



International organisations send report to the UN with warnings and recommendations on press freedom and freedom of expression in Honduras' UPR

In the context of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Honduras, seven international and local organisations have issued a report sent on 7 April warning of systematic violations of freedom of expression and press freedom in the country.

The organisations **Article 19 Mexico and Central America, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Free Press Unlimited, PEN International, PEN Honduras, Reporters Without Borders and ASODEHU (Association for Democracy and Human Rights in Honduras)** sent a report to the UN UPR Working Group to draw attention to laws restricting freedom of expression and press freedom in Honduras; murders and attacks against journalists and community and indigenous media; threats to academic freedom and the limitation of equal participation of women journalists and authors in the media and publishing houses in their country, as well as violence against women journalists and historically marginalised communities.

The report highlights that Honduras has one of the most complex and unstable human rights contexts in Latin America and requires the immediate attention of the international community. Conditions for the exercise of freedom of expression and press freedom have deteriorated with the current political polarisation, impunity rates continue to rise and, given the imposition of an extended state of emergency in Honduras, the scenario for the general elections is worrying.

The report documents that the violence affecting the exercise of freedom of expression and of the press is significantly related to the lack of guarantees by the National System for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators, which fails to adequately provide and promote the necessary conditions for the exercise of journalism in the country.

The lack of institutions committed to improving the current situation, the lack of investigations, measures to compensate victims and the administration of justice allow the cycle of impunity to intensify, especially when the authorities themselves attack journalists. According to the National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH), by 2024, a total of 600 complaints had been filed against security forces for the unlawful use of public power under the state of emergency.

In this context, **13 recommendations** were made on the issues analysed, including the following:

- The revision of the Protection Law and its regulations to strengthen the institutional protection mechanism, with guarantees of its own budget, autonomy and administrative and decision-making independence.
- The immediate repeal of crimes against honour to prevent further violations of the media and journalists. The implementation of lawsuits for libel and defamation violate the journalistic practice of those who promote diverse debate.
- The application of the necessary measures to ensure that an inclusive gender and diversity perspective is fully integrated into public and private cultural, journalistic and editorial programmes;
- That the State does not discriminate against the press through its advertising policy, favouring certain media over others for political or commercial reasons;
- And that CONADEH promotes dialogue with universities, academics and students so that university authorities avoid practices that violate freedom of expression.

About the UPR

The Universal Periodic Review is a mechanism for assessing the human rights situation in the 193 UN member states, through which countries receive recommendations from their peers. In this process, civil society makes suggestions for recommendations to be considered by the members of the UN Human Rights Council. In the previous evaluation cycle to which Honduras was subjected in 2020, the country received 223 recommendations, 203 of which were accepted by the country and 20 were taken note of. According to the organisations responsible for the contribution sent on 7 April, the recommendations relating to freedom of expression have not been respected by the Honduran State. The UN Human Rights Council will rule on the situation in Honduras in November.