

Timeline

1539 - Spain conquers Honduras after years of rivalry among competing conquistadors and native resistance to the invasion.

1821 - After repeated insurrections and unrest in Central America, Spain capitulates and signs the Deed of Independence, freeing Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the Mexican state of Chiapas.

1840 - Honduras gains complete independence.

1913 - U.S.-owned United Fruit Company (Chiquita) controls two thirds of Honduran banana exports.

1932 - National Party of Honduras (PNH) candidate General Andino elected president and subsequently opposes strikes, honors rigorous international debt payments, outlaws Honduran communist party, restricts the press, amends the constitution, and retains presidency until 1949.

1957 - New constitution gives the head of the military, not the president, the authority to control the military. After a military coup in 1956, military steps aside for civilian elections.

1963 - Colonel Arellano takes power in a coup and suspends elections for two years, at which time he runs and wins.

1969 - Immigration and border issues spark 4-day war with El Salvador, resulting in about 4,000 deaths and the expulsion of over one hundred thousand Salvadorans from Honduras.

1971 - Arellano steps down for civilian elections, only to take over as president a year later after leading a coup.

1975 - After accepting a \$2.5 million bribe from the United Fruit Company, Arellano removed in a coup led by Colonel Castro.

1978 - Castro removed from power in a coup led by General Paz.

1981 - Central Liberal Party of Honduras (PLH) candidate Roberto Suazo elected president, yet General Alvarez keeps power over the military. US trains Contras, Honduran counter-revolutionaries fighting Nicaraguan Sandinista government.

1982 - Presidential term limits are reduced to one four-year term.

1982-83 - Alvarez detains trade union and leftwing activists in response to political unrest. Battalion 3-16, responsible for assassinations and torture, is created and reports directly to Alvarez.

1984 - Alvarez is ousted and exiled by fellow generals amid anti-American protests and accusations of abuses. US-run contra training camps are closed. US economic aid is given to Honduras for support against Sandinista government.

1986 - PLH candidate Jose Azcona del Hoyo elected president.

1987 - Military and left-wing guerrillas are granted amnesty for human rights abuses committed during the 1980s.

1988 - According to an Amnesty International report, armed forces and right-wing death squads increase human rights abuses. Honduran government is found guilty of “disappearances” from 1981 to 1984 by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

1989 - Left-wing guerrillas assassinate Alvarez. Contras in Honduras are demobilized after agreements with the Summit of Central American presidents in El Salvador.

1990 - PNH candidate Rafael Callejas implements austerity measures and neo-liberal economic reforms after being sworn in as president. The remaining Contras leave Honduras.

1992 - International Court of Justice rules on new boundaries between El Salvador and Honduras.

1993 - A government commission is set up to investigate human rights abuses by the military. PLH candidate and veteran rights activist Carlos Reina elected president, and promises judicial reforms and limits to the military’s power.

1995 - Conscription abolished. Military charged with abuses.

1997 - PLH candidate Carlos Flores elected president and promises to restructure the military.

1998 - Civilian authorities take control of the police from the military, yet human rights abuses continue. Hurricane Mitch kills over 14,000 people and costs almost \$4 billion in damages.

1999 - Military control is given back to the civilian government after constitutional reforms are ratified by congress.

2000 - Supreme Court declares atrocities omitted in the 1980s not

covered by the 1987 amnesty. Over 1,000 street children murdered by police-backed death squads.

2001 - UN calls for a stop to murders of children and teenagers.

2002 - Newly elected PNH candidate Ricardo Maduro calls for armed forces to play a greater role in combatting crime.

2004 - Over 100 prisoners are killed in San Pedro Sula prison fire. 28 bus passengers are killed by suspected gang members.

2005 - PLF candidate Manuel Zelaya elected president. Congress approves free trade deal with US.

2006 - Honduras and El Salvador inaugurate new border.

2007 - For two hours a day for 10 days, radio and TV stations are forced to play government propaganda. International Court of Justice settles border dispute with Nicaragua. For the first time in 46 years, a Honduran president visits Cuba.

2008 - Zelaya cites a lack of international support in the fight against poverty for his joining of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), an alliance of leftist Latin American leaders.

2009 - Honduras expelled from OAS after a coup in reaction to Zelaya’s plans to make changes to the 1982 constitution. Freedom of the press and assembly are suspended. Security forces close media outlets and are accused of thousands of arbitrary detentions and several deaths. PNH candidate Pepe Lobo elected president.

2010 - Charges against six military commanders for expelling Zelaya are dismissed by the Supreme Court. Diplomatic ties are restored with 29 countries following the fallout from the coup. US aid is restored. Allegations of human rights abuses are investigated by the International Criminal Court. Agreements with Mexico are made to protect undocumented Honduran migrants from attacks and kidnappings on their way to the US.

2011 - Police and military enter Aguan Valley in response to deadly conflict between farm workers and land owners. Congress gives military the authority to take on police duties. US Peace Corps withdraws volunteers due to heightened insecurity in Honduras.

2012 - Comayagua prison fire kills over 350 inmates. Farm workers occupy “public” land despite the government calling it illegal. 149 civilians are killed by police between January 2011 and November 2012. Constitutional Branch of the Honduran Supreme Court declares legislation aimed at cleaning the National Police of corruption unconstitutional, leading Congress to dismiss four Supreme Court judges and pass laws giving itself the authority to remove justices and the attorney general. Over 90 LGBTI deaths reported between 2009 and 2012. Despite government investigations, no prosecution have occurred and police are alleged to be involved.

2013 - 33 journalists killed from 2003 to 2013, 29 killed since 2010. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reports government failures to provide resources and address problems regarding overcrowded and inhumane prisons. Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world. Attorney General Luis Rubi and his chief deputy resign prior to the completion of a Congressional investigation into corruption. After thousands of deaths, Honduran street gangs, MS-13 and Calle 18, agree to end violence. The Directorate for Investigation and Evaluation of the Police Career finds that 33 out of 230 police evaluated are corrupt.

2014 - PLH candidate Juan Orlando Hernandez sworn in as president. 31,453 unaccompanied Honduran minors have crossed the U.S border between FY 2009 and the first month of FY 2015, fleeing violence and political and economic instability.



Torture Methods

Police and military forces have been accused of excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, unlawful killings, torture, and harassment and intimidation during and after the 2009 coup. In most cases, the perpetrators have been the National Preventive Police, Cobra Police, military, or armed men in unmarked vehicles with suspected ties to the government and the military.

BEATINGS by military police and unknown assailants, including beatings with sticks, batons, gun butts, fists, and other blunt instruments has been reported in addition to beatings to the head causing loss of consciousness. Victims also report being stabbed with pencils, strangled with cables, and burned with cigarettes and chemicals.

HARRASSMENT and INTIMIDATION of native populations, peasant farmers, LGBTI activists, journalists, human rights defenders and their families have included threats of violence and sexual assault and often occur with impunity. In addition, judges and witnesses to human rights violations have been threatened by text messages, phone calls, emails, having their pictures taken and face to face.

KIDNAPPINGS of human rights defenders and environmental activists have occurred with impunity and often occur with violence, threats, intimidation, and disappearances.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCES of at least 184 trade union, peasant, student and community activists in the 1980s have gone without concrete investigations. Family members are still unaware of the fate of their loved ones.

MURDER by security forces, others acting with implicit consent of authorities and gangs has left thousands of children and youth dead. In addition, murder of journalists who speak out against government corruption and the murder of peasant farmers, sex workers and members of the LGBTI community have occurred with impunity by armed men in bullet proof vests who often drive vehicles without license plates.

FEMICIDE is widespread and occurs with impunity. Violent deaths of women have increased by 263.4% between 2005 and 2013 with a 95% impunity rate for sexual violence and femicide according to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. Girls are forced into prostitution by gangs and refusal to submit is met with threats to family members and death. Gender-based violence and abuse at the hands of police and military members has occurred against protesters.

ARBITRARY DETENTION has occurred against those who speak out against or demonstrate against the government.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE and abuse at the hands of police and military members has occurred against protesters.

SIMULATED EXECUTIONS have been used against detainees in order to threaten and intimidate.

DEPRIVATION of food and sleep occurs in prisons.

DEATH SQUADS run by Battalion 3-16, an arm of the military, have resulted in the arrest, torture, and murder of civilians.

PRISONS are inhumane, overcrowded, unsanitary and offer poor nutrition. Despite the deaths of 362 people in 2012 due to a fire at a Comayagua prison, the government has not allocated resources to address these problems or to investigate causes of the fire.

Current Situation

Population: 8.5 million

Ethnic groups: Mestizo (mixed Amerindian and European) 90%, Amerindian 7%, Black 2%, White 1%

Religion: Roman Catholic 97%, Protestants 3%

Languages: Spanish, Amerindian dialects, English

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) has been extended for eligible nationals of Honduras for an additional 18 months, effective Jan. 6, 2015, through July 5, 2016.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS are fleeing Honduras for the United States at an unprecedented rate. This journey is fraught with extortion, kidnapping, muggings, theft, and rape. Between fiscal years 2009 and 2011, 2,959 unaccompanied alien children (UACs) entered the US and were placed in US custody, 2,997 in FY2012, 6,747 in FY2013, 18,244 in FY2014, and 506 in the first month of FY2015. These unaccompanied children are leaving to reunite with family; to escape abusive family relationships, gang recruitment or gang violence, drug trafficking, enduring poverty; to find work to support family members who remain in Central America; and/or they were brought by human trafficking rings.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS number about 17,000 in Honduras. Reasons for displacement include violence, extortion, threats, and forced gang recruitments. Honduras is also a source and transit country for victims of sex trafficking and forced labor. Most services for victims are not provided by government but by NGOs.

CENSORSHIP in Honduras is fraught with violence. Honduras is one of the most dangerous countries for journalists in the western hemisphere. Between 2003 and mid-2013, 36 journalists were killed and 29 have been killed since President Lobo took office in 2010. Media outlets are routinely assaulted, threatened, and harassed.

THE HONDURAN ECONOMY is the second poorest in the region and fraught with high unemployment, underemployment, and great unequal distribution of income. Sixty five percent of the population lives in poverty.

LAW & GOVERNMENT has been fraught with corruption and police and military abuse against citizens. After the Honduran Congress passed a law creating a military police force with the power to take control of violent neighborhoods and conduct arrests, 149 civilians were killed by police in 2012.

LGBTQI-identified individuals are vulnerable targets of attacks and harassment. Over 90 LGBTI people have been killed between 2009 and 2012. The Honduran police have allegedly been complicit in the attacks.

LAND DISPUTES in the Baho Aguan Valley have left over 90 dead and many more threatened and attacked. The conflict between international agro-industrial firms and peasant farmers is centered on land ownership.

IMPUNITY for torture and grave human rights violations during the 1980s and during the 2009 coup and its aftermath continues, as well as for torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment against the afro-descendant Garifuna community continues by drug dealers. In many cases, police response is delayed for hours and follow up investigations lack credibility. Impunity for the murders of thousands of children and civilians by loosely affiliated members of the military and gang members continues to plague Honduras.