
Over 70 Homicides This Year in Honduras, Down From 2017

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Honduras has registered a total of 71 homicides so far this year, that's about 12 people per month, down from last year's 107 deaths registered between January and June.

According to the Observatory of Violence at the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH), of the 70 victims, 83 percent were men.

The UNAH reports that most of these homicides are actual attacks on several people. All 71 people were killed in 21 massacres this year.

Four of these concerted attacks took place at the victims' homes. Seven were drive-by shootings. One elderly woman and several minors are among those who have been killed in Honduras this year so far.

Several of the attacks targeted families and were in connection to land disputes. On February 12 three family members - Nahum Jacinto, Augusto Jacinto, and Ismael Jacinto - were gunned down together at dawn in the Olancho department. The alleged perpetrators, a father and son duo were taken into custody for the crime. On June 5 three brothers were killed while working the land in Santa Barbara near the Guatemalan border.

According to the study, a mother and her two daughters, as well as three brothers were all gunned down in Olancho on separate occasions over land.

Olancho, where the Aguan River Valley is located, has been a site of land disputes, assassinations and impunity over the past decade even before the 2009 overthrow of the democratically elected president, Manuel Zelaya. According to the Center For Constitutional Rights, in 2011 forty land-rights activists were murdered in the region.

While Honduras had the highest homicide rate of any non-warring nation in 2012, luckily this statistic has been on the fall. According to the UNAH observatory, there were 107 killing by this time last year, and 170 victims in 2016.

What is on the rise in Honduras is government corruption. In March the Honduran Congress passed a measure that could potentially protect public officials from being charged with embezzlement. President Juan Orlando Hernandez and Congress also passed legislation that sidelined the Mission Against Corruption and Impunity and Honduras (MACCIH), the anti-corruption agency that linked Hernandez and several of his party members to "institutionalized corruption" within the government.
