

Document #2025432

AI – Amnesty International

Human Rights in the Americas. Review of 2019 - Honduras [AMR 01/1353/2020]

The Honduran security forces brutally repressed protests between April and June. Human rights defenders continued to be subjected to attacks, including killings and the misuse of criminal proceedings against them. This raised further concerns over the shrinking space for civil society in the country. Persistent high levels of crime and violence, impunity, inequality and poverty led thousands of people to flee Honduras, either individually or as part of several “caravans” seeking refuge in the USA and Mexico. However, in September the governments of Honduras and the United States signed an Asylum Cooperative Agreement, also known as a “safe third country” agreement, provoking well-founded concerns about Honduras’ capacity to ensure the protection of people forced to seek asylum there instead of the US.

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

The Honduran authorities failed to guarantee the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression during protests against reforms to national health and education services. The security forces used unnecessary and excessive force to repress protests and, on 20 June, the government deployed the army to police demonstrations. At least six people died and dozens more were injured between April and June. Security forces used firearms or less-than-lethal weapons, such as tear gas or rubber bullets, against protesters. Among those killed were 37-year-old Erik Peralta and 17-year-old Eblin Noel Correa Maradiaga, both of whom were shot by members of the Honduran army in June. Military police also opened fire on student protesters in the National Autonomous University of Honduras on 24 June.[1] Attacks against human rights defenders and journalists covering the protests were also reported.

Impunity prevailed in these cases and for the human rights violations committed in the context of the repression of 2017’s post-election protests.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders, particularly those working on issues related to the land, territory and the environment, continued to face high levels of violence, including threats, intimidation and killings, as well as stigmatization and smear campaigns on

social media. Many also faced unfounded judicial proceedings designed to intimidate and harass them and hamper their human rights work. For example, members of the Municipal Committee for the Defence of Common and Public Assets (Comité Municipal por la Defensa de los Bienes Comunes y Públicos, CMDBCP) faced criminal proceedings before courts that normally deal with cases involving organized crime[2]. The case against 12 of them was dismissed in February. However, in September, seven other human rights defenders were charged and detained pending trial. . After two months in a high security jail, they were transferred in November to the Olanchito detention centre, where they remained at the end of the year.

Most attacks against human rights defenders remained unpunished. Major delays and irregularities continued to hamper the pursuit of justice for the killing on 2 March 2016 of Berta Cáceres of the National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras, COPINH). On December 2, one year after seven individuals were found guilty of the murder of Berta Cáceres, a court finally handed down prison sentences against them. At the end of the year, David Castillo, a businessman arrested on 2 March 2018 on suspicion of being behind the killing, was still awaiting trial and there had been no progress in the investigation of others believed to be responsible for planning and ordering the killing.

[1] Honduras: Exercising the right to protest has a high cost for those who dare take to the streets (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/07/honduras-ejercer-derecho-protesta-tiene-alto-costo/>) (News story, 5 July)

[2] Honduras: Autoridades deben garantizar debido proceso a personas defensoras (AMR 37/9929/2019, February)

© Amnesty International

ecoi.net summary:

Report on the human rights situation covering 2019



Country:

Honduras

Source:

AI – Amnesty International ([/en/source/10960.html](https://www.amnesty.org/en/source/10960.html))

Original link:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/honduras/report-honduras/>
[\(https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/honduras/report-honduras/\)](https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/honduras/report-honduras/)

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

27 February 2020

Document ID:

2025432

Austrian Red Cross

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research
and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien

T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583

F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589

info@ecoi.net

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

