**Honduras:** 150+ leaders from Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities were attacked during conflicts linked to infrastructure and extractive projects.

This is a summary of findings from a platform tracking community rights violations across 6 countries in Latin America, from industrial projects operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The digital platform Collective Rights Violated During the Pandemic has revealed that Honduras’ community rights defenders suffered the largest number of attacks in Latin America linked to extractive and infrastructure of projects on community territories.

This number represents 17% of all attacks on communities registered by the platform, which collected information between 2020 and 2021 to analyze the situation in six countries in the region.

The platform also showed that infrastructure and energy projects have impacted 73% of all of Honduras’ Indigenous, Afro-descendant and local communities.

Collective Rights Violated During the Pandemic is a free access digital tool developed by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) with the support of the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT). The platform tracked 30 mapped projects in Honduras that affect 138 communities. Of these, 51 are affected by infrastructure projects and 50 by the energy industry.
A study breakdown showed that 64% of the energy sector projects that affected the communities belongs to the hydropower sub-sector. The rest of the projects were divided into biomass energy, solar, geothermal, and thermoelectric energy in equal percentages (9%).

In the infrastructure sector, the impacts on communities were linked to the sale of communal land, construction of houses with engineering problems, and services that would endanger communal access to water, among others. Other industries that affect communities in Honduras are agribusiness (22 communities); mining (13); and logging (2). It should be noted that 67% of these projects are legally sanctioned.

The platform also shows that not only is Honduras the country with the most community leaders attacked during the pandemic, it also has the second-highest number of defenders killed (after Colombia). Seven community leaders were assassinated in Honduras in 2020-2021.

These leaders included environmental activists who opposed the installation of hydroelectric dams, considering them dangerous for rivers and communities.

Gregoria Jiménez, President of the Organización de Desarrollo Étnico Comunitario - ODECO (Community Ethnic Development Organization), said that they have faced intense pressure from various actors to prevent the documentation of many of these cases.

She said, "If there was no insistence from the communities and organizations that we support in the processes, surely the cases would have been filed away without action."

Jiménez added that this has required community organizations to join forces to report their situation collectively. “We are working as a network to make alliances with other communities who have the same problems.”

**Selling fantasy islands**

Behind the tourist reviews that depict the Honduran Caribbean beaches as paradisiac, there are stories of dispossession and violence against the Garífuna people.

Throughout their history, the nation's communities have suffered forced displacement from their lands: First from multinational companies exporting fruit beginning in the 20th century, and then with the rise of tourism and monocultures for palm oil.
This is the case with the Jeannette Kawas National Park in Bahía de Tela, where before and during the pandemic, the Garífuna community, which has lived there for almost 225 years, was forcibly displaced.

The introduction of oil palm plantations in the land has also impacted the Laguna de Zambuco tourist center and the Garífuna communities of Tornabé, Miami, San Juan, El Triunfo de la Cruz and La Ensenada.

Jiménez says that many local crops cannot survive if they share land with the African palm culture. “This goes against the principles of the Garífuna community.”

The Garífuna are now worried about plans to further dispossess them of their territories to impose a mega-project in Kawas Park, without consultation or the consent of the affected populations.

**Types of violations**

Three types of collective rights violations stand out in more than half of the 30 cases registered in Honduras. These include: the right to free, prior and informed consent (14 cases); to collective ownership of the territory (14); and to defend ancestral land (13). Together, these rights were violated in 45% of the cases studied.

Violations of the communities’ right to a healthy environment (47.83%) and the right to decide their own development priorities (47.83%) were also recorded. While defending these rights, 56.5% of community activists received threats (56.52%) and 30.4% were killed.

Environmental impacts affected over 60% of the territories, including deforestation and water pollution. Social impacts included negative effects on the availability of water and traditional livelihoods, as well as displacement of local populations, reported in half of the cases.

Jiménez called upon Honduras’ communities to continue their struggle with even more vigor, especially since April 12 marks 225 years since the Garífuna people have lived in Honduras.

“We need to raise the profile of our peoples, who are seen as objects and not as subjects of action. We also want to see the faces of Afro-descendant women in institutions that decide the course of this country,” she said.

*For more information, visit the Collective Rights Violated During the Pandemic platform.*