

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
 U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES
 ASYLUM OFFICE - NEWARK, NJ
 MANHATTAN BRANCH

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 IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION :
 FOR ASYLUM AND WITHOLDING OF :
 REMOVAL OF :
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TABLE OF CONTENTS VOLUME II
INDEX TO DOCUMENTATION OF COUNTRY CONDITIONS

I. ARTICLES RELATED TO THE MURDER OF [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

| TAB | SUMMARY |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>HONDURAN NEWS SOURCES</u> | |
| A. | Diario La Prensa, [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), [REDACTED], with certified English translation |
| B. | Diario La Prensa, [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), [REDACTED], with certified English translation |
| C. | Diario La Prensa, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] - c [REDACTED], with certified English translation |

II. REGARDING PERSECUTION OF FAMILIES BY GANGS IN HONDURAS

| TAB | SUMMARY |
|------------|---|
| | <u>NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES</u> |
| D. | <p>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, <i>Death threats and gang violence forcing more families to flee northern Central America – UNHCR and UNICEF survey (December 17, 2020)</i>, available at https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/death-threats-and-gang-violence-forcing-more-families-flee-northern-central-america</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Death threats, gang recruitment, extortion and other forms of targeted violence are driving more families in northern Central America to flee their homes and seek safety in other countries, a new UNHCR and UNICEF survey reveals today. Nearly 20 per cent of over 3,100 interviewees migrating in family units identified violence – including death threats, extortion, gang recruitment and domestic violence – as the main reason behind their decision to leave their communities. More than 30 per cent of unaccompanied migrant children surveyed identified some type of violence as the main driver of their movement, which in turn affected their ability to access essential services, including going to school. These survey findings help explain the dynamic behind the alarming 456 per cent spike in family units apprehended at the southern border of the United States of America last year. This number has soared from nearly 77,800 families in 2018 to more than 432,000 in 2019. ‘The shift in the demographics of flight from the north of Central America reflects a grim reality on the ground in the countries of origin where entire families are under threat and flee together to find safety,’ said Giovanni Bassu, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency Regional Representative for Central America and Cuba.” (p. 2-3) • “In communities characterized by extreme violence, gang attacks and criminal activities, young men, women and teenagers in northern Central America are particularly vulnerable. Violence, especially death threats associated with recruitment, directly affect children and adolescents. Children described facing several push factors, including different types of violence and the lack of opportunities and services in their countries. Adults described receiving threats by gangs aimed at their entire family, which led many to leave their community with all their children in order not to leave them at risk. ‘Many people from northern Central America are literally running for their lives as gangs target entire families, including children, forcing them to flee’, says Jean Gough, UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. ‘They don’t leave any family member behind because they fear retaliation from the gangs in the communities. Now, after COVID-19 and two devastating hurricanes have hit Central America, the increase in poverty and violence is likely to drive more of these families from their homes in the coming weeks and months.’ By the end of |

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| | <p>2019, over 800,000 people from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras had sought protection either within their countries or had crossed international borders seeking asylum to escape interrelated threats, including escalating levels of gang violence and persecution, among other push factors. While some young women and girls are victims of sexual and gender-based violence perpetuated by gang members, young men are exploited for criminal ends, including drug-running, or are fully recruited into criminal groups.” (p. 3)</p> |
| E. | <p>Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, <i>A Web of Violence: Crime, corruption and displacement in Honduras (March 2019)</i>, available at https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201903-honduras-web-of-violence-en.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Enmity presents the greatest risk, and includes refusing to join a gang, leaving a gang, wanting to leave a gang, refusing to comply with a gang’s demands and being suspected of belonging to a rival gang. It may also include having friends or family who are deemed to fall into any of these categories. People accused of enmity are highly vulnerable to extreme reprisals. They and/or their relatives may be killed, tortured, raped or disappeared, and gangs are equally brutal in their response to those who deemed to have disrespected them and their relatives. Those suspected of belonging to or associating with a gang, or having friends or family who do so, face persecution and murder by rival gang members, social cleansing squads and security forces conducting raids in gang areas. People flee to avoid this fate, or if a family member has fallen victim. Reporting a crime or being suspected of passing information to the authorities or a rival gang violates the code of <i>ver, oír y callar</i> [‘see, hear and shut up,’ p. 20] and also invites extreme retaliation. Even the mere fact of witnessing a crime, particularly a murder, may put people at risk, and the threat of reprisals is meant to terrori[ze] and exert control. People who live in areas where bodies are dumped are terrified of being considered a casual witness if, for instance, they see a car pull up. Witnesses and informants are regularly killed, disappeared, tortured or raped. Given the acute risks they face, witnesses to crime may be forced to flee. Reporting a crime is doubly risky, given that gangs have infiltrated the police, who are often also inefficient and may leak information, unwittingly or otherwise. A witness protection scheme exists, but there is understandably little confidence in it, leaving those who do report crimes no choice but to flee immediately, most often outside the country. In the rare event that the authorities secure a conviction, witness protection ends, but orders to kill witnesses and their family members may still be issued from prison.” (p. 22) (footnotes omitted) (internal citation added) • “Women and girls who refuse sexual involvement with gang members or who want to remove themselves from such a situation are at high risk of extremely violent reprisals. This includes former partners and those forced or coerced into sexual involvement. Failure to comply with demands may be met with murder, |

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| | <p>sexual violence or death threats that extend to the whole family. Killings tend to involve torture and the mutilation or dismemberment of the victim’s body. People flee in response to such risks, but may also do so pre-emptively if, for example, parents have been told to bring their young daughter to a gang leader. Because gangs perceive failure to comply as an act of betrayal, the risk of those who flee being sought out and persecuted is high, making safe options within the country extremely limited. The risks before and after displacement are even more acute if a gang leader is involved. The murder, attempted murder, disappearance, violent assault or rape of a relative, partner or friend perceived to have committed an act of enmity or betrayal often triggers the displacement of whole households, because its members fear the risk will extend to them.” (p. 22-23) (footnotes omitted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “For those who have survived sexual violence or domestic violence perpetrated by a gang member, the risks they face in displacement are increased. They are more likely to be located and persecuted and face violent reprisals from other gang members if they report the crime and even more so if it is prosecuted. This is likely to mean the risk will extend to their whole family and may trigger cross-border flight.” (p. 27) • “Effective protection is elusive. The state is largely unable or unwilling to protect its citizens, and people have a deep mistrust of the authorities and fear of reprisals. The state is also often all but absent in urban areas under gangs’ control and border areas where organised criminal groups operate. This lack of security often means displacement fails as a protection strategy.” (p. 34) • “Street gangs pose the greatest risk of violence and displacement in urban areas. Triggers for displacement include a murder attempt or violent assault, the murder of a close relative or partner, death threats that may or may not extend to family members, forced recruitment, extortion and sexual violence including the sexual exploitation and abuse of minors. These may derive from gangs’ everyday activities or from periodic incidents such as violent disputes and territorial battles between rival groups. Men aged 20 to 34 are the most vulnerable to gang-related killings. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment from as young as six, and to sexual exploitation from as young as eight. Death threats triggered 36 per cent of the displacements recorded by CONADEH-UDFI in 2017, and these threats may be related to work, extortion, refusal of gang demands or an act perceived as betrayal such as witnessing a crime. Gangs’ victims broadly fall into two groups: those individually targeted and actively persecuted, and those more generally affected by criminal violence. People from both groups may have to flee, but the former have heightened security concerns before and after their displacement, and this results in different patterns of movement and outcomes. The extent to which an individual’s risk persists after displacement depends largely on how serious the gang in question perceives their infraction to have been.” (p. 21) (footnotes omitted) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gangs and organised crime groups perpetrate sexual abuse and violence in several forms connected to their assertion of power and territoriality. These include the direct punishment of a woman who has offended a gang, reprisals against men meted out against their female relatives, the gang rape of kidnapped minors in <i>casas locas</i> [“crazy houses’, houses taken over by street gangs for illicit activities,’ p. 4], forced or coerced involvement with gang members, sexual slavery and forced prostitution. Threatened girls may be hidden or resort to self-containment before fleeing elsewhere in the country or abroad, and in some cases whole families may leave because risk extends to them. The femicide or disappearance of a close female relative may also lead to the displacement of whole families.” (p. 26) (footnote omitted) (internal citation added) • “Corruption has a systemic effect on displacement by aggravating some of the structural socioeconomic factors that drive it. Corruption and impunity also enable the persistence of widespread criminal violence and severely limit the prospects of those targeted finding safety within the country. They also combine with discriminatory practices to mean that many survivors of GBV [‘Gender-Based Violence,’ p. 4] and violence on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are unable to secure protection in the country, often leading to repeated internal displacement and/or cross-border flight.” (p. 49) |
| <u>MEDIA SOURCES</u> | |
| F. | <p>Thomas Boerman, “Family As A Social Construct In El Salvador, Honduras, And Guatemala: Visibility and Vulnerability of Family Members of Individuals Targeted by Organized Criminal Groups” Immigration Briefings: Thomson Reuters (December 2019), available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3520124</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Specifically, around the world there are precious few examples in which (1) gangs and other organized criminal groups control and/or indirectly influence virtually every dimension of day-to-day life, including government policy and practice, to the degree that they do in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala and (2) the victimization of family members of targeted individuals represents a central element in a strategy of terror through which organized criminal groups establish and maintain control over physical territory, criminal markets, and the population itself and come to exert such an outsized influence over government policy and practice.” (p. 11) • “Because of its centrality as a social unit, targeting or threatening family members is an effective way for gangs to force their primary target to comply with their demands, or to punish or terrorize them.” (p. 11) (footnote omitted) • “Rather, it is part of a larger political agenda, as gangs (1) are frequently acknowledged by officials of the Northern Triangle governments and the public as de facto authorities in areas under their control, (2) routinely engage in |

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| | <p>activities normally associated with governance (e.g., imposing and enforcing curfews; erecting traffic checkpoints; forcing evictions from private residences; imposing ‘taxes’ for use of public infrastructure, living in one’s home, and operating a business, church, or school; and frequently collaborating with elected officials or political candidates to influence elections), (3) at times negotiate with governmental and non-governmental representatives to determine, directly or indirectly, governmental and non-governmental policies and practices, and (4) operate in direct collusion with corrupt state officials across multiple levels of government. Without a political agenda and the means to operationalize that agenda, gangs simply could not function at the level that they do.” (p. 12) (footnote omitted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In order to operationalize the dimension of their strategy that involves the targeting of family members, it is absolutely essential that gangs are cognizant of who is connected to whom through kinship ties in communities under their control, changes in family composition, who has family in the U.S. and other countries, etc.; without this, they would be unable to implement a fundamental part of their strategy.” (p. 12) • “The social constructs around family, its centrality as the most important social institution in the Northern Triangle, and its social visibility in the region are universally recognized by the broadest possible range of stakeholders and are considered so fundamental as to be beyond question or need for analysis. Equally well recognized is the fact that the targeting of family members of individuals who have fallen into disfavor with gangs and other organized criminal groups, or who are otherwise targeted by them, is a central element in the strategy of terror through which they establish and maintain control over physical territory, criminal markets, and the population itself and come to exert a perverse and outsize influence over government policy and practice. The nature of life in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala is such that within the low-income sectors, one cannot escape being identified as part of a family or kinship group, which in the case of individuals and families facing particularized and life-threatening dangers often represents a virtual death sentence unless individuals are able to defy the odds and internally relocate successfully or to flee the country.” (p. 16) |

III. GANG VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION IN HONDURAS

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| | <u>GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES</u> |
| G. | <p>Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Honduras (March 30, 2021), available at https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/honduras/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Organized-crime organizations, such as drug traffickers and local and transnational gangs including MS-13 and the 18th Street gang, committed killings, extortion, kidnappings, human trafficking, and intimidation of police, prosecutors, journalists, women, and human rights defenders. Major urban centers and drug-trafficking routes experienced the highest rates of violence.” (p. 3) |
| H. | <p>Overseas Security Advisory Council: Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Dep’t of State, Honduras 2020 Crime & Safety Report, (March 31, 2020), available at https://www.osac.gov/Country/Honduras/Content/Detail/Report/14441101-11fd-487c-9d15-18553e50609c.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The government lacks resources to investigate and prosecute cases; police often lack vehicles/fuel to respond to calls for assistance. Police may take hours to arrive at the scene of a violent crime or may not respond at all. As a result, criminals operate with a high degree of impunity.” (p. 5) |
| I. | <p>Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Dep’t of State, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Honduras (March 11, 2020), available at https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/honduras/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Organized-criminal elements, including drug traffickers and local and transnational gangs including MS-13 and the 18th Street gang, committed killings, extortion, kidnappings, human trafficking, and intimidation of police, prosecutors, journalists, women, and human rights defenders.” (p. 3) |
| | <u>NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES</u> |
| J. | <p>Human Rights Watch, World Report 2021: Events of 2020: Honduras, available at https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/honduras</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gang violence is widespread in and around urban areas. Estimates of the number of active gang members range from 5,000 to 40,000. Gangs exercise territorial control over neighborhoods and extort residents throughout the country. They forcibly recruit children and sexually abuse women, girls, and LGBT people. |

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| | <p>Gangs kill, disappear, rape, or displace those who resist. Gangs, particularly the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and the 18th Street Gang (Barrio 18), are considered to be largely responsible for Honduras’ murder rate, and are infamous for extortion and drug peddling. Historically, governments have responded with iron-fist security strategies to combat organized crime, enacting tougher legislation and increasing police presence and mass detentions. In 2018, the government created a special force to fight gangs (Fuerza Nacional Anti Maras y pandillas). Members include officers from the police, the military, and the Attorney’s General Office. Abuses by security forces, including alleged collusion with criminal organizations, and weak state institutions, have contributed to the persistence of gang violence.” (p. 2-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Violent organized crime continues to disrupt Honduran society and push many people to leave the country. Journalists, environmental activists, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, and people with disabilities are among the groups targeted for violence. The government relies heavily on the military for public security. Efforts to reform public-security institutions have stalled. Marred by corruption and abuse, the judiciary and police remain largely ineffective. In June 2020, a new criminal code came into effect. It included provisions that appeared aimed at reducing penalties for politicians linked to organized crime, by lowering sentences for corruption and related offenses. The new code also includes alternatives to detention for low-level crimes, including partial prison sentences and penalties that allow for conditional release. Impunity for human rights abuses, violent crime, and corruption remains the norm, even as the prison population has mushroomed.” (p. 2) |
| K. | <p>Freedom House, <i>Freedom in the World 2021: Honduras</i>, available at https://freedomhouse.org/country/honduras/freedom-world/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Corruption remains rampant in Honduras, despite efforts to bolster its anticorruption mechanisms in recent years. The MACCIH, which was established in 2016, facilitated anticorruption legislation aimed at preventing illicit campaign donations, and cooperated with the Attorney General’s Special Prosecutor’s Unit Against Impunity and Corruption (UFECIC) in its work. In April 2019, MACCIH reported that 120 individuals were being prosecuted for corruption, including 70 government officials. That December, Congress—some members of which were implicated in corruption by MACCIH’s work—advised President Hernández not to renew the MACCIH’s mandate. After the OAS and the Honduran government failed to reach an extension agreement, the mission ended in January 2020. The shuttering of the MACCIH was just one marker of a pattern of regression in Honduran anticorruption efforts in 2020. In March, the Supreme Court vacated the conviction of former first lady Rosa Elena Bonilla, who had been convicted of fraud and embezzlement in 2019, and in July she was released from prison pending a new trial. The new criminal code that took effect in June 2020 eased penalties for multiple crimes public officials are regularly accused of, including |

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| | <p>corruption and drug trafficking. The new code also contributed to the dismissal of charges or acquittal of officials implicated in several emblematic corruption cases, including one that exposed large-scale embezzlement in the public health sector. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in additional public health-related graft allegations, with revelations centered on fraudulent contracts and inflated prices for medical supplies and mobile hospital facilities.” (p. 6-7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “While authorities generally do not restrict free movement, ongoing violence and impunity have reduced personal autonomy for the country’s residents. Those living in gang-controlled territories face extortion, and dangerous conditions limit free movement and options for education and employment. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that over 247,000 people were internally displaced in Honduras at the end of 2019. According to the OHCHR, movement restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic increased the difficulties faced by vulnerable communities, including Indigenous Hondurans and migrants.” (p. 14-15) • “The homicide rate has declined notably over the last decade, but violent crime and gang violence remain serious problems, and have prompted large-scale internal displacement and migration. In response to widespread violence, the government has empowered the Military Police of Public Order (PMOP) and other security forces to combat security threats, and these units often employ excessive force when conducting operations.” (p. 13) |
| L. | <p>Transparency International, <i>Honduras: CPI Reflects A Rough 2020 (January 18, 2021)</i>, available at https://www.transparency.org/en/blog/cpi-2020-honduras-rough-year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “As the Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa (ASJ), TI’s national chapter, looks back on 2020, it is clear that the forces of nature and corrupt institutions both dealt serious blows to Honduras. The consequences for transparency were reflected in Honduras’ 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index score of 24, an all-time low since 2012.” (p. 1) • “Instead of strengthening Honduras’ ability to bounce back from these disasters, political and economic elites pushed back on rule of law, further threatening Hondurans’ ability to flourish. Despite international pressure, the Honduran president declined to renew the MACCIH’s mandate to carry out corruption investigations. In its four years of operation, this OAS-backed independent body presented 11 emblematic corruption cases that implicated those in the halls of power. Since its premature demise, Honduran courts have further undercut the Attorney General’s office’s authority to investigate corruption and have dismissed charges in several MACCIH cases. Honduran congressmembers, some under investigation for corruption, also adopted a new penal code that decreased sentences for corruption and drug trafficking. As drug trafficking allegations |

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| | <p>against public leaders, including the current president, persist, this codification of impunity is highly concerning.” (p. 2)</p> |
| M. | <p>Association for a More Just Society, <i>Violence in Honduras (April 2020)</i>, available at https://www.asj-us.org/learn/honduras-violence?gclid=EAIaIQobChMImZvA7Na09gIVjIzICh1s-gcZEAYASAAEgKhFPD_BwE%20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Honduras has been known as one of the most violent countries in the world. To understand violence in Honduras, you have to understand one negative, recurring cycle. Organized criminal groups like gangs and drug traffickers pay off police, prosecutors, and judges to get away with their crimes. This corrupts the criminal justice system. Without a functioning justice system, impunity runs rampant for criminals and murderers: they are rarely held accountable for their actions. This, of course, leads to more violence and crime.” (p. 1) • “Violence and crime in Honduras are likely to go unpunished for a number of reasons. Historically, Honduras has had a weak police force. Criminal investigation is severely hampered by limited funding, a lack of high-tech investigative tools, corrupt officers, and poor police education. Even when the police are able to do their jobs, the judicial system is overwhelmed, with a backlog of over 180,000 cases due to inefficient processes and a lack of resources. The weaknesses in the police and judicial system mean that many cases are left in impunity: 76% of homicide cases are not investigated, and 87% of cases never reach any sort of judicial resolution. This rate of impunity means that people aren’t held accountable for their crimes, leading to flourishing criminal activity.” (p. 4) • “Gangs play a key role in the high rates of violence in the country. In a context of poverty and limited government services (like education and health), gangs are likely to form. In Honduras’ marginalized urban neighborhoods, gangs provide an opportunity for young people to find identity and a source of income. Both MS-13 and the 18th Street gangs are present in Honduras, and it’s estimated that there are up to 40,000 members in Honduras. Gangs commit many different crimes, including extortion, street-level drug peddling, robbery, and murder-for-hire schemes.” (p. 2) • “In Honduras, government institutions are weak, often failing to provide basic public services such as education and health care. Corruption in the police and judicial systems make victims afraid or unwilling to report crimes. And weak or corrupt institutions fail to protect individuals such as journalists, civil society members, legal professionals, and human rights defenders such as Berta Caceres. Corruption is not limited to the justice system, of course. Cycles of impunity and crime occur with gangs and drug traffickers, but they also occur with government employees and businesspeople. Some government employees and allies in the |

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| | <p>private sector have devised a number of devious ways to skim money off the top of budgets from government institutions such as the Ministries of Health or Education. The most famous of these cases is the embezzlement and bribery scheme in the Honduran Institute of Social Security, a health insurance program and system that makes up about a third of the government’s overall public health system that came to light in 2015. Some estimate that over \$300 million were stolen by government employees in this case.” (p 5-6)</p> |
| N. | <p>International Crisis Group, <i>Fight and Flight: Tackling the Roots of Honduras’ Emergency (October 25, 2019)</i>, available at https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/central-america/honduras/077-fight-and-flight-tackling-roots-honduras-emergency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The murder rate is still stubbornly high – Honduras was third in Latin America in terms of lethal violence last year, behind only Venezuela and El Salvador – while the flight from violence explains between 20 and 40 per cent of the country’s emigration. Reported abuses by the security forces, their alleged collusion with criminal organisations and high impunity rates for serious crimes help drive public frustration with state institutions and allow gangs and other criminal organisations to use violence to tighten their grip on communities, with pernicious effects on women and children in particular.” (p. 6) • “The erosion of checks and balances on executive power over the past decade – and particularly the weakening of judicial oversight – has created fertile ground in Honduras for corruption and state collusion with actors engaged in illicit activities. Corruption scandals have implicated politicians of every rank up to the president. As one MACCIH magistrate told Crisis Group: ‘Corruption in Honduras has been normalised, socialised, and institutionalised.’” (p.17) (footnote omitted) • “Criminal gangs have also thrived in Honduras – the number of gang members was once estimated to be the highest in the region, although El Salvador appears to have since surpassed it. While gangs have been reported in Honduras since the 1970s, the largest groups took root in the early 2000s following mass deportations of convicted criminals from the U.S. to Central America. High urban poverty rates, the disruption of family units caused by mass migration to the U.S., and weak and corrupt law enforcement all made Honduras fertile territory for gang expansion. Groups such as the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and the 18th Street Gang have proliferated over the past two decades and are considered largely responsible for Honduras’ sky-high murder rate.” (p. 35) (footnote omitted) |
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| P. | <p data-bbox="297 233 1442 338">Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, <i>Human Rights Situation in Honduras (2019)</i>, available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Honduras2019-en.pdf</p> <ul data-bbox="347 384 1442 1371" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="347 384 1442 636">• “According to the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on his mission to Honduras, the situation described by community members on situations of violence, threats and intimidation, killings of family members, extortion, sexual violence, murders of women and girls, and an environment of fear and insecurity, often as a result of gang activities, represents an environment with effects similar to those experienced in some conflict situations.” (p. 127-128) (footnote omitted) <li data-bbox="347 678 1442 747">• “According to UNICEF, there are up to 25,000 gang members in Honduras, of whom 4,700 are children and young people.” (p. 105) (footnote omitted) <li data-bbox="347 789 1442 1003">• “From the information received, it appears that the main cause of displacement is violence by criminal groups or gangs that seek to control territory and communities by imposing their own rules, in addition to engaging in a variety of criminal activities, including those related to drug trafficking and trade. While these groups are found mainly in metropolitan area districts, their networks and influence extend throughout the country.” (p. 127) (footnote omitted) <li data-bbox="347 1045 1442 1371">• “In addition, CONADEH reported that the criminal activities of gangs and <i>maras</i>¹ have resulted in the arbitrary acquisition of homes, lands and properties of indigenous peoples, in many cases in collusion with local police and military forces, dynamics that often cause the internal displacement of these peoples. According to information received by the IACHR, the inauguration and expansion of extractive and energy megaprojects in some areas of the country has been related to the installation of criminal groups in the territories affected by the projects and to the displacement of communities and people active in the defense of lands and territories.” (p. 128) (footnote omitted) |
| <u>MEDIA SOURCES</u> | |
| Q. | <p data-bbox="297 1457 1442 1598">John Burnett, “<i>Why People are Fleeing Honduras For The U.S.: ‘All That’s Left Here Is Misery,</i>” NPR (May 10, 2021), available at https://www.npr.org/2021/05/10/994065661/why-people-are-fleeing-honduras-for-the-u-s-all-thats-left-here-is-misery</p> <ul data-bbox="347 1644 1442 1749" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="347 1644 1442 1749">• “She says if fleeing Hondurans are turned away by U.S. authorities and deported, and they return to their neighborhood, they do so under a death sentence from MS-13.” (p. 19) (sic) |

¹ “*Maras*” refers to “youth gangs that form a chain of drugs, extortion and violence stretching from Los Angeles to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.” Rory Carroll, “*Honduras: ‘We are burying kids all the time,*” The Guardian (November 12, 2010).

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| R. | <p data-bbox="297 268 1437 449">Marna Shorack, Elizabeth G. Kennedy & Amelia Frank-Vitale, “A State of Mistrust” <i>NACLA Report on the Americas</i>,” Vol. 52, No. 4 (November 5, 2020), available at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/10714839.2021.1840168?scroll=top&needAccess=true</p> <ul data-bbox="347 491 1437 1848" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="347 491 1437 743">• “He almost spits the words: People leave Honduras because of crime, and the authorities don’t do anything. We had each heard this refrain before—from victims and their families, migrants, displaced children, and mothers crying over bullet-ridden bodies. Lamenting how little the authorities do to protect people, stop crime and corruption, and bring perpetrators to justice is commonplace in Honduras. Hearing a police officer utter the words, however, showed how deep the exasperation runs.” (p. 404) <li data-bbox="347 785 1437 1268">• “In another city, Abogada Marilyn neared the end of her 24-hour shift, visibly exhausted. Typically, public prosecutors are on-call for 24 hours at least twice a week. Like most of her colleagues, she is relocated every two or three years for safety. Risk is part of the job, she explains. The day before speaking with us, for example, she had presented at a court hearing against a gang member accused of raping a minor. He glared at her. When she left the courthouse, she saw someone photographing and filming her. She called the police, requesting an escort, but was not surprised when they never showed. Another fiscal filed complaints after witnessing military police conduct extrajudicial killings. The Policia Militar del Orden Publico (PMOP) then threatened him and his family. Years later, and after completely withdrawing his name from the file, his case was marked ‘resolved.’ We start saying, ‘And if you as the fiscal can’t get justice—’ and he finishes our sentence: ‘Imaginense, los demas.’” Imagine everyone else.” (p. 406) <li data-bbox="347 1310 1437 1667">• “Abogado Gerry’s hands shake as we sit down in a small, windowless office. He is diplomatic but unequivocal. Over 10 years as a fiscal, he has been threatened several times, to varying degrees of severity. ‘Threats are part of the job:’ he says. A colleague counseled him not to report these incidents for his own safety. So, he, like other fiscales we interviewed, switched posts whenever threats arose. Now, though, he fears deeper trouble. ‘The police...I do not trust them:’ Abogado Gerry says in a hushed voice. “They are linked to organized crime:’ Although he leads investigations, the police answer to their own chiefs, not the MP, so ultimately he cannot count on them to follow his directions. He also suspects officers have tampered with his crime scenes.” (p. 406) <li data-bbox="347 1709 1437 1848">• “Officer Mendez also recognizes that those present at crime scenes rarely speak. People are afraid, he suspects. ‘There’s no such thing as true protection for witnesses:’ he says. ‘They are vulnerable because they have to depend on the fiscal to keep their identities confidential, both on paper and in court, but there |

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| | <p>are no guarantees.’ The fiscales and DPI agents we spoke to knew of witnesses who had been killed.” (p. 407)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In 2013, Honduras changed how it records homicide statistics, creating a separate violence observatory managed by the National Police. For a death to be counted as a murder, a medical examiner must conduct an autopsy and rule the death a homicide. However, Honduras has only three fully functional morgues, sometimes taxed beyond capacity. One ME told us: ‘We only have the capacity to do 16 autopsies a day, working at full speed... and we are not able to always complete the autopsy.’ Another ME echoed that the accumulated bodies sometimes present an unrealistic amount of work. And many bodies likely never make it to an ME. Abogado Martin estimates that in his city, Forensic Medicine brings in seven out of every 10 bodies. In Officer Mendez’s jurisdiction, the fiscal estimates it’s only three out of 10. Except for the challenge of remoteness, the fiscales’ reasons all ultimately signal Hondurans’ distrust of the state. Some fear they won’t get the bodies back, which is often the case. Others cannot afford the return transportation. And many believe authorities won’t investigate the murder anyway.” (p. 408) |
| S. | <p>“Honduras violence: Gunmen storm court building to free MS-13 leader” BBC (February 14, 2020), available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-51501103</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Heavily armed men dressed in military fatigues and police uniforms stormed a court building in north-west Honduras and freed a senior leader of the powerful MS-13 gang, officials say.” (p. 1) • “It was not clear how the operation to free Mendoza, who was reportedly on the second floor awaiting the start of the hearing, unfolded inside the building. Police officers and other authorities have previously been accused of involvement with criminals.” (p. 2) |
| T. | <p>Emily Palmer and Elisabeth Malkin, “Honduran President’s Brother Is Found Guilty of Drug Trafficking,” NY Times (October 18, 2019), available at https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/18/world/americas/honduras-president-brother-drug-trafficking.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A New York jury convicted the brother of the president of Honduras on cocaine trafficking charges on Friday, ending a trial that offered a blueprint for the way drug money penetrated the highest levels of Honduran politics to buy protection and immunity. Since his brother’s arrest last year, a central question facing Hondurans is how President Juan Orlando Hernández could proclaim to be fighting drug traffickers while his brother was under investigation for allegedly running tons of cocaine to the United States. Over two weeks, a parade of witnesses — including several confessed drug traffickers — offered an answer: |

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| | <p>The president looked the other way in exchange for millions of dollars for his and his party’s political campaigns. Among those who funneled money to the president’s brother, according to one witness, was Joaquín Guzmán Loera, the Mexican drug kingpin known as El Chapo. Mr. Guzmán is serving a life sentence in a maximum security federal prison. ‘These were bribes,’ Assistant United States Attorney Emil J. Bove said of the payouts, and they ‘came with strings.’ With this cash, drug traffickers ‘infiltrated the Honduran government and they controlled it,’ Mr. Bove said. The jury found the president’s brother, Juan Antonio Hernández, known as Tony, guilty on all four charges, including lying to the Drug Enforcement Administration agents who first questioned him in 2016.” (p. 1-2)</p> |
| U. | <p>Karen Jacobsen, “Hondurans Fleeing Gang Violence Need Safety, Not Jobs” The Globe Post (August 29, 2019), available at https://theglobepost.com/2019/08/29/mexico-jobs-honduras/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Honduras’ gangs enjoy widespread impunity because the police are hopelessly outnumbered. In the city of San Pedro Sula, for example, powerful gangs like MS-13 hold sway, but there are just 50 police officers for the city’s 720,000 residents in 189 neighborhoods. When police are understaffed, it is common throughout the world for officers to have a reputation for corruption and abuse, or even work for the gangs. In the poorer areas of Honduras’ cities, the citizens have nowhere to turn for safety.” (p. 1-2) |
| V. | <p>Sonia Nazario, “Pay or Die” NY Times (July 26, 2019), available at https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/07/25/opinion/honduras-corruption-ms-13.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The gang has sent its people to school to become lawyers and accountants, to help with money laundering, and doctors, to treat gang members who have been shot. It has sent gang members to the police academy to become cops. ‘At the bottom and at the top of the police, there are members of MS-13,’ said Jaime Varela Lagos, a gang expert who works with A.J.S. A 911 operator and a Supreme Court investigator were found to be undercover gangsters. In some neighborhoods, MS-13 has its own security cameras. The ultimate goal is to control the police, the courts and Congress. An official who investigates gangs and asked to remain anonymous told me MS-13 has paid off so many prosecutors, politicians and judges that he has to have three times the evidence to keep its members in jail than he does for 18th Street gangsters. In June 2016, when he took part in an MS-13 bust, he said he found nine bags of cash the gang was preparing to deliver, each individually addressed to legislators, police officers and to the mayor of one of Honduras’s largest cities.” (p. 14-15) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The corruption is what allows all the other bad things to happen. It allows gangs to impose a reign of terror. It allows nine in 10 murderers to get away with their crimes.” (p. 3) • “This is especially frustrating because the fight against corruption in Honduras really revved up only four years ago, in response to enormous street protests by fed-up citizens called “indignados.” The investigations and revelations by anti-corruption groups that followed have actually driven up despair, by highlighting both how big the problem is and how few of the bad guys end up in jail. Last year, faced with charges that at least five and as many as 60 additional current and former lawmakers had stolen \$55 million in public funds, the Honduran Congress passed a law shutting down all anti-corruption prosecutions for three years. It had already passed a Law of Secret Information, making it possible for lawmakers to classify just about any government information — including spending — as secret for up to 25 years. Not coincidentally, the statute of limitations to try public officials is less than 25 years. The Supreme Court even ruled unconstitutional the arm of the attorney general’s office that tackles corruption.” (p. 6-7) |
| W. | <p>“Why People Flee Honduras,” Politico Magazine (June 7, 2019), available at https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/06/07/honduras-why-people-flee-photos-227087/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Honduras is one of the deadliest countries in the world and has one of the highest impunity rates. According to an analysis by InSight Crime, gang membership and activity have been on the rise in the past two decades, and the associated violence has hit the country’s urban areas the hardest. Extortion by gangs has forced many to flee in search of more security. Moreover, the Honduran police are both understaffed—in the northern district of San Pedro Sula, home to nearly 230,000 people and where well-known gangs like Barrio 18 and MS-13 operate, just 50 police officers watch over its 189 neighborhoods—and plagued by corruption and abuse.” (p. 2) |

IV. CHILDREN RAISED BY PARENTS UNABLE TO PROTECT THEM FROM ABUSE IN HONDURAS

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| | <u>GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES</u> |
| X. | 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Honduras, U.S. DEPT. OF STATE: BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, (March 20, 2021), available |

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| | <p>at https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/honduras/.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Child abuse remained a serious problem. The law establishes prison sentences of up to three years for child abuse. As of June the Violence Observatory reported killings of 71 persons younger than 18.” (p. 20) • “The commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially in sex trafficking, remained a problem. The country was a destination for child sex tourism. The legal age of consent is 18. There is no statutory rape law, but the penalty for rape of a minor younger than 12 is 15 to 20 years in prison, or nine to 13 years in prison if the victim is 13 or older. Penalties for facilitating child sex trafficking are 10 to 15 years in prison, with substantial fines. The law prohibits the use of children younger than 18 for exhibitions or performances of a sexual nature or in the production of pornography.” (p. 20) |
| Y. | <p><i>Situation of Human Rights in Honduras</i>, INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, (August 27, 2019), available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Honduras2019-en.pdf.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “According to information available to the Commission, of the 4.1 million children living in Honduras, 36% live in poverty, and more than 10,000 are living on the streets. More than one million children and adolescents are outside the education system.” (p. 100) • “In this sense, the IACHR highlights those related to a particularly fragile institutional framework for guaranteeing children’s rights, the absence of comprehensive protection, and the lack of access to basic services for children and adolescents.” (p. 100) • “Available information indicates that the prevalence of sexual abuse during childhood is 7.8%, the highest in Central America, according to the United Nations Population Fund. The Inter-Institutional Commission against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking (CICESCT), responsible for following up cases of commercial sexual exploitation in Honduras, registered 84 complaints of cases of commercial sexual exploitation between 2014 and 2016. Civil society organizations estimate that there is underreporting because many victims do not report for fear of reprisals, so a large number of cases are invisible. A little more than a quarter (28.3%) of the complaints are prosecuted, and only in 30.19% there is a ruling. In its observations, the State indicated that during 2018, the Public Prosecutor’s Office received 122 complaints of human trafficking and 23 for the crime of commercial sexual exploitation, out of which 32 persons were prosecuted and 17 persons were sentenced for the crime of human trafficking and 24 persons were prosecuted and 11 persons were sentenced for the crime of commercial sexual |

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| | <p>exploitation. It also indicated that it had attended to 85 victims and had successfully closed 84 of these cases.” (p. 104)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In its observations, the State indicated that during 2018, the Public Prosecutor’s Office received 122 complaints of human trafficking and 23 for the crime of commercial sexual exploitation, out of which 32 persons were prosecuted and 17 persons were sentenced for the crime of human trafficking and 24 persons were prosecuted and 11 persons were sentenced for the crime of commercial sexual exploitation. It also indicated that it had attended to 85 victims and had successfully closed 84 of these cases.” (p. 104) • The frequency with which unaccompanied Honduran children seek refuge in other countries has made their plight visible to the world. “Honduras is one of the countries in the region with the highest number of children and adolescents who migrate from the country for various reasons, either to escape the situation of violence and insecurity that the country lives, or in search of better opportunities for their future. Between January and April 2018, approximately 2,065 unaccompanied children and adolescents from Honduras were reported to immigration authorities in Mexico. Children and adolescents leave Honduras mainly because of the situation of violence and because of the threats and fear of <i>maras</i> and organized crime, and due to factors such as poverty, inequality and discrimination.” (p. 111) |
| Z. | <p><i>Honduras, 2017: Violence Against Children Survey, GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS, (April 2019), available at https://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-Honduras-VACS-Report-English.pdf.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “About two out of five males and females experienced any type of violence. This represents a substantial portion of Honduras’ youth.” (p. xi) • “About 16.2 % of females and 9.9 % of males experienced sexual violence before age 18.” (p. xi) • “About one out of three females (31.9 %) and three out of ten males (29.5 %) experienced physical violence before age 18.” (p. xi) • “The prevalence of physical violence in childhood was significantly higher among males in urban areas (40.7 %) than the national data.” (p. xi) • “Among 18-24 year-olds, 14.7 % of females and 7.7 % of males experienced emotional violence by a parent, adult caregiver, or adult relative before age 18.” (p. xi) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Also consistent with global data, many victims of sexual violence did not tell anyone about their experiences, and the majority did not seek or receive services.” (p. xi) • “Physical violence was the most common type of violence experienced in childhood, affecting three out of ten females and males. More females than males experienced physical violence by a parent or adult caregiver, and more males than females experienced physical violence by a peer.” (p. xi) • “Similar to sexual violence experiences, many victims of physical violence did not tell anyone about their experiences, and very few sought or received services.” (p. xi) • “For males, [the populations who were more vulnerable to violence] included those who completed secondary school, those who witnessed violence in the home, those who received remittances, and those whose parents migrated in childhood for 6 months or more.” (p. xi) • “Parent-youth relationships were a particular strength in Honduras; nine out of ten youth indicated a strong relationship with their mothers and high parental monitoring and supervision.” (p. xi) • “One in five females (19.5 %) and one in seven males (14.8 %) indicated their mother migrated or was internally displaced for six months or more. The average ages of youth when their mothers migrated was 8.8 years for females and 8.1 years for males. Two out of five females (40.6 %) and one out of three males (32.7 %) indicated their father migrated for six months or more. The average age of youth when their father migrated was 5.7 years for females and 5.1 years for males.” (p. 11) • “[Among male youths who experienced <i>any</i> childhood sexual violence], 30.0 % experienced the first incident at age 13 or younger and 43.5 % at age 16-17.” (p. 14) • “Among youth who experienced childhood sexual violence, more than two out of three females (70.1 %) and males (71.7 %) experienced multiple incidents before age 18.” (p. 14) • “For males, the most common perpetrators [of the first incident of sexual violence] were a friend (44.3 %), followed by a current or former intimate partner (17.8 %), and a classmate or schoolmate (16.3 %).” (p. 14) • “The most common locations for [first incidents of sexual violence for males] were the participant’s home (26.3 %), followed by the perpetrator’s home (24.3 %) and an outdoor space (22.6 %).” (p. 15) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Among females who experienced sexual violence in childhood, 64.2 % ever told anybody about their experience, compared to 34.2 % of males.” (p. 16) • “For males, the most common reasons for not seeking services[for childhood sexual violence] were that they did not think it was a problem (49.2 %) and that they did not need or want services (35.6 %).” (p. 16) • “For males who experienced physical violence in childhood, more than half (51.4 %) had the first experience at ages 12-17, followed by ages 6-11 (37.8 %).” (p. 22) • “The prevalence of childhood physical violence by an adult in the community was 3.1 % among females and 4.5 % among males. Significantly more males (17.7 %) than females (11.8 %) experienced physical violence from a peer in childhood.” (p. 22) • “Among 18-24 year-olds who experienced physical violence in childhood, 56.9 % of females and 47.5 % of males ever told anybody about their experience. The person they most commonly told was a relative (females, 78.3 %; males, 76.4 %), followed by a friend or neighbor (females, 23.0 %; males, 31.0 %). Two out of five females (39.2 %) and males (41.6 %) knew of a place to go for help for physical violence. Only 7.0 % of females and 7.7 % of males sought help, and 3.3 % of females and 6.0 % of males received help. Half of females who sought services (50.2 %) received help from police or other security personnel. Males most commonly received help from a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider (79.0 %) and a social worker or counselor (38.6 %). Females who did not seek services for physical violence indicated their reasons for not seeking services were that they did not think it was a problem (38.9 %), they were afraid of getting into trouble (22.8 %), and they did not need or want services (20.2 %). For males, the most common reasons for not seeking services were that they did not think it was a problem (49.8 %) or they did not need or want services (28.3 %).” (p. 23) • “About one in four females (23.0 %) and 15.8 % of males ages 18-24 witnessed physical violence in the home before age 18. About one out of three females (33.6 %) and males (37.6 %) witnessed violence in the neighborhood or community before age 18. Among youth ages 13-17, 6.4 % of females and 4.8 % of males witnessed violence in the home in the past 12 months, and 17.0 % of females and 15.4% of males witnessed physical violence in the neighborhood or community in the past 12 months.” (p. 26) • “Among 18-24 year-olds, 14.7 % of females and 7.7 % of males experienced emotional violence by a parent, adult caregiver, or adult relative before age 18.” (p. 29) • “Males ages 18-24 who experienced childhood sexual violence were significantly more likely to experience mental distress in the past 30 days (62.7 % versus 45.4 |

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| | <p data-bbox="391 233 1398 302">%) and have ever thought of suicide (11.9 % versus 3.6 %) compared to males who did not experience sexual violence in childhood.” (p. 36)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="347 342 1430 554">• “Males ages 18-24 who experienced childhood physical violence were significantly more likely to have mental distress in the past 30 days (58.5 % versus 42.3 %), binge drinking in the past 30 days (43.4 % versus 31.2 %), drug use in the past 30 days (8.4 % versus 3.0 %), ever intentionally hurt themselves (12.5 % versus 6.0 %), or have ever thought of suicide (8.5 % versus 2.7 %).” (p. 36) <li data-bbox="347 594 1382 737">• “Males ages 18-24 who experienced childhood emotional violence had significantly higher prevalence of mental distress (70.5 % versus 44.5 %) and having ever thought of suicide (17.1 % versus 3.1 %) than those who had not experienced emotional violence in childhood.” (p. 36) <li data-bbox="347 777 1438 1136">• “Males ages 18-24 who completed secondary school, or more were significantly more likely to experience sexual violence than those who completed primary school or less (10.8 % versus 5.5 %). Males who witnessed violence in the home before age 18 were significantly more likely to have experienced childhood physical violence (24.3 % versus 9.4 %) than those who did not witness violence at home. Males who received remittances in the past 3 years were significantly more likely to have experienced childhood sexual violence (15.8 % versus 6.7 %) than those who did not receive remittances. Males who had one or both parents who migrated for 6 months or more in childhood were significantly more likely to have experienced childhood physical violence (16.0 % versus 8.7 %).” (p. 44) <li data-bbox="347 1176 1422 1388">• “[Among 13-17 year olds,] [m]ales who witnessed violence at home were significantly more likely than males who did not, to have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months (47.6 % versus 14.9 %) . . . Males ages 13-17 whose parents had migrated for 6 months or more were significantly more likely to have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months (22.3 % versus 13.4 %).” (p. 44) <li data-bbox="347 1428 1438 1860">• “The indicator data for parent and caregiver support indicate that parent-youth relationships are significant protective factors for youth in Honduras. Among 13-17 year-olds, 47.1 % of females and 42.8 % of males said their parents used positive discipline strategies in the past 12 months. Use of positive parental discipline was significantly higher among females in urban areas (59.3 %). Nine out of ten females (90.2 %) and males (93.9 %) said they were close or very close to their mothers, and nine out of ten females (91.3 %) and males (91.0 %) indicated their parents had high parental monitoring and supervision. Finally, 67.6 % of females and 73.7 % of males said it was easy to talk to their mothers about something that was really bothering them. Physical discipline was also common in Honduras; 18.9 % of females and 15.1 % of males ages 13-17 indicated their parents used physical discipline in the past 12 months.” (p. 47) |

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| | <u>NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES</u> |
| AA. | <p>Thomas Boerman, <i>Family as a Social Construct in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala: Visibility and Vulnerability of Family Members of Individuals Targeted by Organized Criminal Groups</i>, IMMIGRATION BRIEFINGS: PRACTICAL ANALYSIS OF IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ISSUES, Vol. 19:12 (December 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Across the broadest possible range of stakeholders in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala (the Northern Triangle countries of Central America), it is universally agreed that family is the most recognizable social institution in the Northern Triangle societies; in fact it is considered to be the most fundamentally important social construct in the region.” (p. 1) • “Alternatively, the at-risk population in the lower-income sector, which is excluded from these types of clientized relationships, has been effectively abandoned by the governments of the [Northern Triangle] region as it relates to functioning justice system institutions, physical security, social services, and other essential services.” (p. 6) • “Conversely, thousands of people in the low-income sector vanish every year and are never seen nor heard from again, and [Northern Triangle] governments take little or no meaningful action.” (p. 7) • “The family composition and social visibility of children and youth who lack adequate adult protection is crucial. There are essentially four groups of unprotected young people, including (1) children and youth in female-headed households or who are under the care of either young or elderly family members who are not perceived as representing a protective presence, (2) those from toxic, male-dominated households characterized by emotional, physical, sexual, and/or drug or alcohol abuse, (3) children forced to live on the streets, and (4) young people that have reached the age of majority but, due to a host of social, cultural, and economic factors, are unable to attend to their own most basic needs without a supportive and protective family network.” (p. 9) • “Unprotected young people are recognizable to the public in general and to gang members in particular within their neighborhoods and small communities. As in the case of unprotected females, they are recognized as defenseless, without defenders, and subject to predation with expectations of impunity. Simultaneously, once children and youth have been identified as unprotected and targeted for victimization or actually subjected to it, it also puts other members of their family at increased risk. In essence, what exists is a feedback loop in which their family status and corresponding visibility makes unprotected children and youth vulnerable to predation by gangs, and, once targeted, other members of their family are vulnerable due to their familial relationship to the victim.” (p. 9) |

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| CC. | <p>Valentine Josenhans, et. al., <i>Gender, rights and responsibilities: The need for a global analysis of the sexual exploitation of boys</i>, CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT, Vol. 110 (2020).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Violence Against Children Surveys conducted in various countries have found that boys’ low self-perceived sexual victimization was the main reason explaining why they did not try and access support services. Indeed, among boys between the ages of 18 and 24 who experienced sexual violence prior to the age of 18 . . . 49.2 % in Honduras . . . reported that they did not seek assistance because they did not think that their experience of sexual violence was a problem.” (p. 6) • “. . . [In] Honduras . . . it was found that boys between the ages of 18 and 24 who reported experiencing sexual violence as children (prior to the age of 18), were less likely than girls to seek support or to be assisted by service providers.” (p. 7) |
| DD. | <p>Vickie Knox, <i>A Web of Violence: Crime, Corruption and Displacement in Honduras</i>, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (March 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Persistently high levels of violence, the rule of <i>ver, oír y callar</i> - see, hear and shut up - and widespread impunity have led to a situation in which ‘violence is generalised, structural and normalised.’” (p. 20) • “[Gender-based violence] is under-reported, and survivors are rarely able to access support and protection. Those who do report often face re-victimisation and derision in police interviews. Lengthy and inefficient investigations delay legal proceedings, and this is aggravated by a lack of effective witness protection and survivor support programmes.” (p. 27) • “Impunity and the public’s deep mistrust of state institutions also mean that support and protection networks for children tend to be limited to family ties.” (p. 46) • “Corruption has a systemic effect on displacement by aggravating some of the structural socioeconomic factors that drive it. Corruption and impunity also enable the persistence of widespread criminal violence and severely limit the prospects of those targeted finding safety within the country. They also combine with discriminatory practices to mean that many survivors of [gender-based violence] and violence on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are unable to secure protection in the country, often leading to repeated internal displacement and/or cross-border flight.” (p. 48) |
| EE. | <p>Javier Rio Navarro, et. al, <i>Physical and sexual violence, mental health indicators, and treatment seeking among street-based population groups in Tegucigalpa, Honduras</i>, REV PANAM SALUD PUBLICA, Vol. 31:5 (2012).</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62.7% of street-based male adolescents studied experienced physical violence in the past year. (p. 390) • 42.3% of street-based male adolescents studied experienced sexual violence in the past year. (p. 390) |

V. VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBT INDIVIDUALS IN HONDURAS

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| | <u>GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES</u> |
| FF. | <p><u>U.S. Department of State, HONDURAS 2020 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, (2021)</u> <u>Available at: https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/honduras/ (See Exhibit D, Page X)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Significant human rights issues included...threats and violence against...lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons.” • "The Association for a Better Life and the Cattrachas Lesbian Network both reported 16 violent deaths of LGBTI persons as of September. On July 10, unidentified assailants shot and killed transgender activist Scarleth Campbell in Tegucigalpa. Campbell was an LGBTI activist and member of the Rainbow Dolls, an organization that fought violence and discrimination against members of the LGBTI community. " • "The law states that sexual orientation and gender-identity characteristics merit special protection from discrimination and includes these characteristics in a hate crimes amendment to the penal code. Nevertheless, social discrimination against LGBTI persons persisted, as did physical violence. Impunity for such crimes was a problem, as was the impunity rate for all types of crime. According to the Violence Observatory, of the 317 reported cases from 2009 through 2019 of hate crimes and violence against members of the LGBTI population, 92 percent had gone unpunished. " • "LGBTI rights groups asserted that government agencies and private employers engaged in discriminatory hiring practices” |
| GG. | <p>UN. Human Rights Council. Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice, Visit To Honduras: Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice (July 2019) <i>Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3809746?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header</i> (See Exhibit E, Page X)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Despite efforts by the State and feminist activists in the country to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality, discrimination against women persists in all spheres of their lives. This systemic and structural discrimination, nurtured by patriarchy and discriminatory |

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| | <p>gender roles, affects all women in Honduras, but women living in poverty, indigenous, Garífuna and Afro-Honduran women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex women and women with disabilities, inter alia, are particularly disadvantaged. "</p> |
| HH. | <p>Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Honduras: Information Gathering Mission Report, Chapter III: Situation of Sexual Minorities (2018) Available at: https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1429301/1226_1523526023_ffm-honduras-eng.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The mission learned that the situation of sexual minorities and LGBTI human rights defenders in Honduras is precarious. Sexual minorities in Honduras face widespread discrimination on a daily basis throughout the country. Asociación Colectivo Violeta indicated that it is ingrained in society as a whole to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). According to Asociación Para Una Vida Mejor de Personas Infectadas y Afectadas por el VIH/SIDA en Honduras (APUVIMEH), LGBT organizations and sexual minorities live in an ‘extreme situation’ where their human rights are not respected and they remain invisible.” • "The mission learned that sexual minorities in Honduras are persecuted in both public and private domains. In the public domain, persecution occurs at the hands of state authorities, including the police and the military. According to Asociación LGTB Arcoíris, the principal agents of persecution are security forces, including the National Police, the Military Police of Public Order (Policía Militar Del Orden Público), municipal police (policía municipal), DPI, ATIC, Special Operations Command (Comando de Operaciones Especiales, COBRA), and the Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas). " • "The mission also learned that gangs discriminate against sexual minorities and have used them for various gang-related activities. According to APUVIMEH, gangs, including M-18, MS-13, and criminal organizations, like the Cachiros, among others, express a high level of intolerance, homophobia, transphobia and lesbophobia towards sexual minorities." • "The mission learned that sexual minorities have been targeted and killed. APUVIMEH indicated that sexual minorities have been killed in a "very dehumanizing manner" and in "very savage" ways in their homes and in public spaces, including being stoned to death and mutilated. " • "According to Asociación LGTB Arcoíris, the state ‘permits the social cleansing’ of sexual minorities in Honduras by not condemning newspapers that spread anti-LGBTI rhetoric and by allowing state ministers and religious entities to spread negative rhetoric about sexual minorities" |
| NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS | |

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| II. | <p>Human Rights Watch, World Report 2021, <i>Available at: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/honduras#2048fc</i> (See Exhibit J, Page X)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Violent organized crime continues to disrupt Honduran society and push many people to leave the country. Journalists, environmental activists, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, and people with disabilities are among the groups targeted for violence.” • “LGBT people in Honduras are frequently the targets of violence and discrimination, according to Human Rights Watch research. They face violence from gangs, the national civil police and the military police, members of the public, and their own families, as well as extortion by gangs and discrimination in schools and in the workplace. ” • “Violence against LGBT individuals forces many to leave their homes, fleeing internally or leaving the country to seek asylum. Although there is a law that provides higher penalties for bias-based crimes, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, the Attorney General’s office told Human Rights Watch in September 2020 that no one has been convicted under the law. ” |
| JJ. | <p>Freedom House, FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2021-Honduras (2021) <i>Available at: https://freedomhouse.org/country/honduras/freedom-world/2021</i> (See Exhibit K, Page X)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Violence and discrimination against LGBT+ people and Indigenous and Garifuna populations persist at high levels in Honduras. Lesbian Network Cattrachas, a local NGO, reported that at least 20 LGBT+ people were killed in 2020. Cattrachas registered an impunity rate of 91 percent in the 373 murders of LBGT+ people between 2009 and 2020.” • “Same-sex marriage remains illegal in Honduras. In 2019, a law came into force banning same-sex couples from adopting children despite the objection of activists, who called the bill superfluous and discriminatory.” |