

## **HRC46 | Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala in focus**

02.03.2021

**UN High Commissioner for Human Rights denounced today the situation for human rights defenders in Colombia, Guatemala, and Honduras. The absence of the state, legal restrictions, and ineffective practices were highlighted as obstacles that must be urgently tackled by governments.**  
[Spanish version](#)



Each year, the Human Rights Council receives reports on the situation of human rights in countries where the Office of the High Commissioner is present. This session of the Council celebrated a dialogue on Colombia, Guatemala, and Honduras. [Click to watch recorded statements.](#)

### **Colombia**

Any discussion about human rights in Colombia will and must include the killings of human rights defenders. "Frontline's Defenders 2020 report shows that HRD assassinations in Colombia are seven times higher than any other country", said ISHR's Valeria Castellanos. "Defenders are not safer now than they were during the armed conflict".

In her presentation, the High Commissioner observed a significant intensification of violence in Colombia, particularly due to the expansion of non-state armed groups. She highlighted the need to deploy civil institutions and authorities for the prevention of violence and the expansion of human rights guarantees.

NGO Comisión Colombiana de Juristas echoed the recommendations of the High Commissioner and her calling on Colombia to double down its efforts for the implementation of all chapters of the peace agreement.

Compartimos la intervención de [@AnaMaRodV](#), subdirectora de [@Coljuristas](#), en el marco del Consejo de Derechos Humanos de la ONU [#HCR46](#) sobre el informe anual de Colombia, presentado por la Alta Comisionada para los derechos humanos [@mbachelet](#).  
[pic.twitter.com/OIPEetHuly](https://pic.twitter.com/OIPEetHuly)

— Comisión Colombiana de Juristas -CCJ- (@Coljuristas) [March 1, 2021](#)

[Twitter: @Coljuristas](#)

Colombia responded by acknowledging the danger faced by human rights defenders and stating that the source of such violence is the number of armed criminal groups involved in illegal activities, especially drug trafficking.

### **Guatemala**

The erosion of civic space in 2020, with attacks and intimidation to human rights defenders, including journalists, was one of the topics highlighted by the High Commissioner. In February, Decree 5257 was adopted, reforming regulations of non-governmental organizations for development, and - according to the High Commissioner - this decree may represent a problem for the work of human rights defenders. Regarding the issues of impunity and corruption, Guatemala's government commented that public institutions on the matter had been reinforced, particularly relevant prosecutors.

### **Honduras**

The High Commissioner pointed out that since 2016, there has been a contraction of civic space in Honduras, with such a trend intensifying in 2020. Social protests became more common this year. Human rights defenders have been attacked and the killing of activists and journalists has obtained little to no action from

the part of the judicial system. The High Commissioner underlined that national bodies for the protection of human rights in Honduras have weakened with time and are still saturated by problems of corruption and impunity.

In response to the presentation of the High Commissioner, Honduras reaffirmed the importance of cooperative work for the protection of human rights defenders and ensured being open to future visits from Special Procedures of the Council.

Finally, Latin American states took advantage of the opportunity during the session to express their preoccupation with the reduced financial support to the OHCHR in the region. Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru solicited further aid for the protection of victims of human rights violations.

*For any further information, please contact Eleanor Openshaw by email ([e.openshaw@ishr.ch](mailto:e.openshaw@ishr.ch)) or on Twitter ([@eleonoropenshaw](https://twitter.com/eleonoropenshaw)).*

*Foto: [Flickr / UN Geneva](#)*

ISHR