosecutors throughout the country in the investigation of criminal offences, including potentially unlawful deaths. However, the Directorate reports to the Ministry of Security, which poses problems for its impartiality when investigating offences perpetrated by members of the security forces.

23. The national human rights institution is the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, has been accredited with “A” status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. The Office is present in all 18 departments of the country and is mandated to receive complaints of human rights violations, including killings, to investigate such complaints and to make appropriate recommendations to State authorities. Of the total number of complaints handled by the Office in 2023, 12.42 per cent concerned death threats. In the period 2021–2023, around 4,700 persons reported having received death threats and many of them were forced to relocate internally or abroad as a result.

#### IV. Good practices and positive developments

24. In view of the opportunity for change arising from the election of Xiomara Castro, who took office as the first woman President of Honduras on 27 January 2022 and promised to move forward on human rights and to tackle corruption, the Special Rapporteur notes that many of the observations and recommendations made by his predecessors<sup>21</sup> remain relevant to the fight against the entrenched impunity for extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions that has been reported over the past four decades.

25. The Special Rapporteur acknowledges the long-standing structural problems inherited by the new Administration that constitute the root cause of human rights violations including, among the most prevalent, extreme poverty and inequality, rampant corruption, conflict over land, violence, insecurity, impunity, institutional weakness and the patriarchal culture. He also acknowledges the progress made in 2023 towards compliance with the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms, including the adoption of a legal framework to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, the repeal of the Act on the Classification of Public Documents relating to National Security and Defence, progress in environmental matters, and the adoption of the Act on the National DNA Database System.

26. The Special Rapporteur commends recent reparation and remembrance initiatives that recognize the State’s responsibility for crimes committed in application of the national security doctrine. In 2023, Honduras publicly acknowledged its responsibility for the extrajudicial killing of Herminio Deras García in January 1983 and for the multiple human rights violations committed against his family for 30 years, as ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.<sup>22</sup> In February 2024, the Government announced the creation of the National Centre for Historical Memory, which will contribute to the implementation of measures of reparation for the crimes of the past. The Special Rapporteur underscores that meaningful accountability for criminal offences, including extrajudicial killings, through the prosecution of those responsible and the application of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence, is the only way to prevent recurrence and provide comprehensive reparation for the families of the victims.

27. On 30 August 2023, with technical assistance from OHCHR, the Committee of the Families of Detained and Disappeared Persons in Honduras presented to President Castro a bill containing a draft law on the victims of the national security doctrine in the period 1980-1993. The bill envisages a series of measures related to the rights to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for victims and their families. The bill also includes a proposal to create and strengthen, with input from victims and organizations, institutions specialized in the investigation and prosecution of serious human rights violations and mechanisms for the search, location, recovery, identification and dignified return of the skeletal remains of victims of enforced disappearance.

<sup>21</sup> Visits by previous mandate holders: Asma Jahangir in 2001 (E/CN.4/2003/3/Add.2) and Christof Heyns in 2016 (A/HRC/35/23/Add.1).

<sup>22</sup> *Deras García et al vs. Honduras*, judgment of 25 August 2022.

28. The Special Rapporteur acknowledges the adoption of executive and legislative decrees related to violations committed in the context of the 2009 coup d'état, including:

- Decree No. 4-2022, granting financial assistance to the direct descendants and/or ascendants of persons killed during the 2009 coup d'état
- Executive Decree No. 17-2022, establishing a programme of social benefits for family members of the victims of arbitrary execution during the 2009 coup d'état known as "the martyrs of the Honduran resistance"
- Executive Decree No. 13-2023, creating the Programme of Memory, Truth, Reparation, Justice and Non-Repetition for the Reconciliation and Refoundation of Honduras

29. In March 2023, the Office of the Undersecretary for Security submitted to Congress a bill to create a decentralized, independent national institute of forensic medicine and science, in accordance with international standards.<sup>23</sup>

## V. Principal conclusions on the right to life

### A. Right to life of groups and individuals in situations of vulnerability

30. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur was alerted to the long history of attacks on the right to life that has characterized the country's recent past. These attacks, which are still happening, entail death threats and executions targeting vulnerable groups and individuals, including women and girls, LGBTIQ+ persons, persons of African descent and Indigenous persons, children, human rights defenders, including land and environmental defenders, journalists and social media activists. In the 70 cases of killings of human rights defenders documented by OHCHR between 2018 and 2023, 67.1 per cent of the victims were dedicated to the defence of land, territory and/or the environment. The victims were from Indigenous groups in 13 cases and were persons of African descent in 14 cases. In the same period, OHCHR documented at least five cases of enforced disappearance, involving four Garifuna women and one transgender woman.

#### 1. Women and girls (femicide)

31. Honduras has the highest rate of gender-based killings of women and girls (femicides) in Latin America.<sup>24</sup> The Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that more than 8,100 women lost their lives in violent circumstances in 2002 and 2023 combined and that 400 were murdered in 2023. Faced with these concerning figures, the State took certain positive steps, including amending the Criminal Code in 2013 to introduce the offence of femicide, which is defined, in article 208, as the murder of a woman perpetrated by a man "in a context of unequal power relations between men and women for reasons of gender". In 2022, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was created as the lead institution for national policy on women.<sup>25</sup>

32. A number of public institutions with a remit to investigate and prevent femicide have been created, including the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Protection of Women within the Public Prosecution Service and the Unit for the Investigation of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicide, created by decree in 2016.<sup>26</sup> By the same decree issued in 2016, the State also created the Inter-agency Commission for Monitoring the Investigation of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides,<sup>27</sup> responsible for inter-institutional coordination, analysis,

<sup>23</sup> A/HRC/50/34, para. 56.

<sup>24</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/violence-against-women-other-pandemic-impacting-honduras>.

<sup>25</sup> Decree No. PCM-05-2022.

<sup>26</sup> Decree No. 106-2016.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 2. The Commission's rules of procedure can be consulted at: <https://www.tsc.gob.hn/bookcase/index.php/reglamentos/862-rules-of-procedure-de-la-comision-interinstitucional-de-seguimiento-a-las-investigaciones-de-las-muertes-violentas-de-mujeres-y-los-femicidios>.

formulating recommendations for the Government, ensuring the implementation of security policies and recommending campaigns to eradicate violence against women.<sup>28</sup> In 2022, the President of Honduras announced that the National Women's Institute would become a Ministry.<sup>29</sup>

33. However, these positive legislative and institutional advances are undermined by other developments, such as the entry into force, in June 2020, of the new Criminal Code, which reduced the minimum sentence for femicide to 15 years.<sup>30</sup> The reduction in sentences is compounded by a low prosecution and conviction rate in femicide cases, as well as procedural flaws in investigations.<sup>31</sup> During his visit, the Special Rapporteur noted with concern the persistently high rate of femicide and the impunity that prevails. He also noted that the number of investigations and prosecutions in femicide cases remains unsatisfactory owing to a combination of budget, human resource and technical constraints, limited coverage of rural areas and poor inter-institutional coordination.<sup>32</sup>

34. The Special Rapporteur followed with concern the high-profile case of Keyla Patricia Martínez Rodríguez, who was detained by security forces on 6 February 2021 for allegedly violating the curfew imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and placed in custody in Police Departmental Unit No. 10 in La Esperanza (Intibucá), where she died the same day. Witnesses stated that she had been assaulted while in custody while the police claimed that she had committed suicide – a claim that was dismissed by the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Offences against Life within the Public Prosecution Service after the autopsy identified signs of manual strangulation consistent with homicide. A police officer was subsequently charged but, despite irrefutable evidence of femicide, the officer was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and, in February 2024, was granted early release after paying a fine of less than \$400. The outcome of this case attests to the degree of sexist bias and tolerance of gender-based crime that still prevails within the criminal justice system despite the authorities' efforts to prevent it. In October 2023, the Inter-agency Commission for Monitoring the Investigation of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides urged the judiciary to correct the sentence but, to date, there had been no review.

## 2. LGBTIQ+ persons

35. Several Special Rapporteurs have expressed concern about unlawful killings of LGBTIQ+ persons,<sup>33</sup> the lack of investigation and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators.<sup>34</sup> During his visit, the Special Rapporteur noted that this situation continues. In 2023, at least 47 LGBTIQ+ persons were killed (12 lesbian women, 17 gay men and 18 transgender persons) and one was a victim of enforced disappearance. Only 8 of these 47 cases were the subject of a criminal investigation and, to date, no charges have been brought.<sup>35</sup> According to the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights, almost 90 per cent of crimes against LGBTIQ+ persons go unpunished.<sup>36</sup>

36. The dangers faced by LGBTIQ+ persons in Honduras were also recognized by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of Vicky Hernandez, a transgender woman and human rights activist who was a victim of extrajudicial killing in 2009. In November 2020, the Court ruled that the State of Honduras was responsible for her death and for the failure to investigate it, and ordered a series of reparatory measures, including the

<sup>28</sup> Decree No. 106-2016, art. 3.

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/instituto-nacional-de-la-mujer-pasara-secretaria-estado-announcement-xiomara-castro-presidenta-XC6361213>.

<sup>30</sup> CEDAW/C/HND/CO/9, para. 24; and Decree No. 130-2017.

<sup>31</sup> A/HRC/433/Add.2, para. 42; and A/HRC/WG.6/36/HND/3, para. 70.

<sup>32</sup> A/HRC/WG.6/36/HND/3, para. 70.

<sup>33</sup> E/CN.4/2003/3/Add.2, para. 68.

<sup>34</sup> A/HRC/35/23/Add.1, paras. 44–47; and E/CN.4/2003/3/Add.2, para. 68.

<sup>35</sup> A/HRC/52/24, para. 83.

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.conadeh.hn/defensora-del-pueblo-de-honduras-demanda-que-cesen-los-crimenes-of-hate-against-members-of-the-lgtbi-community/>.

formulation and implementation of a special protocol for investigating deaths of LGBTIQ+ persons.<sup>37</sup>

37. The case of Thalía Rodríguez Rivera, a transgender woman and LGBTIQ+ activist murdered at her home in Tegucigalpa in 2022, apparently to end her activism, provides another illustration of the persistent failure to adequately investigate these homicides. In this case, the subsequent investigations were apparently plagued by irregularities. Following national and international protests, one person was arrested and charged with her murder and, at the time of writing, is awaiting sentencing. However, the irregularities in the investigation raise doubts about the charges brought in this case.

38. The Special Rapporteur is providing technical assistance and cooperating closely with OHCHR, national institutions and national and regional non-governmental organizations to develop a national protocol for the investigation and prosecution of violent deaths of LGBTIQ+ persons. The protocol would be the first of its kind and could serve as a model of good practice for other countries and regions.

### 3. Indigenous Peoples and persons of African descent

39. The Indigenous and Afro-Honduran population represents slightly more than 8 per cent of the country's total population.<sup>38</sup> The Lenca, Maya Ch'orti, Miskito, Pech, Tawahka and Xicaque Peoples are classified as Indigenous, while the Garifuna and Bay Island Creoles are Honduran ethnic groups of Afro-Caribbean origin.<sup>39</sup> Indigenous Peoples and Hondurans of African descent have historically faced structural barriers that have given rise to systematic discrimination.<sup>40</sup>

40. The Special Rapporteur noted a lack of effective and timely investigation of the serious violations committed against members of both groups and their communities as well as a lack of protection measures that leaves these communities in a situation of increased vulnerability and exposed to a high risk of further abuse. Echoing the recent judgment of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in *Garífuna Community of San Juan and its Members v. Honduras*, the Special Rapporteur notes with concern the threats and attacks that the community has suffered as a result of its struggle to prevent the misappropriation of its lands, including for tourism development projects, and the reported failures to adequately investigate such violations and provide protection for members of the community.<sup>41</sup> On 28 January 2023, Ricardo Arnault Montero, a fisherman, Garifuna land rights activist and member of the Land Defence Committee, was killed in mysterious circumstances near his home in the community of Triunfo de la Cruz on the north coast. It was in this same location that four Garifuna leaders, including Alberth Sneider Centeno, the first young president of the community's governing board and a member of the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras, disappeared from their homes after being arrested in July 2020 by unidentified men wearing National Police uniforms. There has been no news of them since.<sup>42</sup>

41. In another example of such violations, in 2021 Erick Barú Rivera, a Miskito fisherman, was killed when a sizeable contingent of soldiers of the Armed Forces fired indiscriminately at members of his community, including women and children gathered peacefully on the beach.<sup>43</sup> The Special Rapporteur, as a forensic doctor, met with members of the community, examined their healed gunshot wounds and viewed photographs taken immediately after the attack of the injuries sustained by some of the children, all of which

<sup>37</sup> *Vicky Hernández et al vs. Honduras*, judgment of 26 March 2021. See also <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/court/2019/13051FondoEn.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> See <https://www.ine.gob.hn/images/Productos%20ine/censo/Tomo%20municipales%20pdf/12lapaz/168Cane.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/mrgi/2008/en/65122>.

<sup>40</sup> CERD/C/HND/6-8, para. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Judgment of 29 August 2023, para. 44.

<sup>42</sup> See <https://oacnudh.hn/oacnudh-condena-la-desaparicion-forzada-de-alberth-sneider-centeno-presidente-del-patronato-de-la-comunidad-garifuna-de-el-triunfo-de-la-cruz-y-de-tres-personas-mas-pertenecientes-a-la-comunidad/>.

<sup>43</sup> See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunication/File?gId=26836>.

were fully consistent with their testimonies. At the time of his visit, the authorities had not yet visited the community to investigate the attack, supposedly for security reasons and because they lacked the resources to travel to this remote location. No one has been held accountable for these violations.

42. In November 2022, Marcos Antonio Pineda, a member of the Lenca community of El Encinal, in La Paz department, was arbitrarily killed by members of the National Police while they were conducting an inspection in a village settlement. In October 2023, the local courts acquitted the only officer charged with the murder,<sup>44</sup> so ensuring total impunity for a homicide that, according to reports, was just part of the systematic and unpunished attacks suffered by the Lenca people.<sup>45</sup>

43. An exception to this pattern of impunity is the case of Berta Cáceres, a Lenca Indigenous activist and environmentalist and the national coordinator of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras, who was assassinated in 2016 because of her activism against a hydroelectric project planned on ancestral lands. Those responsible for planning, ordering and carrying out her murder were arrested, charged and found guilty, and were sentenced in June 2022.

44. The Special Rapporteur takes note of the public apology issued by the State in Puerto Lempira in March 2023, when it acknowledged its responsibility for the crimes committed against members of the Miskito community,<sup>46</sup> making an important first step towards ensuring accountability, truth and reconciliation.

#### 4. Children and adolescents

45. Despite the adoption of Executive Decree No. 11-2013, establishing the National Policy for the Prevention of Violence against Children and Young Persons, designed to reduce the structural factors that render children, adolescents and young persons vulnerable to violence,<sup>47</sup> the risk of violent death remains very high. In 2023, there was an average of 60 deaths per month, which was 21 more than in the previous year.<sup>48</sup>

46. Organized crime, including gang violence, is responsible for 36.6 per cent of all homicides. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the extensive recruitment of children by gangs and recommended, inter alia, that the State take all measures necessary to prevent the recruitment of children and protect them from violence.<sup>49</sup> The Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned about the lack of effective solutions to combat the root causes of violence against children, which include poverty, recruitment by gangs, social stigmatization and attacks, including arbitrary killings, by law enforcement officers that are often met with impunity for the perpetrators.

47. Brian Jafeth Hepburn, a 15-year-old teenager, was arbitrarily detained in 2020 by the National Police in San Pedro Sula. He was taken to a local police station, where, according to witnesses, he was tortured and then killed. His mother found his body, with signs of torture and a gunshot wound to the back of the head, lying in a local field later the same day. To date no one has been brought to justice for his murder.

<sup>44</sup> See <https://oacnudh.hn/28-de-octubre-de-2023-oacnudh-lamenta-el-fallo-en-el-caso-de-marcos-antonio-pineda-integrante-de-copinh-asesinado-el-23-11-2022-en-el-que-el-tribunal-de-sentencia-de-comayagua-absolvio-de-los-car/>.

<sup>45</sup> See <https://copinh.org/2023/10/comunicado-el-tribunal-de-sentencia-de-comayagua-ha-absuelto-de-los-cargos-de-manera-arbitraria-al-policia-jose-adan-perez-por-el-homicidio-del-joven-lenca-marcos-antonio-pineda/>.

<sup>46</sup> Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Miskito Divers (Lemoth Morris et al.) v. Honduras*, judgment of 31 August 2021.

<sup>47</sup> See <https://conexihon.hn/2022/04/30/sin-avances-la-implementacion-de-la-politica-nacional-de-prevencion-de-la-violencia-hacia-la-ninez-y-juventud/>.

<sup>48</sup> See <https://redcoiprodén.org/honduras-registra-un-incremento-de-21-en-muertes-violentas-de-ninez-adolescencia-y-juventud/>.

<sup>49</sup> [CRC/C/HND/CO/4-5](#).

48. The Special Rapporteur echoes the Human Rights Committee's call for the authorities to duly investigate all violent crimes, prosecute the perpetrators and enhance protection for children at risk of violence.<sup>50</sup>

## 5. Activists and defenders of land, territory and environmental rights

49. In 2023, OHCHR recorded at least 17 killings. In 15 of these cases, the victims were human rights defenders, mainly defenders of land and environmental rights, while in 2 cases, the victims were journalists. During his visit to the Bajo Aguán region, the Special Rapporteur noted with grave concern the frequent conflicts related to access to land and natural resources, including threats, attacks and killings targeting campesinos, especially land rights and environmental activists and members of campesino cooperatives in the region.

50. Despite the urgent need for human and material resources to ensure prompt and reliable investigations, the Special Rapporteur learned of reductions in the number of prosecutors and expert personnel assigned to investigative units and a lack of basic resources for the medico-legal investigation of these serious crimes. He also noted with grave concern a lack of due diligence and serious conflicts of interest likely to result in negligence and procedural omissions in the investigation of some of the murders. On 14 October 2023, Kevin Meza, an 18-year-old campesino, was murdered in the municipality of Tocoa, in Colón department, during peaceful protests in defence of land rights. He is alleged to have been killed by members of the National Police who intervened to disperse the campesinos and later took over the investigation of his murder. Those responsible are still at large.

51. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the signature of the agreement between the Government, the Agrarian Platform and the Coordinating Committee of Community Organizations of Bajo Aguán in 2022. The agreement provided for the creation of a tripartite commission, which had already been established as at April 2024, to mediate in the conflict and prevent and investigate related human rights violations. However, he remains deeply concerned about the impunity that prevails in respect of the deaths of and attacks on defenders of land and territory that have continued to occur since the signature of the agreement. Security guards and agents of private security companies have allegedly been involved in these threats, attacks and killings.

52. These attacks are not limited to the Bajo Aguán region. Pablo Hernández Rivera, a local media worker and member of the Lenca Indigenous community who denounced local government corruption, was murdered in early 2022 in Tierra Colorada, in Lempira department, allegedly by order of the local authorities, due to his activism. Two persons from his community were arrested and charged with murder in June 2022 and are now awaiting sentencing. Mr. Hernández Rivera's family are reported to have suffered threats for having demanded accountability, including from those who ordered the murder.

53. The Special Rapporteur noted with grave concern that many of the victims of the recent attacks and killings were persons benefiting from precautionary measures under the National Protection System for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators. The State has a duty to protect the right to life and any breach of this obligation may in itself equate to a violation of the right.

## B. Excessive use of force in the context of the fight against crime

54. The Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned about the state of emergency declared by Decree No. 29-2022 in a bid to combat extortion and related crimes that entered into force on 6 December 2022. Excessive and unscrutinized powers have been granted to the National Police and the Public Order Military Police, which bodies continue to carry out civil security tasks using military tactics and weapons, including making arrests and conducting searches without warrants, at a time when various fundamental rights and freedoms, such as the rights to personal liberty and freedom of association, assembly and movement, among others, have been suspended. The state of emergency has been extended nine times to date and has been expanded into all 18 departments. Several of these extensions

<sup>50</sup> CCPR/C/HND/CO/2, para. 19.

have been passed in Congress with only limited debate as to their effectiveness and the controls that might be relevant. On at least three occasions, the extensions have not been passed in their entirety, in violation of national regulations.

55. Multiple human rights violations have been reported, among them arbitrary and excessive use of force, including lethal force, and unlawful killings allegedly committed by the Police Directorate for Combating Gangs and Organized Crime and the Public Order Military Police. In 2023, OHCHR documented seven cases of enforced disappearances (of six men and one transgender woman), five extrajudicial killings (all of men), four cases of torture and ill-treatment (all against men) and one case of sexual violence (against a woman). It also recorded allegations of illegal detentions, excessive use of force, abuse during searches conducted without a warrant and planted evidence, particularly in the departments of Cortés, Francisco Morazán and Yoro.<sup>51</sup>

56. Wilson Ariel Pérez Hernández was killed in 2022 in San Pedro Sula by members of the former National Anti-Gang Task Force. The police stated that he was killed in a shooting while resisting an arrest warrant issued following an assault on a female police officer who was attempting to disperse a brawl at a football match. The victim had publicly announced that he would surrender to the police in exchange for guarantees of his safety. After his murder, evidence, including closed circuit television footage, emerged which showed that he had been severely beaten before being summarily executed. Four police officers were charged with the murder and were awaiting trial at the time of writing. However, they are likely to be released early. The family has received threats for having demanded justice.

57. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the publication of the National Police Manual on the Use of Force and Firearms.<sup>52</sup> However, the guidelines contained in the Manual are not legally binding and a specific regulatory framework is required to ensure their effective application. The Special Rapporteur also welcomes the bill to regulate the use of force by law enforcement bodies and officers in Honduras, which is based on relevant international standards and is currently being considered by Congress. He calls for the bill to be adopted.

### C. Deaths in custody

58. The National Prison System, which can accommodate 13,000 persons at maximum capacity, is currently housing around 19,500 adults (about 18,500 men and 1,500 women). Overcrowding is thus nearly 30 per cent above capacity, contributing to violence and deaths in custody. Owing to long delays in the administration of justice, around 45 per cent of those in prison are in pretrial detention. At the time of the visit, the judiciary was implementing a prison decongestion plan in an attempt to reduce overcrowding, for example by granting early release where appropriate and expediting trials. As a result, overcrowding had been reduced by 6 per cent compared to 2022.

59. Homicides, inter-gang violence and access to weapons among gang members<sup>53</sup> are long-standing problems in prisons that are aggravated by substandard infrastructure and lack of resources, including the resources needed to ensure inmates' health and safety. The accidental fire at the national prison in Comayagua in 2014, in which 361 inmates died, was the deadliest ever recorded in a prison. The high death toll was attributed to a combination of overcrowding, lack of adequate fire safety measures and poor prison management. In 2019, gang violence claimed the lives of 37 detainees across the country's prisons, leading the Government to impose a state of emergency and place prisons under military control until February 2022.<sup>54</sup>

60. The Special Rapporteur noted that there was no unified computer system for registering and monitoring persons held within the prison system and no centralized system for recording information on deaths in custody, including the cause and manner of death and

<sup>51</sup> A/HRC/52/24, para. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Ministerial Agreement No. 1147-2023.

<sup>53</sup> See [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/415610\\_HONDURAS-2022-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/415610_HONDURAS-2022-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> See <https://www.hrw.org/es/world-report/2021/country-chapters/honduras>.

the outcome of any investigations conducted. Such information is essential for the design of prison management policies that respect human rights and for the prevention of deaths in custody.

61. Honduran prison regulations require all deaths in custody to be investigated, irrespective of the apparent cause and circumstances. However, this important provision is undermined by the fact that investigations rarely comply with established international standards, including the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Wrongful Death of 2016, not least because practising forensic doctors lack the specialist knowledge and training necessary for its effective implementation. The families of the deceased rarely have access to the results of investigations, which are not usually shared with the prison administration.

62. The Special Rapporteur welcomed the current Government's early efforts to demilitarize the national prison administration, improve prison management and reduce the persistently high level of violence in prisons, including deaths in custody. To lead these efforts, the Government established the National Prison System Intervention Commission, tasked with improving conditions of detention. Additionally, however, he noted with concern the persistent long-standing structural problems – in particular, severe overcrowding coupled with a level of human and material resources alarmingly insufficient to guarantee the safety of inmates and staff – and alerted the authorities to the fact that, without substantial improvements to staffing levels, infrastructure and prison security, the risk of prison violence would not be abated.

63. Shortly after the Special Rapporteur's visit, on 20 June 2023, a violent brawl between rival gangs erupted at the National Women's Prison for Social Adaptation in Támara, resulting in the death of 46 women. Inmates clashed using knives, arson and firearms, the latter belonging to the National Police. When the former head of the Intervention Commission requested an investigation into the origin of the weapons, she received death threats that forced her to flee the country for her own safety. The investigations into the events and the deaths are continuing.

64. As a result of these events, the Government declared a state of emergency in the National Prison System and issued Executive Decree No. 28/2023, re-establishing military control and thus leaving the promising reforms on hold. The Decree delegated to the Public Order Military Police, for one year, the powers to serve as Intervention Commission. The Government also announced plans to build a maximum-security prison on the Swan Islands, a group of remote Caribbean islands, to house gang leaders and prisoners considered violent. This situation raises serious concerns about the ability of the Armed Forces to manage prisons without the relevant training. Owing to this lack of training, a restrictive approach to security, as opposed to an approach respectful of the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty, is likely to be favoured and thus could fuel still more prison violence and, consequently, deaths.

## **VI. Duty to investigate and access to justice**

65. A number of structural impediments continue to impede access to justice and accountability for past and present human rights violations. This situation is attributable, among other things, to the fact that investigations are to a great extent inadequate, to flaws in the administration and enforcement of justice, including unjustified procedural delays, to the limited extent to which victims are involved in criminal proceedings, and to the absence of an effective victim and witness protection system. The Special Rapporteur also noted that capacity for investigating violations of the right to life was limited and that such investigations were often neither prompt, effective, thorough, independent, impartial nor transparent, as required by international standards. He further noted a lack of cooperation from the Armed Forces and security forces when it came to sharing important information with the Public Prosecution Service and allowing access to military installations in the course of criminal investigations, especially investigations into crimes committed in the context of the 2009 coup and the 2017 post-election crisis, as well as a lack of coordination between the

offices of the specialized prosecutors assigned to such cases with a view to ensuring their more effective investigation. The Human Rights Secretariat has echoed these concerns.<sup>55</sup>

66. The Directorate for Police Disciplinary Matters is responsible for investigating abuses committed by police officers in Honduras and the Inspectorate General of the Armed Forces and the Humanitarian Law Directorate are responsible for investigating abuses committed by military officers, while the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights process complaints of human rights violations and refers them to the Public Prosecution Service for investigation.<sup>56</sup> The fact that the same law enforcement body suspected of having carried out extrajudicial killings is responsible for the investigation of its own conduct raises serious doubts as to the independence and impartiality of the investigative process and its outcome, and is not compatible with international standards. The Special Rapporteur noted the creation, in 2023, of the Specialist Criminal Investigation Agency within the Public Prosecutor's Office,<sup>57</sup> which is independent from the National Police and is mandated to investigate serious crimes. However, the human and material resources allocated to this Agency are insufficient.

67. Another recurrent impediment is that the investigating authorities often refuse or otherwise obstruct the registration of victims' complaints. Additionally, human rights defenders are frequently criminalized while those who report unlawful killings, including relatives of victims, face threats and attacks. Junior Tomás Santos Pineda was arbitrarily detained in March 2023 by officers of the National Police and the Police Directorate for Combating Gangs and Organized Crime, who used violence to enter and raid his home on the pretext of the state of emergency, and, at the time of writing, his whereabouts are unknown. During the arrest, the police threatened his family and severely beat his brother Darwin Fabricio Santos. In June 2023, Tomás Santos Alejandro, the father of Junior Tomás, was shot and killed at his home by unidentified assailants. In July 2023, Darwin Fabricio Santos was arrested, charged with gang activity and imprisoned pending trial. Those responsible for the disappearance of Mr. Santos Pineda and the murder of his father remain at large.<sup>58</sup>

68. The Special Rapporteur noted that victims had only limited access to free and effective legal services. Although article 16 of the Code of Criminal Procedure establishes that the Public Prosecution Service must provide legal assistance when required, the provision of such services is hampered by a lack of resources that creates an additional obstacle to victims' participation in criminal proceedings, as required by international standards.<sup>59</sup>

69. The Special Rapporteur noted with great concern that the State, and particularly its criminal justice system, has failed to comply with decisions of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that require the State to take the measures necessary to investigate, prosecute and, especially, punish those responsible for the commission of extrajudicial killings. The Public Prosecution Service has not yet implemented any of the protocols that the Court has called for, including, in particular, a protocol for investigating crimes committed against LGBTIQ+ persons, human rights defenders and victims of political violence in the electoral context, despite having received assistance for their formulation, including from OHCHR and from this mandate holder.

## VII. Medico-legal and forensic investigation system

70. The Special Rapporteur noted with concern that medico-legal and forensic capacity and resources appeared to be insufficient to ensure the adequate and reliable investigation of crimes, including serious human rights violations such as unlawful killings. Specialists in

<sup>55</sup> See [https://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2023/CIDH/IA2022\\_Cap\\_5\\_HO\\_ES.pdf](https://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2023/CIDH/IA2022_Cap_5_HO_ES.pdf), para. 59.

<sup>56</sup> See [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/415610\\_HONDURAS-2022-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/415610_HONDURAS-2022-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf); page 4.

<sup>57</sup> See <https://www.mp.hn/publicaciones/area/atic-agencia-tecnica-de-investigacion-criminal/>.

<sup>58</sup> See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28651>.

<sup>59</sup> [A/HRC/45/13/Add.3](#), para. 61. See also the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Wrongful Deaths, para. 25.

anthropology and forensic archaeology are lacking, and access to effective forensic investigation is very limited, if it exists at all, in the remote areas where many of these crimes are reported. The Special Rapporteur discovered that the Tocoa morgue, which is described as being “mobile”, was in fact immobile and lacked equipment, notably radiology equipment, essential to the reliable investigation of cases of violent death.

71. The fact that the General Directorate for Forensic Medicine is structurally dependent on the Public Prosecutor’s Office is incompatible with the impartiality and independence expected of medico-legal systems for investigating deaths under international standards. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the bill to create a decentralized national institute of forensic medicine and science separate from the current General Directorate of Forensic Medicine attached to the Public Prosecutor’s Office, which was submitted to Congress in March 2023. A “decentralized” institute would mean an autonomous, independent institute with its own legal personality and resources, and thus with greater capacity to conduct investigations with full impartiality and with the necessary State powers.<sup>60</sup>

72. The Special Rapporteur acknowledges other legislative and institutional advances aimed at improving forensic investigations and reiterates the need to adopt specific measures to implement these laws. He particularly welcomes the adoption of the Act on the National DNA Database System, passed by Congress in August 2023,<sup>61</sup> which will allow for the categorization and systematization of analyses of DNA profiles obtained from samples and evidence related to criminal investigations and of civil and humanitarian identifications made in the context of situations such as mass disasters, migration and human trafficking, among others.

## VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

### A. Conclusions

73. **The Special Rapporteur welcomes the fact that the authorities have made an express commitment to investigate and prevent unlawful killings, have acknowledged the problems existing in the area of human rights and have identified the measures needed to address them. Their stated political will must be translated into specific and measurable actions that allow for prompt, effective, thorough, independent and impartial investigations of all cases of unlawful killings, even in the absence of a complaint (i.e. ex officio), for full reparations to be granted to victims and their families and for all those responsible, including those who ordered, planned or agreed to violations of the right to life, to be brought to justice.**

74. **The Special Rapporteur recalls that the duty to combat impunity for unlawful killings is a State obligation, not an option. Bringing those responsible for unlawful killings to justice is also essential to preventing the recurrence of such violations and enforcing the victims’ right to reparations.**

75. **The Special Rapporteur welcomes the cooperation and technical assistance programmes established between the Government of Honduras and OHCHR, particularly the programmes intended to strengthen the rule of law and build capacity within the prison system.<sup>62</sup> He encourages the State to extend this cooperation to encompass the effective investigation of unlawful killings and expansion of medico-legal and forensic capacity, including through international cooperation, in particular South-South cooperation. Such cooperation will be key to breaking the culture of violence and impunity.**

<sup>60</sup> A/HRC/50/34. See also <https://seguridad.gob.hn/subsecretaria-de-seguridad-busca-crear-instituto-nacional-de-medicina-legal-y-ciencias-forenses/>.

<sup>61</sup> See <https://justiciaforense.org/2023/08/23/aprobada-ley-de-bases-de-datos-de-adn-en-honduras/>.

<sup>62</sup> Human Rights Council resolution 54/30.

## B. Recommendations

76. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Honduras carry out prompt, effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigations and, in particular, urges the State to:

(a) Ensure that all potentially unlawful deaths are investigated in a prompt, independent, impartial, effective, thorough and transparent manner, applying a gender perspective and in accordance with international standards, including, in particular, the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Deaths;

(b) Adopt the bill to create a national institute of forensic medicine and science and allocate sufficient human and financial resources to ensure the institute's effective and autonomous operation;

(c) Prosecute all those responsible for carrying out or instigating unlawful killings and all senior officers in the chain of command responsible for such killings in order to end the situation of structural impunity;

(d) Operationalize the DNA databases that will serve as the basis for investigations into unlawful killings, including the reliable identification of the deceased, and ensure access to information for the victims' families; these databases should be consolidated across all investigative agencies and should allow for information cross-checking in all 18 departments of Honduras, while ensuring that personal data is protected;

(e) Ensure that victims and families have unrestricted access to complaint mechanisms and case files and are able to participate in investigative processes, including by adopting victim and witness protection systems to prevent reprisals;

(f) Ensure effective and transparent coordination between specialized prosecutors' offices and prevent police involvement in investigations into potentially unlawful deaths in order to ensure timely and thorough investigations.

77. With regard to the investigation of past human rights violations, including extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Honduras:

(a) Implement all outstanding recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in particular by thoroughly investigating violations committed before and after the 2009 coup d'état, prosecuting those responsible, providing reparations to the families and adopting measures to ensure that the events are not repeated, in accordance with the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;

(b) Facilitate effective search and recovery operations and the reliable forensic identification of victims of extrajudicial killings committed in the past, including while the national security doctrine was being applied in the 1980s and 1990s;

(c) Consider adopting, as a matter of priority, the draft law on victims of the national security doctrine and ensure that its provisions guarantee the investigation of serious human rights violations as well as reparations for the victims.

78. With regard to deaths in custody, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Ensure that all deaths in custody are investigated in accordance with the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Deaths;

(b) Ensure that all medico-legal and forensic investigators responsible for investigating deaths in custody receive adequate training on the use of the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Deaths, have the resources necessary for its effective implementation and communicate appropriately with the relevant prison authorities;

(c) Establish a unified, computerized central registry system containing disaggregated data on all persons deprived of liberty in the country and all deaths in custody nationwide, including an indication of the cause of death;

(d) Notify the families of persons who die in custody in a prompt and transparent manner;

(e) Ensure that prisons are managed by civilian forces and that prison security personnel receive adequate training on international standards related to deprivation of liberty, including the management of situations of violence and emergencies;

(f) Ensure that prisons are not controlled by gangs and that inmates do not have access to weapons, drugs and cell phones that could be used to commit crimes and endanger the lives of others inside and outside prison;

(g) Work to reduce overcrowding by adopting, among other measures, less punitive policies that prevent excessive use of pretrial detention.

79. With regard to the use of force, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Implement, as a matter of urgency, the National Police Manual on the Use of Force and Firearms (introduced by Agreement No. 1147-2023);

(b) Adopt the bill to regulate the use of force by law enforcement bodies and officers in Honduras and ensure that its provisions adhere fully to the fundamental principles of necessity, proportionality, legality, precaution and non-discrimination;

(c) Provide adequate financial and human resources, and also equipment, to law enforcement bodies in order to ensure compliance with human rights standards;

(d) Provide training on the aforementioned international standards to all agents mandated to use force, and establish administrative and criminal mechanisms to ensure accountability and appropriate penalties;

(e) Ensure that the military police are not involved in public security activities or activities that, in compliance with international standards, should be carried out by non-military personnel;

(f) Identify and address the structural causes of violence and insecurity and ensure that the declaration of a state of emergency and the suspension of rights is an exceptional measure subject to systematic review in full compliance with international human rights law and, in particular, the principles of necessity and proportionality.

80. With regard to femicides, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Adopt and implement, without delay, a specialized protocol for the prevention and investigation of gender-based killings of women and girls, in accordance with the standards established in the Latin American model protocol for the investigation of gender-based killings of women, and foster coordination between civil society and public institutions to ensure its effective implementation;

(b) Amend the Criminal Code to increase the penalties for femicide and make them proportionate to the seriousness of the crime, and ensure that cases of femicide are investigated by the Inter-agency Commission for Monitoring Investigations of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides and that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished appropriately;

(c) Train criminal justice system actors to address the personal and contextual factors that lead to femicide, which include deeply rooted misogynistic beliefs. The content of the training should be developed in collaboration with civil society actors and academia.

81. Regarding violent deaths of LGBTIQ+ persons, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Redouble efforts to prevent deaths resulting from violence based on gender or sexual orientation, in particular by ensuring that all such cases are investigated in accordance with international standards, and take steps to address the underlying discrimination and stereotyping apparent in such investigations;

(b) Move forward, in cooperation with OHCHR and civil society organizations, with the promotion, training and effective implementation of a protocol for the investigation and prosecution of violent deaths of LGBTIQ+ persons.

82. With respect to children and adolescents, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Adopt appropriate measures to protect the right to life of children and adolescents, especially in areas controlled by gangs and during arrests and raids, and establish rules for security forces and investigative agencies to ensure that the rights of children and adolescents are protected during homicide investigations;

(b) Investigate all violent and other serious crimes committed against children and adolescents promptly, thoroughly and impartially and prosecute and punish those responsible, at the same time ensuring that full reparations are provided to victims;

(c) Develop programmes to protect children and adolescents who refuse to join gangs, including by ensuring the effective implementation of and sufficient funding for the Comprehensive System for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Honduras.

83. With regard to the situation in the Bajo Aguán region, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Guarantee the effective investigation of all violent deaths occurring in the context of the Bajo Aguán conflict;

(b) Allocate adequate resources to investigative units, including forensic units, and ensure effective protection against reprisals and acts of intimidation for witnesses, victims and their families;

(c) Operationalize and ensure the effective functioning of the tripartite commission established to mediate in the agrarian conflict in Bajo Aguán with a view to finding lasting solutions, addressing structural challenges and guaranteeing reparation and measures of non-repetition.

84. With regard to human rights defenders, journalists, social communicators and justice operators, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Strengthen the National System for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators in order to guarantee its effectiveness, adopt clear protocols for assessing risk situations and raise awareness of the mechanism, particularly at the local level;

(b) Call on investigative agencies to establish the pattern of human rights violations, particularly violations committed against the aforementioned groups, with a view to identifying the root causes of unlawful killings and developing a strategy to prevent their recurrence, including by bringing the perpetrators and instigators to justice;

(c) Adopt a comprehensive protection mechanism to protect the physical and psychological integrity and life of persons belonging to this group.

85. With regard to Indigenous Peoples and persons of African descent, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Protect the right to life of persons belonging to Indigenous and Afro-Honduran communities and ensure that a differentiated approach is applied in the investigation of all potentially unlawful deaths, threats and attempts on their lives, taking the context of historical discrimination into account and ensuring the availability of the human and financial resources necessary for this purpose.

86. With regard to the fight against impunity and corruption, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Continue to work with the United Nations to address the root causes of corruption and to combat corruption in all public institutions, including as a prerequisite for ensuring truth and justice for all victims of violations, including unlawful killings, and members of their families, and for restoring public trust in State institutions, including the criminal justice system;

(b) Commission an independent assessment of the work of investigative agencies, including the Public Prosecution Service and its specialized units, in order to identify the structural weaknesses that lead to inconclusive investigations, particularly in cases of potentially unlawful deaths, and adopt an accountability protocol designed to ensure that any person found responsible for obstructing access to justice, tampering with evidence or obstructing the prosecution of perpetrators is held accountable;

(c) Adopt a policy of zero tolerance for corrupt behaviour and abuse of power in all State institutions with a view to increasing accountability and eliminating real and perceived impunity.

87. The Special Rapporteur recommends that OHCHR expand its programmes of support for the National Prison System so as to ensure the reliable investigation and prevention of deaths in custody, including forensic investigations that conform to international standards, particularly the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Deaths.

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# **Exhibit 7**

# At least 4,050 women were victims of femicide in Latin America and the Caribbean In 2022: ECLAC

[caribbean.un.org/en/253787-least-4050-women-were-victims-femicide-latin-america-and-caribbean-2022-eclac](https://caribbean.un.org/en/253787-least-4050-women-were-victims-femicide-latin-america-and-caribbean-2022-eclac)

## Story

23 November 2023

Femicidal violence can be prevented with comprehensive and forceful state responses, says says the United Nations regional organisation.

In 2022, at least 4,050 women were victims of femicide (also known as feminicide) in 26 countries and territories of Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the latest data that official agencies reported to the [Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (GEO) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This is equivalent to one gender-related killing of a woman every two hours in the region.

“It is not possible to identify an upward or downward trend in the rates of femicide or feminicide in each country, since the variations are small and do not reflect an increase or decrease in the problem,” ECLAC explains in a [new report](#) on this issue. However, the United Nations regional organization stresses, it can be affirmed that femicide persists in the region, despite greater public awareness, legislative advances, progress in the measurement of cases and the state response.

Of the 19 countries and territories in Latin America that reported the number of femicides or gender-related killings of women in 2022, the highest rates were seen in Honduras (6.0 per 100,000 women), the Dominican Republic (2.9) and El Salvador and Uruguay (1.6). The lowest rates (meaning less than 1 victim per 100,000 women) were observed in Puerto Rico and Peru (0.9), Colombia (0.8), Costa Rica (0.7), Nicaragua (0.5), Chile (0.4) and Cuba (0.3).

In the Caribbean, 46 women were victims of lethal gender violence in the seven countries and territories that provided information corresponding to 2022. The highest number of cases by far was in Trinidad and Tobago (43).

“We will not get tired of saying this: Latin America and the Caribbean has a duty to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. It is unacceptable that more than 4,000 women and girls are murdered each year in our countries on the basis of gender,” José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ECLAC’s Executive Secretary, said just before the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), which is commemorated each year on November 25 and launches 16 days of activism through to December 10, which is International Human Rights Day.

In the context of his official visit to Chile, the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, participated in one of the commemoration and awareness-raising activities that ECLAC and the UN System in the country carry out each year in the framework of the [UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women campaign](#).

Launched in 2008, this initiative by the UN's highest authority calls on governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, media and the UN system to join forces to prevent and eliminate this true global pandemic. The theme this year is "UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls."

Femicide is simply the most extreme expression of inequality, discrimination and the multiple forms of violence against women and girls, ECLAC reiterates. For example, according to specialized national surveys from 10 countries in the region, between 42% and 79% of women (around 2 out of every 3) have been victims of gender violence in different areas of their lives. In addition, on average, 1 in 3 women has been or currently is a victim of physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone who was, or is, their partner, which entails the risk of lethal violence, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). This corresponds to 88 million women over 15 years of age in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time, early and forced child marriages and unions are a harmful practice and a manifestation of gender violence that persists and is widespread in the region, affecting 1 in 5 girls.

"Femicidal violence can be prevented with comprehensive and forceful state responses. Profound transformations are urgently needed to ensure that the women and girls of our region can live violence-free lives," José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs underscored.

More than 70% of the femicide victims in 2022 were between 15 and 44 years of age, according to the information provided by eight Latin American countries. However, 4% of them were under 15 and 8% were aged 60 or older.

In seven countries that reported to ECLAC, at least 400 children, adolescents and other dependents lost their mother or caregiver due to femicide in 2022. On this topic, it is important to note that only eight Latin American countries have created concrete reparation measures to support the dependents of femicide victims, which constitute a fundamental response in building a comprehensive approach.

To prevent femicidal violence, it is also necessary to strengthen data on the existence of prior complaints of violence or precautionary measures (such as restraining orders) that would allow for assessing risks and taking timely action, and thereby averting gender-related killings.

States in the region must increase budget allocations and invest to bolster policies against gender violence with new strategies for responding to the various manifestations of violence such as, for example, gender violence in digital media, ECLAC warns.

In the [Buenos Aires Commitment](#) – which was approved in 2022 and proposes a path for moving towards a care society – the region’s countries agreed to “promote the adoption and implementation of laws, policies, comprehensive and multisectoral action plans and educational awareness-raising programs to prevent, address, punish and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women, adolescent girls and girls in all their diversity, in different areas and manifestations, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage and early unions.”

Moving towards a care society requires transforming patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns, ECLAC emphasizes.

In sum, the Commission urges the region’s governments to redouble their efforts aimed at improving record-keeping and information systems; to increase budget resources for public policies that respond comprehensively to victims and survivors; and to invest in effective prevention, strengthening risk assessment and effective protection and reparation measures for victims, and their access to medical, psychosocial, legal assistance and other services, as well as to educational, economic and employment opportunities.

Finally, the Commission clarifies that current information on femicide victims does not enable the construction of a comparable time series for the region’s countries. Several countries have improved their femicide records through legal reforms, which has entailed methodological adjustments that prevent a strict comparison.



## **ECLAC Caribbean**

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# **Exhibit 8**

# Violence claims the lives of 127 women in Honduras during the first half of 2025

**swi** [swissinfo.ch/spa/la-violencia-cobra-la-vida-de-127-mujeres-en-honduras-durante-el-primer-semester-de-2025/89782861](https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/la-violencia-cobra-la-vida-de-127-mujeres-en-honduras-durante-el-primer-semester-de-2025/89782861)

efe

August 4, 2025

Tegucigalpa, Aug 4 (EFE) - A total of 127 women were violently murdered in Honduras during the first six months of 2025, of which 63.8% died from gunshot wounds, according to figures from the Center for Women's Rights (CDM, non-governmental) consulted this Monday by EFE.

The report details that of the total cases, 49 were classified as intimate femicides, family femicides, femicides due to sexual violence or linked to organized crime.

In addition, there were 42 deaths from causes yet undetermined, 21 homicides and 15 violent deaths also without specific classification.

63.8% of women's deaths were caused by gunshot wounds and 53.5% of the crimes were committed in public spaces, which are consolidated as the main scenario for these events.

Regarding the relationship between the victims and their aggressors, in 63.7% of the cases it was not possible to determine the link, while 16.6% were committed by ex-partners and 8.6% by unknown persons.

The statistics also reveal that 48% of the murdered women were between 10 and 39 years old; 19.7% were over 50 years old, and 5.5% were under nine years old. In 26.7% of the cases, the victim's age was not established.

The departments with the highest number of violent deaths were Francisco Morazán (24 cases) and Cortés (22), followed by Olancho (15), Atlántida and Yoro, with 11 each.

In June alone, the CDM documented 20 violent deaths of women, of which 80% were perpetrated with a firearm and 75% occurred in public spaces.

Between January and June, the National Emergency System 911 also received 13,034 reports of domestic violence and 15,647 reports of family abuse, reinforcing the magnitude of the problem of gender violence in the country.

Ninety-five percent of cases of murdered women remain unpunished due to a lack of effective investigation, according to official data and feminist organizations, which believe that persistent violence against women occurs within a sociocultural context dominated by machismo and structural inequality. EFE

ac/rao/cpy



# **Exhibit 9**

# Suspect arrested for killing his ex-partner and ex-father-in-law in Roatán

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**LP** [laprensa.hn/fotogalerias/sucesos/honduras-roatan-caso-historia-capturan-sospechoso-OB27518071](https://laprensa.hn/fotogalerias/sucesos/honduras-roatan-caso-historia-capturan-sospechoso-OB27518071)

Redacción La Prensa

September 25, 2025

## Before allegedly killing them, he had threatened the victim via WhatsApp audio messages.

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Updated: September 25, 2025 at 11:44

On Thursday, a suspect in the double murder of his ex-wife and former father-in-law was captured in Roatán. The man was apprehended in a mountainous area after being sought by the National Police for more than 24 hours.

The man was captured in police operations. He attempted to escape through a mountainous area. The deceased victims were identified as **Darlyn López**, who was pregnant, and her father, **Ángel Aguilar**. Meanwhile, **María López**, the young woman's mother and Aguilar's wife, suffered serious injuries and remains under medical care.

According to preliminary investigations, the alleged perpetrator is **Alexander Rosa Pineda**, Darlyn's former partner. According to audio recordings circulating on social media, he traveled from **San Pedro Sula** to Roatán with the intention of murdering the entire family.

"Talk to me on Tuesday or Wednesday, let's see if you're all relaxed with the 'nance', as you call it," the alleged perpetrator threatened in an audio message he reportedly sent to López, which is in the hands of police authorities.

The events unfolded when Rosa Pineda burst into her former in-laws' home and opened fire without saying a word. After the attack, she fled the scene, leaving two dead and one person seriously injured, according to police reports.

Witnesses to the crime allowed the **National Police** to immediately identify the alleged assailant. Since early Thursday morning, investigative teams have been conducting **operations in various locations in Roatán** in order to capture him and bring him to justice.

# **Exhibit 10**

# Third suspect imprisoned in the parricide and murder of his mother and brother in Curarén

[mp.hn/publicaciones/a-prision-tercer-implicado-en-el-parricidio-y-asesinato-de-su-madre-y-hermano-en-curaren](https://mp.hn/publicaciones/a-prision-tercer-implicado-en-el-parricidio-y-asesinato-de-su-madre-y-hermano-en-curaren)



**Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán** . The Women's Death Section of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Life (FEDCV) obtained in an initial hearing a formal indictment with preventive detention against José Santos Figueroa García for considering him responsible for the crimes of parricide and murder against his mother María Alejandra Martínez García (83) and his brother Pedro Figueroa Martínez (51).

The preliminary hearing was scheduled for May 9 at 11:30 a.m.

Similarly, José Humberto Figueroa Martínez (61) and Dilver Dodanin Figueroa Munguía (22) are imprisoned for this reason.

Investigations determine that the victims lost their lives on March 25 of this year at about 5:00 in the afternoon in the Tacha sector of the El Anís hamlet, municipality of Curarén, department of Francisco Morazán, where two brothers and a grandson of the victim arrived at the property to kill Alejandra Martínez García and Pedro Figueroa Martínez.

Similarly, the investigations determined that the accused maintained an enmity with their mother and uncle stemming from a dispute over land inheritances.

During the autopsy, the forensic doctor determined that Pedro Figueroa died from stab wounds; while María Alejandra Martínez García died from asphyxiation by strangulation.

# **Exhibit 11**

# Photographer arrested for stabbing his ex-wife's husband to death

LP [laprensa.hn/sucesos/honduras-crimen-capturan-fotografo-mato-punaladas-marido-exesposa-AJ16799180](https://laprensa.hn/sucesos/honduras-crimen-capturan-fotografo-mato-punaladas-marido-exesposa-AJ16799180)

Jorge Monzón

January 2, 2024

## [Events](#)

### **The detainee found out where his ex-wife was meeting with her current partner and went there to kill him.**



- The 64-year-old man, identified as Hipólito Pavón, was taken into custody by DPI agents.

San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

An elderly citizen made the wrong decision to take the life of the current partner of his former housemate.

Hipólito Pavón, 64 years old, a photographer by trade, jealous of seeing his ex-partner with another man, attacked Fausto Gabriel Irías Uclés, 50 years old, with a knife on the afternoon of December 31 in the La Ronda neighborhood, in the capital.

Don Fausto Irías was taken in serious condition to the Hospital Escuela (HE), where he died hours after being hospitalized, on the last day of the year 2023.

According to the investigative file of the Directorate of Police Investigations (DPI), Pavón's ex-wife called Fausto Irías, her romantic partner, asking him to meet her at a specific location. Irías learned of the meeting and the location, and he discreetly went there as well.

Upon making eye contact, Fausto ran, but after a few meters, he tripped in the street due to a leg injury, slipping on the pavement. At that moment, the suspect took advantage of the situation and stabbed him several times in front of his ex-wife, leaving him nearly dead. With the information provided about the attacker, DPI agents began a search, locating him hours later in the Guanacaste neighborhood.

The children's mother said she went to work on the island because they were experiencing great hardship in El Progreso and she wanted...

The suspected killer was found in possession of the alleged murder weapon, a sharp knife, which he is believed to have used to kill Irías. The arrested man is originally from the municipality of San Antonio de Flores, Choluteca, and resides in the same location where he was apprehended.

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