

Militarization in Honduras Causes Spike in Human Rights Abuses



Tegucigalpa, July 10 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Increased militarization in Honduras in recent years has led to a flood of abuses at the hands of soldiers, including arbitrary detentions, murder, torture, and rape. Militarization spiked in Honduras following the 2009 military coup in the name of increasing security and cracking down on violence in the Central American country that has been dubbed the murder capital of the world.

President Juan Orlando Hernandez brought in a strategy of putting “a soldier on every corner” after his National Party predecessor Porfirio Lobo had already ramped up militarization in 2012. According to Honduran authorities, militarization is an effective strategy to crack down on drug gangs and violence crime. But analysts have pointed out that the drug war serves as a pretext for increased criminalization of political dissent and the focus on gang violence obscures the widespread political violence, repression, and impunity in Honduras.

Honduran soldiers were accused of at least nine murders, over 20 incidents of torture, and some 30 illegal detentions between 2012 and 2014, according to numbers compiled by Reuters.

The human rights organization Rights Action documented 34 acts of violence and other crimes attributed to the Honduran military between 2010 and 2013 in northern Honduras' Aguan Valley region alone, home to an intense conflict between private large landowners and farmer's movements struggling to defend their land and livelihood.

The Aguan Valley has been heavily militarized since the coup. As a result, violence and criminalization of farmers has dramatically increased in the region.

One of the Honduran government's security strategies has been the creation of a controversial hybrid military police force. Launched in 2013 with some 900 personnel who paroled city streets with military armaments, masked faces, and authority to make arrests, Honduras' military police received widespread condemnation from human rights groups.

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