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ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RIGHTS REPORT

HONDURAS



SUMMARY

How can the European Union (EU) better contribute to building an enabling space for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Honduras? How can the EU support the progressive realization of Economic and Social Rights - that is to say Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise, Decent Work and the Right to Social Protection for all - in connection with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The SOLIDAR Network is active on these themes in Honduras through its member and partner organisations. During a process led by Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo Integral Honduras (OCDIH) and AWO International, our Network has held several meetings aimed at discussing the current situation of Economic and Social Rights in Honduras, as well as define the modalities of a solid partnership between the EU and CSOs in the promotion of these rights.

This publication presents the main results of these exchanges and is structured around two priority axes:

1. Building Enabling Spaces for Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders (mainly linked to SDGs 16 and 17)



2. Promoting Decent Work and Social Protection for all (mainly linked to SDGs 3, 4, 8)



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1. ABOUT THE SOLIDAR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS MONITOR

In 2015, all United Nations member states signed up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a global commitment to transform our current model of economic development into one based on respect for human rights and the environment. In 2017 - with the aim of promoting policy coherence for development - the new European Consensus on Development announced the alignment of the development activities of the EU and its member states with the 2030 Agenda.

According to SOLIDAR, the 2030 Agenda constitutes a powerful framework to:

1. Promote a model of sustainable development at the service of the greatest number and not of the few, making the full realization of human and environmental rights its main objective;
2. Ensure the progressive realization of economic and social rights, namely decent work, social protection and freedom of association.

The Economic and Social Rights Monitoring Report (ESRM) is a tool developed by SOLIDAR members and partners within the framework of the EU-funded program “Organizing International Solidarity” (OIS).¹ It aims to collect the views and recommendations of civil society organizations (CSOs) on the contribution of national and European policies and programs to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal, and especially of:

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Good health and Wellbeing

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



SDG 4: Quality Education

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



SDG 8: Decent Work and economic growth

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals

The ESRM aims to engage in a structured dialogue with the EU over the progressive realization of economic and social rights and the Agenda 2030, and to contribute to the EU Programming for the period 2021-2027, by paying special attention to EU and national contributions to the promotion of (1) an enabling environment for CSOs and Human Rights Defenders and (2) Decent Work and Social Protection for all.

¹ A presentation of the OIS programme is available at: <https://prezi.com/view/9zuxuivoqUSD3w1pGJSz>



2. HONDURAS - COUNTRY BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

TABLE 1. HONDURAS AT A GLANCE

Population ²	9.746.117 (2019)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ³	€22 billion (2019)
Human Development Index (HDI) and rank ⁴	0.623 (132 nd on 189 countries) (2019)
Total public spending on social protection, including health (percentage of GDP) ⁵	4.4% (2010)
Indicative total budget of the Honduran NIP ⁶	€235 million
Sustainable Development Score (current) ⁷	64.4/100 (105 th out of 193 countries)

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=HN>

³ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/overview_honduras_en.pdf

⁴ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/HND>

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_604882.pdf

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/mip-honduras-2014-2020_en.pdf

⁷ <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/HND>



In recent years, Honduras registered the second highest levels of economic growth - after Panama - in the Central American region, and over the last 20 years its Human Development score increased by almost 23%.⁸ Despite this positive trend, however, the country remains plagued by very high levels of poverty and inequality, with 48.3% of people being indigent as of 2018, especially in rural areas, and inequality being one of the highest in Central America and the world, which results in Honduras having one of the smallest middle classes in Latin America (11% in 2015 vs 35% regional average). In addition, “Honduras struggles from high levels of violence with over

41 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (2017)” and it is vulnerable to “natural adverse events and climate change, especially heavy rainfall and drought that regularly occur and disproportionately affect the poor.”⁹ In addition, Honduras also struggles with high degrees of corruption, with efforts to fight the phenomenon remaining still insufficient. This is reflected in the Global Corruption Barometer 2019¹⁰ as well as in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)¹¹ 2019 released by Transparency International (TI) - the latter ranking the country as 146th out of 180 for level of corruption.

⁸ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/HND.pdf

⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview>

¹⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/latin-america-and-the-caribbean-x-edition-2019>

¹¹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/index/nzl>

EU-Honduras cooperation is based on the Framework Cooperation Agreement signed by the EU and Central American countries in 1993, and their relationship was further strengthened in 2013 with the signing of the Association Agreement, the most important institutional bond the EU can establish with its partners at the global level. Development cooperation priorities between the EU and Honduras are established through the Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIP), which draw on the Honduran government's

internal development plan and objectives. The current MIP 2014-2020,¹² which was developed also based on lessons learned after evaluating cooperation between the EU and Honduras from 2002 to 2009, is based on the country's vision for the 2010-2038 period,¹³ and on its first operationalisation plan - the 'Plan de Nación 2010-2022.' The MIP establishes the following cooperation priorities and their related objectives:

COOPERATION SECTOR	GENERAL OBJECTIVE	BUDGET (€235 million total)
Food security: policy and strategy with a focus on family agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to the national objective of achieving an educated and healthy country, free of extreme poverty, with consolidated social welfare systems (as defined in the National Plan) 	€100 million (42.5%)
Employment: decent work and social protection policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to the national objective of being a productive country that generates opportunities for decent employment, and has consolidated social security systems (from the National Plan) 	€85 million (36.2%)
Rule of law: universal accountability to the law and citizens' democratic participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to the national objective of achieving a democratic and secure country, free of violence, based on transparent, efficient, inclusive and competitive state (as defined in national development plan) 	€40 million (17%)

¹² https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/honduras/15211/multiannual-indicative-programme-honduras-2014-2020_en

¹³ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/lc_10.pdf

Most recently, the European partners represented in Honduras - the EU, France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland - also prepared the Joint European Strategy 2018-2022 under the leadership of the government and in consultation with national and local authorities, civil society and the private sector, and proposed new as well as reiterated the existing MIP priorities for this period, namely:

1. *Promoting decent work and economic growth;*
2. *Improving decentralisation and local development processes;*
3. *Contributing to sustainable management of natural resources and to climate change adaptation and mitigation measures; and*
4. *Promoting the rule of law and democratic governance.*

In addition to these priority axes, the following cross-cutting cooperation sectors were identified: human rights, gender equality, and promoting dialogue with state actors.¹⁴

In light of Honduras' development objectives and of EU-Honduras cooperation priorities, and based on the consultations carried out by SOLIDAR's members and partners in the field, this report highlights the following themes to be addressed by the EU in its next Programming priorities and within the context of its work towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Honduras:

- *Building an Enabling Space for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)*
- *Promoting Decent Work and Social Protection for all*

¹⁴ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming-tracker/honduras>

Within these themes, **the SOLIDAR Network in Honduras identified especially workers' rights** on the one hand, and **access to and management of the healthcare system** on the other, **as the main areas needing particular attention and the redoubling of efforts by the EU** in its development cooperation with the country. Background and specific recommendations for EU action on these themes will be found at the end of the relevant chapters and in the conclusions of this report.





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3. BUILDING AN ENABLING SPACE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs) AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (HRDs)

An ‘enabling space for CSOs’ is the set of conditions that allows civil society and individuals to organize, participate and communicate freely and without discrimination, and in so doing, influence the political and social structures around them (CIVICUS).¹⁵ The rights essential to civic space - the rights to freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression - must be respected both in the context of the values, norms and attitudes of society, as well as in the legal framework, regulatory environment, access to finance and meaningful participation in decision-making of states and other relevant entities.

The 2012 EU Communication entitled ‘The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe’s Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations’¹⁶ confirmed the EU’s desire to establish a stronger and more strategic dialogue with civil society organizations and to involve EU delegations in determining the path for CSOs’ participation in policy-making processes.

Moreover, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) as individuals must also be able to accomplish their mission safely and with integrity. Repression, censorship, threats or defamation against HRDs, whether they come from states or private actors, must be abolished.¹⁷ Support for HRDs is thus also an integral part of the European Union’s external human rights policy. In situations where the state cannot guarantee the protection of HRDs, or when the state is the oppressor, the international community must intervene through powerful mechanisms of protection for HRDs.

¹⁵ <https://monitor.civicus.org/FAQs/>

¹⁶ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/burundi/5969/roots-democracy-and-sustainable-development-eu-ropes-engagement-civil-society-external-relations_en

¹⁷ The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution A / RES / 53/144 recognizes the “valuable work of individuals, groups and associations in contributing to the effective elimination of all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples and individuals”, without discriminating between paid or voluntary work, or between professional and non-professional activity. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/53/144>

The existence of an environment conducive to CSOs and HRDs is a necessary condition for the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely Goal 16 - 'Promote the advent of peaceful and inclusive societies for the purposes of sustainable development' - and 17 - 'Partnerships for the achievement of the goals.'

The 1982 Honduran Constitution¹⁸ guarantees full political and civil rights to its citizens, including freedom of thought, expression, association and assembly, as well as it laid the legal foundation for the establishment of the National Commission of Human Rights in Honduras (CONADEH). In 2015, the country also passed, in response to advocacy from civil society and international human rights organisations, law no. 34/2015 for the 'Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Legal Practitioners', which establishes, under Article 19, a National Protection System for Human Rights Defenders.¹⁹

Honduras is, moreover, part of the Inter-American Committee on Human Rights (IACHR) and the protection mechanisms that this implements. In addition, the country is subject, as a result of the signing of agreements and conventions within the United Nations system, to special UN reports on human rights. The most recent of these, dating back to 2019, highlights with concern the situation of poverty and exclusion that exists in Honduras, including problems with access to healthcare and the condition of migrants, as well as the violation of human rights in the business world, the lack of independence of the justice system and impunity.²⁰ In 2019, the IACHR also presented a series of recommendations²¹ for the

18 <http://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/Honduras%20Constitution.pdf>

19 <https://www.ishr.ch/news/honduras-ensure-effective-implementation-human-rights-defender-protection-law>

20 https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/40/60/Add.2

21 <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Honduras2019-en.pdf>



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government of Honduras in regard to the protection of human rights, including, among others, preparing a plan for access to justice to ensure that victims, family members and HRDs have broad access to investigations and judicial processes related to rights violations, especially for women and LGBT+ people; reviewing the national legislation to eliminate provisions that may restrict the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and the work of journalists; and strengthening and increasing resources for the recently established National Protection System for Human Rights Defenders.

Effectively, although several mechanisms for the protection of HRDs and fundamental rights formally do exist in Honduras, their application and effectiveness has often been questioned by civil society and human rights activists in the country.

Cases of death threats, persecutions and smear campaigns against human rights defenders and members of civil society representing vulnerable communities, including the murder of the indigenous leader Bertha Cáceres,²² the environmental campaign leader in Choluteca, Damián Castro,²³ as well as the disappearance of countless other civil society activists and defenders of minority groups, such as leaders of the LGBT+ community, are a reality in the country.

The SOLIDAR Network highlights that **violent repressions of peaceful manifestations organised by civil society to protest government actions have become more and more repetitive**, sometimes even resulting in deaths. This has been especially the case since the contested 2017 election, as reported by Amnesty International.²⁴ As for freedom of expression, this has also come under attack in different ways: on the one hand, as a consequence

²² <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/es/case/case-history-bertha-c%C3%A1ceres>

²³ <https://www.fidh.org/es/temas/defensores-de-derechos-humanos/honduras-asesinato-del-defensor-ambiental-marvin-damian-castro-molina>

²⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2019/07/honduras-ejercer-derecho-protesta-tiene-alto-costo/>

²⁵ <https://tiempo.hn/oacnudh-81-periodistas-asesinados-honduras-2001/>

²⁶ https://www.civicus.org/images/The_Republic_of_Honduras_NGO_Submission_to_the_UN_UPR_22nd_Session.pdf



of the government's control over most media editorial decisions; on the other, through self-censorship, which is very common, with some media silencing internal dissident voices. In other cases still, acts of repression are carried out against media that do not follow the government's editorial guidelines. In this respect, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that 81 media actors have been assassinated between 2001 and 2019.²⁵

Legislative, regulatory and participatory framework for CSOs

The legislative framework for civil society organisations operating in Honduras, is, as reported by CIVICUS, based primarily on “the Constitution, the Civil Code, the Administrative Procedures Code, and the Executive Accord 65-2013”, with the “Law for Neighborhood Boards, the Special Law for Non-Governmental Development Organizations (the “NGO–D Law”), the Law for Non-Governmental Financial Development Organizations and the Community Waterboard Law also affecting civil society operations to different degrees.”²⁶



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The SOLIDAR Network on the ground reports that the regulatory framework for NGOs has not been favourable in recent years, due to an increase in regularisation of the sector

- including the introduction of the requirement to register cooperation agreements, and greater legal and bureaucratic requirements for organisations to open bank accounts as well as file tax returns. In regard to the latter, CSOs have experienced difficulties as they are not differentiated from profit-generating companies by the Honduran fiscal law. Moreover, with the migration of the tax authority from the Executive Directorate of Revenue (DEI) to the Revenue Administration System (SAR) the number of steps for the tax rendering processes has increased. These heavily bureaucratic and cumbersome regulations affecting third sector organisation can be seen as a consequence of the widespread corruption phenomenon in the country, which has also been linked to the NGO sector, due to this initially benefitting from fiscal concessions and permissive regulations which have allowed individuals to use organizations supposedly working for development purposes to commit crimes and embezzle public funds (this phenomenon is known as 'ONGs de maletín'). In addition, the introduction of a new Penal Code in the

country in 2020,²⁷ which has established criminal liability for legal persons - something that was not regulated before - could also have a negative impact on the capacity of CSOs to operate, as analyses on the new law suggest that this might lead groups organising demonstrations to be considered responsible and subjected to criminal law if such demonstrations turn violent.

In terms of CSOs participation to policy-making processes, **our Network reports that CSOs' opinions and proposals are either ignored by the government and/or outrightly ostracised** - in cases when these go against the government's position - or exploited by the government to its advantage when the latter perceives CSOs' views to be somewhat in line with the government's agenda. **At the EU level, the process is perceived by our Network to be more participatory, as more attention is being paid to thematic issues and proposal raised by CSOs, especially thanks to the launch by the EU Delegation in Honduras of the 'Programa de Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos y Democracia (PRODERECHOS)'**²⁸ in early 2020, which will have a 5 years duration and that has as one of its main

²⁷ https://www.civicus.org/images/The_Republic_of_Honduras_NGO_Submission_to_the_UN_UPR_22nd_Session.pdf

²⁸ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/trinidad-and-tobago/63013/programa-proderechos-uni%C3%B3n-europea_hu

objectives that of ensuring “the active participation of non-state actors, in particular civil society organizations and the private sector, in the national human rights system as key agents for the promotion of human rights, the prevention of abuses and the formulation, implementation and oversight of policies and strategies related to human rights.”²⁹ Moreover, several documents to ensure the political participation of civil society were also developed by the EU in collaboration with the Honduran third sector, including the Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2018-2020.³⁰

Capacity building and funding opportunities for CSOs

The SOLIDAR Network in Honduras reports that national public funding mechanisms for CSOs are available in the country, but the process to access the funding can be cumbersome. A mechanism is present for the transfer of public resources to civil society groups who work specifically with populations with vulnerabilities, such as children, young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities. However, for many years it has been denounced by a number of organisations that the resources that should have been transferred to them never arrived in their entirety, or were channeled through other organizations that did not have a proven record of working with the target groups, or that the funding was simply not transferred altogether.

Our Network also points out that, since 2014, another mechanism has been in operation, through which NGOs can obtain provision of service contracts with ministries such as the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. In this context, and in order to avoid hiring fraudulent NGOs, since 2018 the Ministry of Finance launched a

certification process for NGOs who want to apply for these contracts - the ‘Plataforma de Registro para Certificación de Ejecutores de Fondos Públicos’.³¹ However, this registration process is reported to be taking longer than expected, with the last information available to our Network suggesting that, of 51 NGOs that registered for certification, only 6 passed the transparency unit process and have been able to execute public funds.

All in all, the SOLIDAR Network in Honduras highlights that, as a result of the corruption that led to the use of development organizations to misappropriate public funds, it is very difficult to clearly establish how effective state support is for CSOs, and it is thus essential to establish a rigorous transparency process and a system for the allocation of public funds to CSOs that allows to clearly identify the destination of these funds.

When it comes to funding opportunities from international institutions such as the EU, our Network reports that these are present but limited, as well as that the resources available are shrinking while the competition is rising. Moreover, the funding is allocated based on priority areas identified by the funding bodies, and the margin of flexibility they offer is limited. Additionally, in order to have higher chances of accessing EU resources, it is necessary to participate in calls for proposals in a consortium with European CSOs, which reduces the real resources that local organisations have access to. Moreover, another problem arises in regard to the implementation time requirements of the projects, that are often too short to generate real impact.

Finally, in regard to training and capacity building, our Network explains that these are offered mainly as informal opportunities from

²⁹ <https://rds-empleos.hn/plazas/details/19755>;

³⁰ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/colombia/42482/hoja-de-ruta-de-la-ue-para-el-compromiso-con-la-sociedad-civil-2018-2020_en

³¹ <https://www.sefin.gob.hn/rcefp/>



cooperation and national organizations and they are aimed at reinforcing knowledge in the technical teams of the NGOs. Our Network's experience is that administrative personnel are the least likely to benefit from these kinds of training opportunities and that another limitation to the development of capacities of CSO personnel is the absence or scarcity of CSOs' own or donors' resources that can be used for this purpose.

3.1 Promoting an enabling civic environment : SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

Drawing on the elements reviewed so far in regard to Honduras' provisions on the protection and promotion of an enabling environment for HRDs and CSOs and citizens' participation to public decision making, the SOLIDAR Network recommends the EU to dedicate special efforts to the following issues within the context of its CSO development cooperation work in Honduras:

- Ensure meaningful consultation of NGOs on their needs for capacity building, and promote accessibility to training opportunities, including by providing scholarships for participation;
- Advise the government on easing bureaucratic requirements for registration and fiscal reporting of NGOs, as well as promote the establishment of transparency mechanisms and oversight bodies to track the allocation of public funding;
- Simplify the criteria for CSOs to access EU funding mechanisms in Honduras.

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4. PROMOTING DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL



According to the definition of the International Labor Organization (ILO), Decent Work³² consists of the combination of four elements: the free choice of work, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

By virtue of their membership in the Organization, all ILO members also have an obligation to respect, promote and fulfill the following fundamental rights:

- *freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining (Conventions Nos. 87 and 98);*
- *the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor (Conventions Nos. 29 and 105);*
- *the effective abolition of child labor (Conventions Nos. 138 and 182);*
- *the elimination of discrimination in respect to employment and occupation (Conventions Nos. 100 and 111).*

The right to social protection is also a necessary precondition for the achievement of Decent Work, as well as for development more generally. Indeed, social protection is an essential tool to reduce and prevent poverty, social inequality, exclusion and insecurity, to promote equality of opportunity and outcomes, as well as to support the transition from informal to formal employment. By adopting Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors (2012),³³ the member states of the ILO have thus committed to guaranteeing every human being's access to:

- *The security of an income throughout life, in the form of various social transfers (in cash or in kind);*
- *The availability, affordability and quality of a set of essential services, including health care and education.*

³² <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

³³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_165750.pdf

The commitment to achieve Decent Work and Social Protection for All has been upheld by the UN 2030 Agenda, and namely by SDG 1.3 'nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors', SDG 3 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages', SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 8 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

4.1 Decent work

The SOLIDAR Network in Honduras highlights workers' rights as a major priority for improvement and development in the country within the context of the promotion of Economic and Social Rights for all, and urges the actions of the EU and international organisations to pay special attention to this realm. This is in line with the Joint European Strategy 2018-2022 for Honduras, that also considers employment and economic growth as the main development cooperation priority area.

Our Network reports that Honduras has experienced a serious deterioration in its labor market in recent years, with a high presence of informal workers, without access to social security and without the minimum income guarantees to cover their needs.

As of 2018, the number of total workers in the country amounted to a little more than 4 million people, out of a total of slightly above 7 million of the active population (defined as people over 10 years of age who are employed, have sought or are seeking employment). Of the 4 million, 2.1 were non-salaried workers. The deterioration of the labor market becomes evident when considering that 68.5% of workers in 2018 showed some employment-related problem,



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A green graphic overlay on the right side of the page. It features three icons representing Sustainable Development Goals: a book icon for '4 QUALITY EDUCATION', a heart with a pulse line for '3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING', and a bar chart with an upward arrow for '8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH'.

either as unemployed (5.7% - 49.4% of which being young people under 25 years of age), visible underemployed (14.2%) or invisible underemployed (48.6%).³⁴ The latter is clearly the most problematic face of the job market, reflecting the reality of the majority of the labour force being informal sector workers who lack any form of social security guarantees.

As a consequence of these deficiencies in the labor market, Honduras is one of the main migrant-sending countries in Latin America, with the United States being the main recipient.

Rights at work

Honduran labor legislation dates back to 1959 - when the country's Labor Code³⁵ was established - and it remained more or less unchanged until the first decade of the 2000s. The Constitution also contains provisions covering labour rights, including guaranteeing a minimum wage to all workers, to be established periodically through a decree by the Ministry of Labour.³⁶ In 2000, the Economic and Social Council (CES) of Honduras was also created, a government advisory body aimed at facilitating negotiations over minimum wage and employment policies, and at promoting and increasing the competitiveness of companies, as well as improving professional training and the quality of life of workers.

In 2011, the first significant change to labour law provisions since the '50s took place, namely the approval of the Temporary Hourly Employment Law. This Law, which was initially devised as temporary, was made permanent at the end of 2013. Its main intention was that

of increasing the number of available jobs in the country, essentially by allowing companies to hire 40% to 50% of their total payroll as temporary employees. What this provision resulted in, however, was an increase in precarious employment, with many workers earning less than the minimum wage established by law.³⁷

As a result of complaints on labor rights violations and non-compliance with labor legislation by companies, especially of transnational capital, **in 2016 a Labor Inspection Law was approved**, aimed at “promoting, monitoring and guaranteeing that employers and workers comply with and respect all legal provisions relating to work, social security, labor standards, safety and health at work and those relating to social security” and at regulating the General Directorate of Labor Inspection and the inspection power of which this was made depositary.³⁸ This law is considered to be one of the most significant advances in recent decades in terms of regulation of working conditions in the country, although **our Network reports that its implementation has remained very limited, due to the lack of financial and other resources, as well as of political will**, necessary to carry out the administrative and organisational changes required for the General Directorate of Labour to effectively carry out its inspection activities, including approving the Law's General Regulations.

Following the ratification of ILO Convention 102 on Social Security in 2012,³⁹ moreover, Honduras also carried out a series of reforms to its social security system, the highest expression of which was the **approval of the Framework Law of the Social Protection System**⁴⁰ in 2015. While the aspiration of this law was to lead a

34 <https://www.ine.gob.hn/V3/imag-doc/2019/06/Boletin-Mercado-Laboral-2018.pdf>

35 <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/29076/64849/S59HND01.htm>

36 <https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/Honduras%20Constitution.pdf>

37 <http://derechosdelamujer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Empleo-temporal-por-horas-y-los-derechos-humanos-laborales.pdf>

38 http://www.ccichonduras.org/web/site/Descargas/LEYES/LEYES_LABORALES/LEY%20DE%20INSPECCION%20LABORAL/Ley_de_Inspeccion_de_Trabajo.pdf

39 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11200:0::NO::P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102675

40 https://www.ccichonduras.org/web/site/Descargas/LEYES/LEYES_DE_SEGURIDAD_SOCIAL/Ley_Marco_del_Sistema_de_Proteccion_Social.pdf





Author: Judd Irish Bradley

comprehensive reform of the Social Security's health, pension and occupational risk systems, **the SOLIDAR Network in Honduras reports that the changes produced by the law so far are not very significant, one of the reasons being that the institution responsible for its implementation, namely the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, does not have all the legal and technical resources necessary to carry out its activities.** For example, its influence on guaranteeing quality of pensions is limited, and so is its ability to promote prevention actions to reduce the rate of risk of accidents at works, its action being reduced to small interventions related to occupational medicine and its contribution to other benefits such as health, unemployment, maternity or family benefits being almost non-existent.

Finally, in regard to the legislative and bureaucratic framework regulating trade unions in Honduras, the SOLIDAR Network reports that this is in need of reform. Especially, **it is necessary to strengthen the response capacity for the registration and certification of unions, collective agreements and boards of directors of workers' organizations, as well as to improve digital tools for the processing of paperwork and promote**

a process of automation of procedures that allows for the streamlining and de-bureaucratization of these processes, so as to guarantee less burdensome and easier bureaucratic procedures to trade unions. Moreover, **it is also important to improve the conditions in which employment statistics are processed and recorded in order to enhance the quality and timeliness of the data presented for the purpose of serving for decision-making.**

The SOLIDAR Network in Honduras collaborates with two networks to improve the social and economic conditions of workers in the country: the Red de Sindicatos de la Maquila de Honduras (RSMH), whose work consists in facilitating bi- and tripartite dialogue over wage negotiations, social benefits and reduction of conflicts within the maquila industry, and the Union of Food and Beverage Workers' Unions of Honduras (USTABH), which brings together agro-industrial and food processing unions in the banana, fruit (palm, melon, watermelon), beverages and sugar cane industries. The purpose of the USTABH is to influence working conditions and wages in the agribusiness, increase union membership and reduce outsourcing and underemployment in the sector.





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Discrimination at work

Honduras has ratified the 1951 ILO Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration in 1956, and 1958 ILO Convention No. 111, on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), in 1960. The country also adopted a regulation aimed at reducing inequality between men and women, namely the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women (Decree 34-2000), which establishes that “the State will not allow any kind of discrimination based on gender or the age of the man or woman in order to nullify or alter equal opportunities or treatment in employment or training” (Article 46).⁴¹

The elimination of employment discrimination against people with disabilities is another issue that has been legislated on: the Law of Equity and Integral Development for People with Disabilities,⁴² approved in 2005, establishes in article 35 a policy of quotas of jobs that must be covered by people with disabilities. However, it is uncertain to what extent the Ministry of Labor and Social Security implements actions to comply with these provisions.

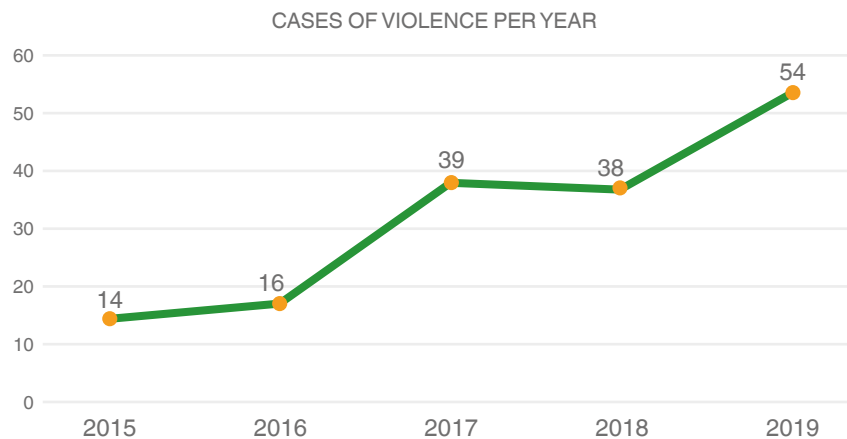
The SOLIDAR Network in Honduras reports that the country does not have statistics on current employment discrimination, its causes and consequences. The only data available is related to female participation in the labour market, which shows that Honduras, despite existing provisions to guarantee equality, remains one of the Latin American countries with the lowest rate of female participation in the labour market (46% in 2018, compared to 76.3% of male participation).⁴³ Moreover, our Network highlights that, despite the lack of official data, other kinds of

⁴¹ <https://www.suelourbano.org/bibliotecas/2017/08/17/decreto-n-34-2000-ley-de-igualdad-de-oportunidades-para-la-mujer-honduras/>
⁴² <https://www.tsc.gob.hn/biblioteca/index.php/leyes/559-ley-de-equidad-y-desarrollo-integral-para-las-personas-con-discapacidad>
⁴³ <https://cicesct.gob.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Informe-ANUAL-2019.pdf>

employment discrimination do keep occurring in the country, especially against members of vulnerable communities, like LGBT individuals.

Violations of trade union freedoms

In 2020, the Network Against Anti-Union Violence presented the report 'The Cost of Defending Trade Union Freedoms 2019',⁴⁴ which reveals a grim landscape for trade unions in Honduras.



Source: *The Cost of Defending Trade Union Freedoms, 2019, p. 6*

While some of the recorded growth in cases of violence against trade unions between 2015 and 2019 can be explained by the improved ability of the Network to document cases of violence over the years, the direction of the trend can hardly be dismissed. As revealed by the report, between 2009 and 2019, at least 36 trade unionists were assassinated, most of them in the framework of the resistance against the 2009 Coup d'état.

⁴⁴ http://festagro.org/?attachment_id=7254



The same report also shows that in 2019, public sector unions were more persecuted than private sector ones (57% versus 43%), and that in more than half the cases (51%) the alleged violence perpetrators remain unknown. In those cases in which the perpetrators were identified, 57% turned out to be public officials, very often belonging to the National Police. Moreover, the main acts of violence against trade union activists took the form of harassment, followed by aggression, threats and intimidation.

The state's involvement in violence perpetration against unions in Honduras becomes evident when looking, for example, at the cases of the murder of the leader of the Workers' Union of the National Autonomous University of Honduras, Héctor Mortino, who also benefited from precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in 2015, when he was assassinated. In this instance, the government tried to cover up the murder by arguing that his death was provoked by 'land conflict'. Similarly, the reaction of investigative bodies to the 2019 assassination of Jorge Acosta, leader the Union of Workers of the Tela Railroad Company, was to falsely accuse him post-death of being a lender and insinuating that his death occurred as a consequence of his activities as such.

All in all, thus, the SOLIDAR Network in Honduras highlights that trade union freedoms and the safety of activists are at high risk in the country.



Author: Svetlana Bykova, Shutterstock.com

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Child labour and human trafficking

Honduras has ratified the two international laws on child labor in Honduras: ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973), ratified in 1980, and Convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999) ratified in 2001.⁴⁵

In 1998, the country created the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor, as a mechanism to guarantee the eradication of child labor. The commission operated under the IPEC program (International Program for the Eradication of Child Labor) of the ILO, that lasted until 2013. In 2015 (according to PCM Decree 057-2015) this Inter-institutional Commission was reformed in order to adapt it to the new government structure and allow more space for its actions. In 2018, the ILO also started a project of the duration of 3 years financed by the United States Department of Labor to reduce child labor in the Honduran coffee chain.⁴⁶

Despite existing efforts to eradicate child labour, actions taken by the country have remained insufficient to fight off this plague: in 2015, the organization World Vision Honduras, that is dedicated to promoting the well-being of girls and boys in the country, published a Diagnostic report on Child Labor in Honduras,⁴⁷ which showed that 14% of children between 5 and 17 years old were active in the labor market, for a total of 381,386 working children. **The SOLIDAR Network highlights that one of the issues that need to be overcome is that of having a National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor without an assigned budget, which results in it currently being mostly unable to implement its functions.**

45 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:102675
46 https://www.ilo.org/sanjose/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_672438/lang--es/index.htm
47 <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Diagn%C3%B3stico%20Trabajo%20Infantil%20En%20Honduras.pdf>

The SOLIDAR Network also points out that not only child labour is persistent in Honduras despite the existence provisions and institutional bodies aimed at preventing and combating it, but that also **human trafficking for commercial purposes continues to represent a major challenge in the country.**

In 2002, the Inter-Institutional Commission Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Honduras (CICESCT) initiated its operations, as a response to commitments made by the State of Honduras at the First and Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual exploitation of Children, held in 1997 and 2001. In addition, in 2012 the Law Against Trafficking in Persons (Decree 59-2012) was approved, the purpose of which is to prevent and combat human trafficking and care for its victims.

Between 2018 and 2019, the CICESCT assisted 344 victims of trafficking, of which 28 were victimized abroad (including Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Swiss and Spain).⁴⁸ In terms of the effectiveness of CICESCT's prosecution of the crimes of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, however, this institution still faces important challenges: in fact, of a total of 78 people accused in 2019, only 38 were sentenced.⁴⁹

According to the 2019 CICESCT report, the main challenges that remain to effectively address human trafficking in Honduras are the lack of human resources in CICESCT, weak capacity in the consulates for the identification of victims and their channeling to the competent institutions in the country of their rescue, lack of protection centers for specialized care for victims and difficulties for the collection of information. Moreover, there is concern over the entry into force of the New Penal Code which includes the penal sanction for crimes of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons,

showing a significant reduction in penalties as well as some gaps in relation to the provisions in international standards.⁵⁰

In light of this context, **the SOLIDAR Network calls on the international community to put pressure on the Honduran government to redouble its efforts and allocate more financial and human resources to combating both child labour and human trafficking. Moreover, our Network calls for the CICESCT body to be made more inclusive and allow the participation and systematic collaboration of trade unions and employers in its work to fight trafficking crimes and rescue victims.**

4.1.1 Promoting Decent Work: SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

The guarantee of Decent Work and the protection of workers rights is a *sine qua non* for the realization of Economic and Social Rights, and is integral part of Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The SOLIDAR Network in Honduras highlights that the creation of job opportunities and the guarantee of workers rights, including freedom of association and access to social security and protection, should be at the forefront of EU-Honduras development partnership efforts. For this reason, and based on the evidence so far, the SOLIDAR Network makes the following recommendation to the EU:

- Ensure the EU Programming process keeps decent work and freedom of association as one of the priorities for Honduras;



48 <https://www.sedh.gob.hn/noticias3/496-trata-de-personas-una-de-las-mas-graves-violaciones-a-los-derechos-humanos>

49 <https://cicesct.gob.hn/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Informe-ANUAL-2019.pdf>

50 *Ibidem*



- The promotion of an enabling space for CSOs should be prioritised in all the actions funded by the EU and its members states in the framework of the joint programming;
- Support the Design and development of mechanisms to report cases of abuses and discrimination at work;
- Promote campaigns and raise awareness on the benefits of an inclusive labour market - including women and marginalised communities such as LGBT people and persons with disability - and of the respect of activists and trade union rights and freedoms;
- Advice and provide technical support to the government in simplifying bureaucratic requirements for the filing of requests and documents of trade unions to public authorities, improving electronic systems and communications;

- Support the government in increasing the resources of the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor and of the Inter-Institutional Commission Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Honduras (CICESCT) to ensure they can fulfill their mandate in fighting child labour and human trafficking.

4.2 Social Protection: Universal Access to Healthcare

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. Good health enhances quality of life, increases capacity for learning, strengthens families and communities and improves workforce productivity. Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people, and guaranteeing them access to quality and affordable healthcare is an expression of social justice.

The SOLIDAR Network in Honduras stresses access to and management of the healthcare system as crucial issues in need of attention and improvement in the country, and calls for an upgrade on government and European development cooperation partners' action in this realm.

Deterioration of health indicators

Our Network reports that the country has experienced a high deterioration of the health system, with health indicators such as level of public investment, out-of-pocket spending, access to medicines and specialised diagnosis having worsened over time.

According to WHO data, for example, an important part of the health expenditure in Honduras is contributed by households - around 50%

- causing the poor to suffer great financial risk when seeking medical attention. In fact, out of 12 Latin American countries, in Honduras out-of-pocket spending on health has the greatest impact on the impoverishment of households (5%).⁵¹

This institutional weakening of the system is also evident from the lack of health infrastructure in the country: between 2009 and 2014, the number of beds per thousand inhabitants went from 0.69 to 0.60 and the health facilities had an average coverage of 4,904 to 5,168 patients. The number of patients per health institution also increased, while the number of doctors available per 10,000 inhabitants in the period 2010-2015 moved from 3.5 to 2.97. The increased discrepancy in number of doctors vs inhabitants is mainly due to population growth and doctor recruitment stagnation.⁵²

Our Network points out that the causes of this deterioration in healthcare services are mainly inadequate management, corruption, misuse of resources and deficiencies in the planning and execution of health policy.

Healthcare governance and marketisation

The Honduran health system is made up of three main actors: the Ministry of Health (SESAL), the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS) - which administers a public health insurance system designed mainly for salaried workers - and the private providers of health services.

The main provider of health services is the Ministry of Health (SESAL), with about 70% of population coverage. **However, the SESAL has been affected by a progressive reduction of its**

51 <https://tiempo.hn/oms-honduras-escasa-inversion-salud/#:~:text=Seg%C3%BAn%20la%20Comisi%C3%B3n%20Econ%C3%B3mica%20de,entre%20doce%20pa%C3%ADses%20de%20Latinoam%C3%A9rica>
52 Based on Health Indicators, Instituto Nacional de Estadística Honduras (INE)
53 <https://www.tsc.gob.hn/biblioteca/index.php/leyes/627-ley-marco-del-sistema-de-proteccion-social>



budget as a proportion of the national budget over the last five years, something that our Network highlights as a signal that public healthcare has not been a major priority on the government's agenda. The budget cuts have caused serious deficiencies with respect to the quality of human resources, supplies and medicines that the public healthcare system has been able to provide, which clearly resulted in a decrease in the quality of public healthcare for end users.

In 2015, the Framework Law of the Social Protection System (LMSPS)⁵³ was approved with the aim of creating the legal framework for public policies on social protection that would guarantee all Hondurans decent health coverage. The most significant change in the health realm that was approved within this Framework Law is the convergence of the country towards a universal insurance system, which is described as a Health Care Insurance regime. Our Network signals, however, that the Medical Association of Honduras and the Workers' Centers have already manifested their concerns over this reform, arguing that this change may not be efficient as it entails shifting from the model of public health provision that currently covers about 70% of the population, to that of public insurance whose coverage currently barely reaches 18% of Hondurans.

While the mechanisms of subcontracting the administration of health services to third parties - be they public bodies like municipalities



Author: amma30, Shutterstock.com

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or private entities such as foundations or private development organisations - was already in place and adopted by the SEAL before the passing of the 2015 Framework Law (and was referred to as 'decentralised management'), these concessions were never before given to for-profit parties. It was only the IHSS - which through a process called 'subrogation' transferred groups of patients to private institutions that would provide first level of care in exchange for a per-capita payment per patient - that was issuing contracts for service administration to for-profit businesses.

Already before the passing of the LMPS, these processes of subrogation and decentralised management had started to present a series of difficulties for users of health services. For example, our Network reports that in many cases the role of each actor was not clearly defined, causing stakeholders to mutually transfer responsibilities to each other, which in turn resulted in patients not being treated on time or not receiving quality healthcare.

Moreover, our Network highlights two further issues that make decentralised health management a less than optimal solution to meet people's healthcare needs in Honduras. On the one hand, in fact, while the SEAL establishes and transfers a per-capita payment per patient to the private healthcare providers, it does not account or take responsibility for any lack of resources that these might be facing, leaving the responsibility to procure and cover the costs for those resources to the private entities themselves. Concretely, this translates into end-users being asked by service providers to pay out of their pockets for 'recovery fees' - which are framed and managed as donations from patients or other organisations - to co-finance these additional expenses. For instance, the San Lorenzo Hospital promoted a fundraising initiative for the hospital through radio and television ads. Clearly, this impacts negatively on healthcare services' end-users.

In addition, the per-capita SEAL payment to service providers is established based on their performance on a series of indicators, which also results in the service delivery entities avoiding to finance any service that is not linked to these indicators, with the consequence of diminishing relevant service coverage for patients.

Finally, our Network reports that the decentralised health management system is also linked to a perceived lack of accountability of public institutions with respect to health services, with the responsibilities of the service providers versus the SEAL not being clearly established, and the common perception being that the only responsibility left with the Ministry is to pay for the healthcare contractual costs established, but not to monitor the efficacy and quality of all essential health service provision.

All in all, **the SOLIDAR Network thus shows concerns over the further marketisation of healthcare services, and calls for a fundamental revision of the healthcare system**, which should reconsider the existing funding and coverage structures to make sure that end-users receive quality and timely care. **This can be done by re-assessing the per-capita payment amounts as well as the way in which the SEAL establishes healthcare indicators and priorities.**

4.2.1 Ensuring quality healthcare: SOLIDAR Network's recommendations

Goal 3 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda consists in ensuring healthy lives and promoting people's well-being at all ages. The achievement of this goal is a fundamental precondition for the achievement of full Economic and Social Rights and of Decent Work.

⁵⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-work_en

Ensuring the provision of good quality and accessible healthcare is also part of the European Commission's current priorities, being considered as one of the main prerequisites necessary to increase countries' human capital and thus their capacity for development, as well as guarantee the respect of individuals' fundamental rights.⁵⁴

In light of this, the SOLIDAR Network stresses the importance of reinforcing the healthcare system in Honduras and recommends the EU to support the Honduran government and citizens' access to healthcare by implementing the following actions:

- Invest on public health as part of the Programming process, ensuring universal access to services including sexual and reproductive health;
- Providing financial and advisory support to the government in building a health system that is capable of responding to the needs of prevention, care, cure and rehabilitation of people, and giving public institutions the necessary resources to effectively manage the delivery of health services;
- Advising the government to rethink the current model based on curative medicine towards a family and community preventive model aimed at the care and control of the social determinations that cause healthy or unhealthy behaviours;
- Consult CSOs on the recovery plans that need to be considered and implemented to support the rebuilding and strengthening of the health system after the COVID-19 crisis.



5. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

According to the SOLIDAR Network in Honduras, the COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered the lack of clear strategies and mechanisms in the country able to effectively address issues of health, the economy, and social dialogue. In calls for social dialogue, only those organizations that were favorable to the government's stance were allowed to participate, while diverse points of view and proposals on alternative models to face the crisis were dismissed, even when they were presented by experts from private companies, academia and civil society, such as the Medical College of Honduras and the Association of Professional Nurses of Honduras. The Network suggests this resulted in the taking of decisions by public institutions that possibly aggravated the impacts of COVID-19 in the country.

COVID-19 changed the labor market landscape in Honduras, mainly because of the suspension of numerous activities to prevent the spread of the virus. There are no official statistics, but according to the Honduran trade union movement, about 500,000 workers might have been suspended from work, namely around one third of all salaried workers. The government introduced legal provisions to counteract the loss of income that workers would incur as a result of their suspensions. One of the most important laws is Decree

33-2020, which contains the Law to Help the Productive Sector and Workers Faced with the Effects of the Pandemic Caused by COVID-19.⁵⁵ This law created a temporary solidarity contribution, a compensation mechanism that guarantees workers a “vital minimum” to cope with the suspension of contracts. The temporary solidarity contribution is assigned to two large groups, namely the workers affiliated to the Private Contribution Scheme (RAP), and the workers in the textile maquiladora sector. This mechanism however lacks a clear regulation that clarifies its functioning.

Evangelina Argueta, Maquila coordinator in the Central General de Trabajadores (CGT) said that the government's help “would not be sufficient to cover the basic consumption basket: they [workers] would receive 6000 lempiras (€ 222) while the basic wage is 8226 lempiras (€ 305). The brands should pay the rest, up to 8226 lempiras, but the companies say they can not pay because they are not selling and do not have money for us.” Moreover, the origin of the funds for this rescue programme is not known. “We asked, but nobody knows or says where our government will get the money.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ <https://www.tsc.gob.hn/biblioteca/index.php/leyes/901-ley-de-auxilio-al-sector-productivo-y-a-los-trabajadores-ante-los-efectos-de-la-pandemia-provocada-por-el-covid-19>

⁵⁶ Based on an interview carried out by SOLIDAR in early 2020. For more info on the impact of COVID-19 on Maquila workers, see SOLIDAR's briefing paper 'Maquila Workers in Central America', available at: <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/briefing-paper-maquilla-workers-in-central-america-falling-off-the-boat-in-the-coronavirus-storm>

Regarding social protection, Decree 31-2020 was approved, which contains the Special Law of Economic Acceleration and Social Protection Against the Effects of the Coronavirus COVID-19,⁵⁷ and a series of mainly financial measures, aimed at providing the Honduran Institute of Social Security with resources to finance the subsidized Pillar of affiliation to Social Security instituted by the Framework Law of the Social Protection System. This Special Law also contains the possibility of direct contracting for the implementation of the Pillar, however it does not contain a specific plan on the mechanisms with which this implementation can take place.

Finally, when it comes to the work of CSOs, our Network reports that one of the most significant impacts that the Coronavirus crisis produced on organizations was the need to redesign work processes to be able to face social distancing measures and thus continue to defend human rights. This new context for the development of organisations' activities presents new challenges for NGOs, especially due to the increase in poverty expected in the country as a result of the fall in national production. In addition, in a process of suspension of personal rights and freedoms, repression by the State security organs might also increase, requiring organisations to stay alert in order to be able to defend people from possible abuses.

⁵⁷ <https://www.tsc.gob.hn/biblioteca/index.php/leyes/908-ley-especial-de-aceleracion-economica-y-proteccion-social-frente-a-los-efectos-del-coronavirus-covid-19>



6. CONCLUSIONS

The promotion of Economic and Social Rights and of a favourable and enabling environment for CSOs and Human Rights Defenders is an essential prerequisite for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its response policies, and the hardship that these have and will continue to cause on people's lives, especially when it comes to their ability to work, to access public services such as health and education, not to mention their ability to exercise fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly, make the promotion of economic and social rights and the strengthening of countries' civil society fabric all the more urgent. In a country like Honduras, moreover, the pandemic risks to exacerbate long-standing problems in the labour market such as availability of decent work opportunities and guarantee of workers' rights, as well as to put pressure on an already strained health system, which in turn results in increased risks and insecurity for people and workers.

The ongoing EU Programming process represents a true opportunity to address these issues and make sure that economic and social rights and the achievement of the SDGs will be the backbone of future EU work with partner countries, a work that SOLIDAR is ready to support. More particularly, and in line with the European Consensus and the 2019 Von der Leyen Commission priorities,



the SOLIDAR Network makes the following recommendations to the EU, in regard to (1) building of an enabling environment for CSOs and (2) promoting decent work and social protection in Honduras:

Building an enabling environment for CSOs and HRDs

- Ensure meaningful consultation of NGOs on their needs for capacity building, and promote accessibility to training opportunities, including by providing scholarships for participation;
 - Advise the government on easing bureaucratic requirements for registration and fiscal reporting of NGOs, as well as promote the establishment of transparency mechanisms and oversight bodies to track the allocation of public funding;
 - Simplify the criteria for CSOs to access EU funding mechanisms in Honduras.
-

PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

Decent Work

- Ensure the EU Programming process keeps decent work and freedom of association as one of the priorities for Honduras;
- Prioritise the promotion of an enabling space for CSOs in all the actions funded by the EU and its members states in the framework of the joint programming;
- Support the Design and development of mechanisms to report cases of abuses and discrimination at work;
- Promote campaigns and raise awareness on the benefits of an inclusive labour market - including women and marginalised communities such as LGBT people and persons with disability - and of the respect of activists and trade union rights and freedoms;
- Advise and provide technical support to the government in simplifying bureaucratic requirements for the filing of requests and documents of trade unions to public authorities, improving electronic systems and communications;
- Support the government in increasing the resources of the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor and of the Inter-Institutional Commission Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Honduras (CICESCT) to ensure they can fulfill their mandate in fighting child labour and human trafficking.

Access to Healthcare

- Invest on public health as part of the Programming process, ensuring universal access to services including sexual and reproductive health;
- Provide financial and advisory support to the government in building a health system that is capable of responding to the needs of prevention, care, cure and rehabilitation of people, and giving public institutions the necessary resources to effectively manage the delivery of health services;
- Advise the government to rethink the current model based on curative medicine towards a family and community preventive model aimed at the care and control of the social determinations that cause healthy or unhealthy behaviours;
- Consult CSOs on the recovery plans that need to be considered and implemented to support the rebuilding and strengthening of the health system after the COVID-19 crisis.

European COMMISSION's Priorities and SOLIDAR Network's Work in Honduras

GROWTH AND LASTING EMPLOYMENT, INCLUSION OF WOMEN



Fondo por la Cooperación para el Desarrollo (FOS) promotes the right to decent work and social determinants for health with the population of the Central American area.

Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo Integral de Honduras (OCDIH) supports local initiatives that promote production, employment and income generation for young people and women at risk of migration, and knowledge management.

Consejo para el Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer Campesina (CODIMCA) is a women's movement that supports peasant women in training, sustainable agriculture, integral health and integral medicine and advocacy.

GOVERNANCE, PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY



AWO International supports local partner organizations on issues related to youth violence prevention, income-generating initiatives with youth, migration and humanitarian aid in cases of emergency or disaster.

Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo Integral de Honduras (OCDIH) promotes active citizenship from a human rights perspective.

Association of Non-Governmental Organizations of Honduras (ASONOG) is a network that promotes governance and democracy actions in communities and with local organizations and comprehensive risk management including the struggle of communities for concession territories.

GREEN DEALS



Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo Integral de Honduras (OCDIH) promotes sustainable production systems and climate change awareness.

CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS

Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo

Integral Honduras (OCDIH)

AWO International

Asociación de Organismos No Gubernamentales
de Honduras (ASONOG)

Fondo por la Cooperación para el Desarrollo (FOS)

Consejo para el Desarrollo Integral
de la Mujer Campesina (CODIMCA)



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Organising International Solidarity (OIS)

A presentation of the OIS programme can be found at the following link:

<https://prezi.com/view/9zuxuivoqUSD3w1pGJSz/>