

# WOLA

Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas



# Central America Monitor

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**UNAH**  
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**IUDPAS**

ABOUT

# THE PROJECT

**El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras consistently rank among the most violent countries in the world. High levels of violence, corruption, and impunity have undermined the states' capacity to address the deep insecurity many of their citizens face.**

Over the past three years, the arrival of thousands of Central American migrants—many of them unaccompanied minors—at the U.S.-Mexico border has brought renewed attention to the region and its challenges. Many of these children, teenagers, and their parents fled violent neighborhoods and a lack of economic opportunities in their home countries, as well as weak governments unable to protect them. One part of the response has been a considerable increase in foreign assistance intended to address these issues.

In 2015, the U.S. Congress approved a US\$750 million aid package to Central America. The first tranche of a new multi-year strategy of engagement with the region, the aid is designed to help address the underlying conditions driving Central Americans to leave their countries. While previous assistance to Central America tended to focus solely on strengthening security, the new aid package recognizes, in principle, the need to reduce violence, strengthen government institutions, combat corruption, and expand economic opportunities.

When it approved the aid package, the U.S. Congress also included an unprecedented set of accountability measures to ensure that the recipient governments stay committed to reform. In order to receive a portion of the aid each year, the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras must show that they have taken concrete steps on accountability and transparency, public sector reform, anti-corruption, human rights, and citizen participation.

The majority of the U.S. assistance began to be delivered in early 2017, and in May 2017 the U.S. Congress approved another \$655 million. Ensuring that this assistance is being wisely invested and properly implemented—and that the governments of Central America are advancing needed reforms—requires systematic monitoring. This is why WOLA, in collaboration with a group of respected and experienced Central American NGO partners, has launched the Central America Monitor.

The Central America Monitor will track and analyze U.S. assistance programs in

the region and evaluate the progress in Central America to reduce violence and insecurity, strengthen the rule of law, improve transparency and accountability, protect human rights, and combat corruption. To do this, we have developed a comprehensive series of quantitative and qualitative indicators to systematically assess progress on the ground.

The indicators will allow us to measure progress in each of the three countries, moving beyond abstract discussions of reform to specific measures of change. WOLA and our partners developed these indicators in a months-long process that included review of international standards and consultation with experts in the field.

As the U.S. and other donors consider funding for Central America in the future, WOLA and our partners will use the results of our measurement and analysis to inform Congress, policymakers, and donors so they can make smart choices about continued assistance to the region.

## OUR GOAL

Is to provide an instrument that can help identify the areas of progress and shortfalls of the policies and strategies being implemented in the region in a form that is useful for policymakers, donors, academics, and the public. At the same time, we hope to provide analysis that can contribute to the evaluation of trends over time both within and between Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

To find out more, visit: [www.wola.org/CAM](http://www.wola.org/CAM)

# EVALUATING PROGRESS

WOLA and our partners have developed a series of qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess progress in Central America in ten key areas. Data sources include official documents and statistics, surveys, interviews, and reviews of existing laws and regulations that will be systematically compiled.



## STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS

### // Capacity of the Justice System

Number of criminal justice officials, geographical coverage, workload, effectiveness, and public trust.

### // Internal Independence

Existence and implementation of a public, merit-based selection process free from external influence, a results-based evaluation system, and an effective disciplinary system.

### // External Independence

Size of budget allocated for the judicial sector and implementation of national and international protection measures for justice officials.



## COMBATTING CORRUPTION

### // Scope and Implementation of Legislation to Combat Corruption

Classification of new crimes in criminal codes and reforms to existing anti-corruption laws to adhere to international standards.

### // Advancements in Criminal Investigations

Number of corruption cases filed, prosecuted, and resolved, as well as the progress made in emblematic cases.

### // Functioning of Oversight Bodies

Existence and capacity of external oversight bodies or agencies to combat corruption.

### // Level of Public Trust

Degree of public trust in state institutions involved in efforts to prevent, identify, investigate, and punish corruption.



## IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY

### // Budget and Spending Transparency

Access to public information on budget allocations and spending on security, justice, and defense.

### // Scope and Implementation of the 'Law of Access to Public Information'

Type of information categorized as restricted or of limited access, period of classification, availability and quality of statistics related to security and justice, information requests granted and denied, and related fees.

### // Disclosure of Public Officials' Statement of Assets

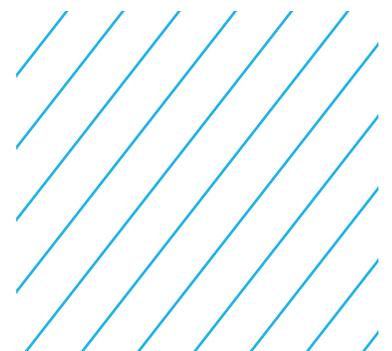
Level of official compliance with disclosure norms and the degree to which such statements are made available to the public.



## COOPERATION WITH ANTI-IMPUNITY COMMISSIONS

### // Political Will and Level of Collaboration

Commitment of the state to collaborate and enable the work of the CICIG in Guatemala and the MACCIH in Honduras, demonstrated by the progress of emblematic cases, the approval of legislative reforms, and support for domestic counterparts working with these commissions.





## STRENGTHENING OF CIVILIAN POLICE FORCES

### // Functioning of Police Career Systems

Existence and effectiveness of police recruitment and promotion mechanisms, training processes, and disciplinary systems, as well as the structure of police bodies.

### // Allocation and Use of Budgetary Resources

Allocation and effective use of public funds and percentage designated for the wellbeing of members of the civilian police forces.

### // Community Relations

Public trust in the police, police-community relations, and relations with indigenous authorities.



## TACKLING VIOLENCE AND ORGANIZED CRIME

### // Capacity Building

Existence and functioning of specialized anti-organized crime units, application of scientific and technical investigative methods, and functioning of judges or tribunals dedicated to the prosecution of organized crime.

### // Advances in Criminal Investigations

Number of organized crime-related cases filed, prosecuted, and resolved, as well as the progress made in emblematic cases.

### // Crime Reduction

Convictions for homicides, extortion, and against criminal networks, as well as a reduction in serious and violent crimes.



## CONSULTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

### // Design, Representation, and Implementation of a Consultation Mechanism

Design, implementation, and monitoring of a representative consultation policy for the Alliance for Prosperity Plan, as well as for the various projects deriving from the Plan that may affect indigenous peoples and/or local communities.



## LIMITING THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN PUBLIC SECURITY

### // Development and Implementation of a Concrete Plan

Design and implementation of a publicly accessible and verifiable plan with goals, timelines, activities, and clearly established indicators, repeal of legal norms authorizing participation of the armed forces in public security, and access to information regarding payroll and assigned resources.

### // Conduct of Military Forces

Complaints, accusations, and sentences regarding human rights violations perpetrated by members of the armed forces and the level of public trust in the armed forces.



## PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

### // Investigation and Conviction of Human Rights Violations

Existence and functioning of specialized investigative units, number of complaints, prosecutions, and convictions, handling of emblematic cases, and degree of security forces' collaboration with investigations.

### // Protection Mechanisms

Structure and functioning of domestic protection mechanisms and implementation of international protection measures for human rights defenders who have been victims of attacks or threats.

### // Hate Speech

Analysis of attacks and smear or defamation campaigns against human rights defenders.



## FUNCTIONING OF AN AUTONOMOUS ENTITY TO OVERSEE THE ALLIANCE FOR PROSPERITY PLAN

### // Structure, Mandate, and Composition

Establishment of an autonomous and public entity with broad representation, with the structure and mandate to oversee the Alliance for Prosperity Plan developed by the countries of the Northern Triangle, and whose recommendations are incorporated in the execution of the Plan.

ABOUT

WOLA

**WOLA is a leading research and advocacy organization advancing human rights in the Americas. We envision a future where public policies protect human rights and recognize human dignity, and where justice overcomes violence.**

## OUR PARTNERS

### // MYRNA MACK FOUNDATION

The Myrna Mack Foundation (*Fundación Myrna Mack*) is a Guatemalan non-governmental organization that develops and produces research and policy proposals aimed at furthering the fight against impunity, strengthening the rule of law, and consolidating peace and democracy in Guatemala.

### // UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION

The University Institute of Public Opinion (*Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública, IUDOP*) is a research center based at the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA) in El Salvador. In collaboration with other areas of the university, the IUDOP seeks to systematically and scientifically monitor the social, political, economic, and cultural situation of the country.

### // UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE ON DEMOCRACY, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The University Institute on Democracy, Peace, and Security (*Instituto Universitario en Democracia, Paz y Seguridad, IUDPAS*), based at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, monitors violence trends and provides data and analysis to government institutions, NGOs, and the public in order to promote transparent public policies to combat violence.



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**#CentralAmericaMonitor**

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