

## [UPR: Call on Honduras to protect human rights defenders](#)

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(Geneva) - The Honduran Congress must incorporate civil society feedback and pass a proposed Law to protect human rights defenders, journalists and justice operators, says ISHR in a new [Briefing Paper on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Honduras](#), published today. [The briefing paper is now also available in Spanish.](#)

Honduras is scheduled to be reviewed at the 22nd session of the Universal Periodic Review in April 2015.

The run up to the 2015 UPR of Honduras provides its Congress and Government with the opportunity to take into account the input from local civil society, outlined in ISHR's publication, and pass and implement a law to improve the situation for activists in the country. On the ground, the situation remains dangerous for human rights defenders, who are in danger of being threatened, abducted, defamed, tortured and even killed.

Those who defend the rights of the LGBTI population, or who work on business and human rights, face particularly brutal and elevated risks in the country. Meanwhile, impunity rates for attacks against journalists are at 90%.

'In having consulted a range of civil society actors, including human rights defenders and international experts, the Honduran Congress is in a fantastic position to be able to pass a best practice law to protect those striving to put human rights at the core of the Honduran transition', said ISHR's Ben Leather. 'It represents an opportunity for the government to underline its commitment to human rights, going into its second UPR cycle, and to take a key step towards overcoming the risks which activists in the country currently face'.

Another international NGO focused on human rights defenders, [Protection International](#), also recently submitted a [briefing paper](#) to the UPR. Like ISHR, they also hope that the Honduran legislature can pass a law which responds to the needs and demands of its future beneficiaries.

Key recommendations that should be made to Honduras at the UPR in 2015 include that the Government should demonstrate political support through statements recognising the legitimate and important role of human rights defenders, and combat impunity by ensuring the prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of all violations against defenders.

ISHR's briefing paper on Honduras is intended to assist States and other stakeholders to formulate questions and recommendations regarding the protection of human rights defenders during the UPR.

**Key civil society recommendations regarding the drafting and implementation of the Law to protect**

## **human rights defenders, journalists and justice operators include:** <sup>[1]</sup>

- The law must contemplate the explicit recognition of the right to defend human rights.
- The protection mechanism which the law will create ought to reside under the complete control of the Secretary of State for the Offices of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralisation, who must be granted the power to coordinate the participation of all other governmental institutions in the protection of the mechanism's beneficiaries.
- The only security officials charged with the protection of beneficiaries within the protection mechanism must be specifically trained for this purpose.
- Beneficiaries of the protection mechanism must have given their informed consent to the protection measures they are granted.
- The protection mechanism ought to develop, in consultation with civil society, effective protection plans for collectives, communities, groups of HRDs and social movements.
- The law must ensure that sufficient budget, training and capacity is provided for all authorities and institutions involved in its implementation.
- The law must guarantee a clear risk analysis methodology with transparent, previously defined and coherent criteria which respond to regional best practise.
- The law must clarify how the mechanism will coordinate with the Inter-American System for Human Rights, ensuring that the mechanism cannot revoke previously authorised protection measures.

*For further information about the Briefing Paper or for any assistance or advice in the formulation of recommendations, please contact ISHR's Ben Leather, on [b.leather@ishr.ch](mailto:b.leather@ishr.ch).*

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[1] Recommendations reflect those given to legislators by a coalition of human rights defenders, with the support of Protection International and Cejil, in August 2014.