

## **Human Rights Protection Mechanisms in Honduras: Tools for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders**

### **Mecanismos de protección de los derechos humanos en Honduras: herramientas para la protección de los y las defensoras**

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#### **Manuscript information:**

**Recibido/Received:**25/09/24

**Revisado/Reviewed:** 11/10/24

**Aceito/Accepted:** 13/12/24

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#### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Keywords<sup>a</sup>:**

Human rights, safety mechanisms, Honduras, violence.

This article examines how human rights protection mechanisms function in Honduras and how they safeguard human rights defenders. The country has become one of the most dangerous for activists and human rights defenders due to the high incidence of attacks and killings. In this context, the study reviews current laws and public policies and their implementation, finding the challenges and opportunities for improving protection. A qualitative approach was used to conduct an in-depth review of legislation, national and international reports, and emblematic cases that illustrate the situation of defenders in the country. Additionally, comparisons were made between the protection mechanisms in Honduras and those of other countries in the region, such as Mexico and Colombia, to name best practices. This analysis is essential for understanding how the state can strengthen its commitment to human rights protection. The findings show a significant discrepancy between policy development and its execution, hindered by a lack of resources and institutional coordination. Despite legislative progress, significant obstacles are still in ensuring effective protection. It is concluded that the State must protect human rights defenders by

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<sup>a</sup> The keywords were taken from the UNESCO thesaurus.

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improving law enforcement, including affected communities, and strengthening international cooperation.

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## RESUMEN

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### Palabras clave<sup>b</sup>:

Derechos humanos, mecanismos de seguridad, Honduras, violencia.

Este artículo examina cómo funcionan los mecanismos de protección de los derechos humanos en Honduras y cómo protegen a los y las defensoras de estos derechos. El país se ha posicionado como uno de los más peligrosos para activistas y defensores de derechos humanos debido a la alta incidencia de agresiones y asesinatos. En este contexto, el estudio tiene el objetivo de explorar las normas y políticas públicas actuales y su implementación, mediante la identificación de los desafíos y las oportunidades para mejorar la protección. Para ello, se utiliza un enfoque cualitativo con el fin de realizar una revisión exhaustiva de la legislación, informes nacionales e internacionales y casos emblemáticos que ilustran la situación de los defensores en el país. Además, se llevan a cabo comparaciones entre los mecanismos de protección de Honduras y los de otros países de la región, como México y Colombia, con el objetivo de identificar prácticas buenas. En tal sentido, este análisis es esencial para comprender cómo el Estado puede reforzar su compromiso con la protección de los derechos humanos. Los hallazgos muestran una gran discrepancia entre la elaboración de políticas y su ejecución, afectada por la falta de recursos y coordinación institucional. A pesar de los progresos en la legislación, persisten obstáculos significativos para garantizar una protección efectiva. En ese orden de ideas, se concluye que el Estado debe proteger a los defensores de derechos humanos mediante la mejora de la aplicación de la ley, la inclusión de las comunidades afectadas y la cooperación internacional.

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<sup>b</sup> Las palabras clave se tomaron del tesoro de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO).

## **Introduction**

The human rights crisis in Honduras is marked by the presence of violence and persecution of human rights defenders. As a result, defenders of the environment, indigenous and territorial rights, among others, have suffered threats, attacks and even homicides. Likewise, the increase in these cases in the last ten years has concerned international organizations, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights [IACHR] (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2021). In contrast, the Honduran government has established defense mechanisms in response to this situation, although they have been questioned for their ineffectiveness and lack of resources. Therefore, in order to understand their responsiveness to increasing threats, the objective of this article was to examine how these mechanisms are structured and function.

Honduras is considered one of the most dangerous countries for human rights defenders, especially for environmental and land rights defenders. More than 148 environmental defenders were killed in the country between 2012 and 2023, making the territory, according to Global Witness (2024), one of the deadliest places in the world. Impunity, corruption and lack of political will are the causes of this situation (Amnesty International, 2020).

Following increasing reports of violence against defenders, Honduras has implemented some protection mechanisms, such as the National Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators, established in 2015 under the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (Legislative Decree No. 34-2015).

Indeed, the purpose of this mechanism is to provide preventive and protective measures to people who are at risk due to their work. You can take measures such as physical protection, police accompaniment and legal action. However, its implementation has been ineffective due to lack of resources and lack of institutional capacity to provide a rapid and effective response (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

However, the mechanism has been criticized for several reasons despite its existence. First, there is a lack of financial and human resources to ensure the implementation of protection measures. In this regard, a report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Honduras (2022) indicates that the funds allocated to the mechanism are insufficient to meet the needs of the beneficiaries. In addition, many advocates have pointed out that the protection provided is insufficient or late.

Secondly, most people have a distrustful attitude towards the organizations responsible for protection. In that sense, given that some of the threats come from state actors or groups linked to the government, many defenders see the security forces as part of the problem. As a result, the situation has led certain supporters to reject the proposed measures and to seek unofficial solutions such as self-exile.

For this reason, it is essential to modify and strengthen existing protection mechanisms. In order for the mechanism to be able to meet the requests of defenders at risk, the budget allocation must first be increased. In addition, it is essential to train and educate security forces and justice operators on human rights and the importance of defenders in society.

Accordingly, the creation of spaces for discussion between the government, civil society and human rights defenders is another important proposal to identify areas for improvement in the current mechanisms. To this extent, international organizations have suggested that defenders actively participate in the evaluation and monitoring of the protection measures implemented (Global Witness, 2024).

## **General Situation of Human Rights in Honduras**

One of the most dangerous places in Latin America for human rights defenders is Honduras, especially for environmental, territorial and LGBTI rights activists. In this regard, Amnesty International (2020) stated that human and environmental rights defenders, as well as LGBTI activists, are victims of smear campaigns, criminalization, threats, aggressions and even homicides in an environment marked by impunity.

According to the 2022 annual report of the non-governmental organization Global Witness, deadly attacks against human rights defenders in Honduras are a serious problem. For this group, 14 murders were recorded that year, making the country the most lethal in the world per person. As a result, the worrying situation has led to the creation of the National Protection System in 2015, through Decree No34-2015, which established the "Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators". It is important to note that the human rights of persons in defense are protected by this law.

However, reports from organizations such as Human Rights Watch (2021) indicated that the protection mechanism lacks adequate personnel and financial resources, making it ineffective. Moreover, instead of addressing the structural causes of the conflict, priority has been given to the implementation of reactive measures.

Additionally, a diagnosis issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2019) identified more than 125 recommendations to strengthen the National Protection System, by highlighting the importance of ensuring sufficient personnel, financial autonomy and an agile operational structure. The report also stressed the importance of flexible financing to allow for adequate planning and ensure the continuity of system operations without interruptions.

For their part, Forst (2016), United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and Orozco (2016), IACHR Rapporteur on the Rights of Human Rights Defenders, called on the Honduran government to take prompt and effective measures to protect human rights defenders and ensure that they can carry out their work without fear of reprisals or violence.

In 2019, the UN rapporteur reiterated that Honduras was one of the most dangerous countries for human rights defenders in Latin America. In this regard, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported at least 120 attacks against human rights defenders, including 78 environmental and territorial activists, between January and August 2022. These defenders are often wrongfully accused of crimes such as theft or misappropriation to hinder their work (OHCHR, 2022).

According to the *in loco* visit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) conducted in 2018, high levels of poverty, inequality and exclusion have a disproportionate impact on women, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, LGBTI people and other vulnerable populations, worsening the human rights situation in the country (IACHR, 2018).

Finally, in 2023, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) reported on a context of inequality and violence in Honduras, where the excessive use of force by authorities has caused unlawful killings, especially among youth, women, LGBTIQ+ people and human rights defenders.

## **Methodological**

### ***Research Design***

This article used a qualitative approach to analyze the effectiveness of human rights protection systems in Honduras and their impact on the security of human rights defenders. That said, the main methodological components are presented below:

### ***Documentary Review***

A thorough review of official documents, reports from national and international organizations and regulations related to the protection of human rights in Honduras was carried out. Key documents include:

- The Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators (Legislative Decree No. 34-2015).
- Reports from international organizations such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Global Witness.
- National reports from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Honduras.

Accordingly, these documents established a basis for the analysis of current legal and political mechanisms, as well as the evaluation of discrepancies between theory and practice.

### ***Case Analysis***

Specific case studies reflecting the situation of human rights defenders in Honduras were selected to complement the documentary review. Emblematic cases such as those of environmental defenders, indigenous activists and justice operators were chosen. These cases allow us to observe how protection mechanisms are used and their effects.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

Although no direct interviews were conducted, this article is based on testimonies and previous interviews collected by human rights organizations and the media. The semi-structured interviews conducted by these organizations with human rights defenders in Honduras provide valuable qualitative information on the perceptions of the beneficiaries of the protection mechanism, its effectiveness and the challenges they face.

### ***Comparative Analysis***

An assessment was made of the similarities and differences between Honduras' security mechanisms and those of other countries in the region, such as Mexico and Colombia, which have similar systems. This helped identify good practices and lessons learned that could be applied in Honduras.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

It is important to note that this analysis was based on secondary sources, which means that the research relied heavily on information available in previous reports and studies. In addition, the ability to evaluate certain aspects of the mechanism's functioning is limited by the lack of access to updated data and direct interviews with key actors in Honduras.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The principles of human rights and the international protection of human rights defenders serve as the theoretical basis for this article. The UN stated that human rights defenders are those who, individually or collectively, promote and protect universally recognized human rights. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998) stated that States must protect them. In this sense, it could be argued that the theoretical framework in Honduras is based on the theories of human rights governance, rule of law and transitional justice, which are essential elements for understanding the dynamics of protection.

From a human rights governance perspective, the State is supposed to establish institutional structures to protect fundamental rights. Transnational activist networks can influence the domestic politics of states, generating international pressure for stronger protection frameworks, according to Keck and Sikkink (1998). In this regard, the rule of law theory asserted that the protection of human rights depends on a strong legal system and an independent court. However, in Honduras there are significant gaps that hinder adequate protection.

In addition, the transitional justice approach is relevant in contexts such as Honduras, where violence and human rights violations have been present for a long time. To protect the most vulnerable people, including human rights defenders, transitional justice emphasizes the need for mechanisms of reparation, justice and non-repetition (Teitel, 2003).

### ***The National System for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Honduras***

The National Protection System for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators in Honduras is a tool created in response to the growing need to protect these groups, who face threats due to their work in defense of common and public goods. In this sense, this system seeks to guarantee the security and protection of defenders in the context of a country with high levels of conflict linked to the neoliberal and extractivist economic model that prevails in various regions. However, these defenders face risks such as persecution, violence and assassinations, many of them linked to political and economic interests that seek to exploit the country's natural resources (IACHR, 2022).

On the other hand, the regulatory framework that supports this system is found in the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators, especially Article 19, which establishes the State's obligations to guarantee adequate protection measures. In accordance with the above, the Secretariat for Human Rights is the lead entity that coordinates the system, and is supported by several key institutions for its operation (Secretariat for Human Rights, Justice, Governance and Decentralization, 2016).

### ***System Structure***

The National Protection System is made up of five main entities:

1. Secretary of Human Rights: It is the governing institution of the system, in charge of coordinating and supervising its operation.
2. General Directorate of the Protection System: It is in charge of the system's operability, managing protection measures and their implementation.

3. National Protection Council: It is a space for advice and participation involving both state institutions and civil society organizations. Its role is to supervise and propose improvements to the system.
4. Technical Committee: It is the body that issues and grants protection measures. Its composition includes representatives of the State and civil society.
5. Operational Instances: They include various units within the Human Rights Secretariat, such as the Case Reception Unit, the Risk Analysis Unit, and the Implementation and Monitoring Unit.

Each of these entities has specific roles in receiving complaints, analyzing risk, implementing precautionary measures, and following up on cases of defenders at risk.

### ***Issues and Challenges***

Despite its existence, the system faces important limitations in terms of resources and response capacity. The lack of an adequate budget, together with the administrative processes that must be followed according to the state contracting law, hinders the prompt implementation of protection measures. In addition, the irregular participation of some actors, such as the journalists' and lawyers' associations, reduces the effectiveness of the system.

Another significant challenge is the collusion of economic, political and criminal interests in some regions of the country, which increases the vulnerability of human rights defenders. These structural difficulties underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to combat the causes of violence and protect those who oppose the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources.

**Table 1**

*Entities comprising the National Protection System*

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Role</b>
Secretariat of Human Rights	System Administrator
General Directorate of the Protection System	Operational coordination of protection measures
National Protection Council	Advisory and participatory body, including civil society
Technical Committee	It dictates and grants protection measures
Operating Units (General Management)	Case management, risk analysis, implementation and follow up

*Note.* Own elaboration.

## **Discussion and Results**

According to the analysis, the effectiveness of protection mechanisms in Honduras is negatively affected by a series of structural and operational limitations. These are the main findings of the study in light of the theoretical framework and practical experiences:

### ***Institutional and Financial Inadequacy***

The lack of financial and human resources to guarantee adequate coverage is one of the main weaknesses identified in the protection mechanisms. The budget allocated to the National Protection Mechanism is limited, as noted by Amnesty International (2020) and OHCHR (2022), which hinders the effective implementation of preventive and protective measures for defenders at risk. To that extent, Honduras is in an unfavorable position compared to other countries in the region, such as Colombia, which has developed a more comprehensive and better resourced protection system (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

In this sense, the capacity of the State to comply with its international obligations to protect human rights is compromised by this institutional inadequacy from a human rights governance perspective. Therefore, the lack of resources is detrimental to defenders' confidence in institutions and fosters the idea that there is no punishment.

### ***Lack of Confidence in State Institutions***

The legitimacy and confidence of the Honduran State are at risk. Many human rights defenders see judicial authorities and security forces as part of the problem, making protection mechanisms less reliable. Numerous cases in which state actors have been accused of committing or facilitating violent acts against defenders have reinforced this perception. From the perspective of the rule of law, this represents a serious violation of the principles of impartiality and justice because the institutions that should guarantee the security of citizens are perceived as complicit in the violations.

### ***Deficient Implementation of Protection Measures***

The analysis of cases shows that the mechanism's protection measures are often late or inadequate for the level of risk faced by human rights defenders. According to the above, there have been cases in which physical protection measures, such as police accompaniment, were abruptly withdrawn for no apparent reason, increasing the risk for defenders. Transitional justice theory argues that these decisions not only violate their rights, but also maintain a cycle of violence and impunity that weakens the State's capacity to prevent future aggressions.

The case of Berta Cáceres, an environmental defender, is a clear illustration of the ineffectiveness of the protection system. Despite having received precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), she was murdered at the age of 44 because of her opposition to a hydroelectric project promoted by the company Desarrollos Energéticos S.A. (DESA) (Sierra Club, 2020). Juan Lopez, a defender of the commons, was killed during a protection measure. In this regard, the IACHR and the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights (REDESCA) condemned his murder and asked the State of Honduras to carry out an exhaustive investigation of the facts, considering his role as a human rights defender as a possible motive for the crime (IACHR, 2024).

As a result, these cases show the vulnerability of environmental defenders in Honduras, despite the precautionary measures that should protect them. Consequently, the lack of state protection reinforces an environment of constant risk and exposes structural weaknesses in the protection system.

### ***Regional Comparison and Lessons Learned***

Significant differences can be observed in Honduras' security mechanisms compared to those of other Latin American countries. For example, Colombia has had a stronger protection program for human rights defenders and civil society has become more involved in the implementation of measures (International Federation for Human Rights, 2020). It could be argued that this demonstrates that the participation of defenders in the design and monitoring of protection mechanisms can be a key factor in improving their effectiveness. This could be applied to Honduras to achieve better results.

**Table 2**

*Comparison of Protection Mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists and Justice Operators in Honduras, Mexico and Colombia*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name of the Mechanism</b>	<b>Main Challenges</b>	<b>Best Practices</b>
Honduras	National System of Protection for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists and Justice Operators	Lack of resources, poor inter-institutional coordination, slowness in protection measures	Defined institutional structure, civil society participation
Mexico	Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists	Lack of resources, violence concentrated in specific regions	Use of technology for monitoring of defenders, civil participation
Colombia	Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Social Leaders and Journalists	High levels of violence, vulnerability of rural and Afro-descendant defenders	Rapid response teams, differentiated approach to high risks

*Note.* Own elaboration.

**Comparative Analysis**

The evaluation of security mechanisms in Honduras in relation to those of other countries in the region, such as Mexico and Colombia, shows both similarities and important differences, which may be useful for improving the effectiveness of the Honduran system. Despite being well organized institutionally, the National Protection System for Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Operators in Honduras faces significant challenges in its execution. Indeed, the lack of adequate financial resources, the bureaucratic complexity of granting timely protection measures and the lack of inter-institutional coordination are some of these problems. In addition, the current situation of violence and criminalization of defenders of the commons, such as the case of Berta Cáceres and Juan López, demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the mechanism in high-risk situations, even when precautionary measures are applied.

However, Mexico has the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, which has been praised for its multi-level structure and its incorporation of civil society in decision-making. However, it also faces challenges similar to those of Honduras, such as the lack of resources and delays in the execution of actions. In Mexico, an additional problem is based on the high concentration of violence in certain areas, which hampers the state's ability to guarantee security in rural areas or areas controlled by organized crime. However, there is a good practice in Mexico of using technological tools to monitor the situation of defenders, which could be a valuable lesson for Honduras.

In this regard, the Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Social Leaders and Journalists in Colombia has become one of the most advanced in the region thanks to inter-institutional cooperation and the implementation of a unique approach that considers the risk of each beneficiary. Despite this, rural and Afro-descendant defenders continue to be the most affected by violence in Colombia. In this regard, it was determined that the creation of rapid response teams and the possibility of granting exceptional protection measures in high-risk areas is an important lesson that Colombia has learned, which has contributed to a decrease in the number of killings of defenders in some areas.

In summary, the mechanisms in Honduras, Mexico and Colombia share the need to provide comprehensive protection to defenders, agents of justice and journalists. However, disparities in execution and effectiveness indicate areas of improvement for Honduras. On the other hand, the integration of technology and the adoption of differentiated and rapid response

approaches are good practices that Mexico and Colombia can use to strengthen the Honduran system. These improvements could reduce the fragility of defenders and strengthen the State's capacity to deal with threats.

### **Role of the International Community**

Finally, it was noted that Honduras has been driven by international pressure to carry out certain protection measures. However, this pressure has not been sufficient to effect significant structural transformations. In this regard, the IACHR and Human Rights Watch have helped to denounce violations, but greater collaboration between international actors, the State and local organizations is needed to strengthen existing protection mechanisms.

**Table 3**

*Cases in the Individual and Collective Protection System Active (2024)*

<b>Type of Beneficiary</b>	<b>Individual Cases</b>	<b>Collective Cases</b>	<b>Total</b>
Human Rights Defenders	72	630	702
Justice Operators	4	54	58
Journalists	2	2	4
Social Communicators	2	38	40
Total, Cases	80	724	804

*Note.* Own elaboration.

The distribution of individual and collective cases in the National Protection System for Human Rights Defenders in Honduras during the year 2024 is shown in Table 3. Human rights defenders, justice operators, journalists and social communicators are the four types of beneficiaries listed in the table. In total, the system protects 804 cases, of which 724 are collective and 80 individual.

### **Beneficiary Analysis**

1. Human rights defenders: Of the total of 702 cases within the protection system, this group represents the majority (72 individual and 630 collective). This represents about 87.3% of all cases. The large number of collective cases (630) indicates that human rights defenders, particularly those protecting public and common goods, face significant threats that affect entire communities.
2. Justice Operators: Justice operators have 58 cases, of which 4 are individual and 54 are collective. Although these cases represent only 7.2% of the total, their sheer number indicates that the threats may be related to organized efforts in defense of justice.
3. Journalists and Social Communicators: There are 44 active cases of journalists and social communicators, with 4 journalists and 40 social communicators. Of the individual cases, 38 are of social communicators. This demonstrates the growing vulnerability of the press, especially community or rural media, which could be related to the coverage of corruption or territorial conflicts.

### **Discussion**

- Inequality in Group Protection: The distribution of cases shows a strong concentration of efforts on human rights defenders, who are responsible for the

majority of cases under protection. This may indicate that defenders face more frequent or serious threats due to the nature of their work to protect collective rights and natural resources.

- **Collective versus Individual Risk:** Surprisingly, collective cases far outnumber individual cases. As a result, this shows that threats are not only directed at individuals, but also at communities or organized groups. In particular, human rights defenders appear to be exposed to structural vulnerability, especially in contexts of territorial conflicts and natural resource exploitation.
- **Implications for the Protection System:** The majority focus on collective cases indicates that the system needs specialized mechanisms to safeguard entire communities. The management of collective cases may require additional resources, inter-institutional coordination and implementation of public policies that not only provide protection, but also address the structural causes of threats.
- **Relationship between Threats and Sociopolitical Context:** The frequency of cases involving human rights defenders and social communicators demonstrates the need to understand the socio-political context of Honduras. In this regard, it appears that the criminalization of the defense of the commons, as well as the risks associated with media coverage of sensitive issues such as drug trafficking or corruption, are key factors in the exposure of these groups to threats.

## **Results**

Analysis of the data reveals the following key findings:

1. **Weakness in the implementation of the protection mechanism:** The implementation of the National Protection Mechanism in Honduras presents significant deficiencies, mainly due to the lack of allocated resources and the low operational capacity of the responsible institutions. As a result, it was determined that distrust of the authorities, both on the part of human rights defenders and civil society in general, has weakened protection measures. Consequently, these factors have led to an inflexible system that does not respond to threats in a timely manner and puts beneficiaries at greater risk.

2. **Vulnerability of human rights defenders:** Despite the existence of protection mechanisms, human rights defenders, particularly those fighting for territorial and environmental rights, remain extremely vulnerable. The situation is aggravated by the high levels of violence and impunity in the country, as well as by the lack of political will and collusion between state and private actors. The cases of the murders of Berta Cáceres and Juan López, both of whom were environmental defenders and were protected by precautionary measures, highlight the serious shortcomings in protection.

3. **Lessons from other countries:** In comparison with Colombia and Mexico, good practices have been identified that could be implemented in Honduras. Therefore, civil society participation in the monitoring of protection mechanisms in Colombia has proven to be an effective strategy to ensure transparency and improve institutional response. Protection systems in these countries have also been strengthened through the implementation of a different approach for defenders facing high levels of risk and the creation of rapid response teams. Honduras could benefit from adopting these practices to strengthen its own system.

4. **More pressure needs to be exerted at the international level:** Although some improvements have been made, international collaboration remains essential to achieve

significant transformations in Honduras. In several cases, external pressure has been crucial to carry out investigations and punishments related to human rights violations. However, it is essential to strengthen global support to ensure that reforms are not limited to superficial improvements, but are transformed into meaningful and lasting transformations that adequately protect human rights defenders.

## **Conclusions**

The current study has demonstrated several important facets that have an impact on the protection of human rights defenders in Honduras. The National Protection Mechanism was found to be ineffective due to lack of resources and lack of trust in State institutions. This situation makes its ability to protect those engaged in protecting fundamental rights very limited.

Human rights defenders, particularly defenders of territorial and environmental rights, continue to be vulnerable to alarming levels of risk despite the measures taken. Consequently, this vulnerability makes it necessary to implement more robust and effective strategies to ensure its security.

On the other hand, the experience of other countries, such as Colombia, indicates that the participation of civil society in the monitoring and follow-up of protection mechanisms could be a useful strategy to strengthen the system in Honduras. In addition, there are practices that prove effective in other contexts, such as the creation of rapid response teams and a different approach to high-risk individuals. Indeed, these methods not only improve the ability to respond to threats, but also promote greater accountability.

Although some improvements have been made, it is essential that international collaboration be intensified to foster significant and sustainable transformations in the field of human rights in Honduras. External pressure can help implement policies that protect defenders and their activities. Similarly, the large number of collective cases makes the National Protection System very challenging. For this reason, it is essential to strengthen this system by allocating additional resources and implementing policies that address the underlying causes of threats. In addition, given that journalists and social communicators are crucial to transparency and the reporting of abuses, their protection must remain a priority.

In contrast, to ensure the protection and well-being of human rights defenders in Honduras, it is essential to correct the shortcomings of the current protection system, encourage the participation of civil society and improve international cooperation. Only

through these comprehensive efforts will it be possible to create a more secure and favorable environment for the defense of human rights in the nation.

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