

Rights Action
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**U.S. and Canadian Governments “Feed the Beast” in Honduras:
With this regime in power, murder, militarism and impunity will continue without
question in Honduras**

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Honduras Is Combating Its Homicide Epidemic With Militarization

By Giorgio Trucchi, April 16, 2014

https://news.vice.com/articles/honduras-is-combating-its-homicide-epidemic-with-militarization?trk_source=homepage-in-the-news

In March of 2013, images captured on a public security camera in a busy area of the capital city of Tegucigalpa shocked [Honduras](#). The footage shows a group of highly trained and militarized hooded kidnapers, over the course of just a few minutes, surround two young people, force them to lie flat on the ground, and viciously execute them with a spray of bullets — calmly retreating afterward in several different vehicles.

This brutal felony has yet to be solved — and is just one of the tens of thousands of murders that have gone completely unpunished in the last years. According to official data from the Public Ministry of Honduras, only 20 of every 100 murder cases are ever investigated, and of those only a few go to trial or reach a verdict.

“In this country there is total impunity, and the judicial system works well only for the perpetrators... while it works completely against the victims,” said Felix Molina, a journalist and director of the Tegucigalpa Resistance Radio Program. Molina, who is an authority on regional violence and an expert on Honduran human rights violations, told VICE News that the system was especially kind to “those behind the 2009 attack against president Manuel Zelaya,” who was forced into exile in Costa Rica in what the Honduras Truth Commission subsequently determined was an illegal coup d’état.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other international human rights organizations operating in the country denounced the overthrow of Zelaya then and have reported that their current initiatives have been repressed by state security operatives.

According to the Violence Observatory at the National Autonomous University of Honduras, in the past year Honduras registered a slight decrease in its homicide rate, dropping from 85.5 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2012 to 83 in 2013.

Even so, Honduras is again positioned as the country with the highest homicide rate in the world. Its rate remains more than 12 times the international average of 6.9 per 100,000. Some 7,000 people among the 8 million inhabitants of Honduras can expect to be murdered.

The country is officially enduring a severe homicide epidemic — quantified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a murder rate that exceeds 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants.

“The level of violence and impunity in Honduran society is directly related to the degree of corruption and level of infiltration by members of organized crime, and to the amount of involvement of institutions and state agencies (including those which are entrusted with public security) in the drug trade,” the ex-Director of Internal Affairs for the National Police, Commissioner Maria Luisa Borjas, assured VICE News.

Faced with this situation, President Juan Orlando Hernandez, who was inaugurated in January 2014, is opting to militarize public security and promote the creation of a “military police” and a new elite corps. This strategy would further increase the Honduran military budget, which has already seen increases that are among the largest in the entire Latin American region. The 18 percent jump during 2013 was especially remarkable, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Ex-commissioner Borjas, though, doubts whether the danger can be combated solely with more weaponry and repression. It could be handled, she believes, with a “true purge of the state security forces” and by ensuring that preventative social policies become integral parts of the problem’s solution.

“We must improve the quality of civilian life, satisfy the basic needs of the people, and create opportunities. When the quality of life improves for the people, the delinquency index decreases,” Borjas insisted.

Historically, Honduras has been dependent on United States economic support, but Hernandez may be overestimating current US enthusiasm for pumping money into a demonstrably corrupt environment.

The United States’ economic support has significantly facilitated Honduras’ process of militarization, and US political figures are growing concerned. The Pentagon’s contract spending in Honduras tripled during the past decade, and a huge jump in Fiscal Year 2011 lifted the spending to \$53.8 million — up [71 percent from the previous year’s budget](#). Several American politicians vigorously criticized this massive increase.

In 2011, a US congressional representative, Howard L. Berman, writing to then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, called on “governments that assist the Honduran police...as well as US taxpayers, to evaluate immediately United States assistance to ensure that we are not, in fact, feeding a beast.”

Similar concerns were voiced in 2012, when US representative [Jan Schakowsky](#), a Democrat from Illinois, rallied 94 congressmen to urge Secretary of State Clinton “to suspend US assistance to the military and police [of Honduras], due to the lack of mechanisms in place to ensure security forces are held accountable for abuses.”

The amount of US foreign aid that Honduras receives greatly affects its ability to implement new social defense strategies. Without it President Hernandez’s plan to militarize public security might falter.

Since 1998, Rights Action has been funding grassroots organizations in Honduras struggling for community controlled development, environmental protection, truth, justice and human rights, and for democracy and the rule of law. Rights Action does extensive education and activism work concerning how the United States and Canada contribute to and benefit from endemic harms and violations in Guatemala and Honduras. Rights Action (Canada), founded in 1999, is independent from Rights Action (USA).

Honduras – Murder Capital of the World

Americans / Canadians: Keep on, keep on, keep on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to your politicians (MPs, Congress members and Senators) and media. Since the June 2009 military coup, that ousted the last democratically elected government, Honduras has become the ‘Murder Capital of the world’. Repression has reached the levels of the worst years of the 1980s.

Since 2009, the U.S. and Canadian governments have legitimized a succession of illegitimate and repressive regimes. North American companies and investors, and “development” banks (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank) have increased business activities in African palm production, maquiladora sweatshops, privatized “model cities”, tourism and mining.

The Honduran regime remains in power due in large part to its political, economic and military relations with the U.S. and Canada and the “development” banks. Across Honduras, community based organizations in the pro-democracy movement need considerably more human rights accompaniment, funding, media attention on the harms and violations and education and activism in Canada and the U.S.

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