



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment Snapshot

Honduras

June 2026



SUMMARY

Reporting period covered: February to June 2026

Between February and June 2026, the enabling environment for civil society in Honduras showed mixed developments, with some formal progress alongside persistent de facto restrictions. The end of the state of emergency and the inauguration of the new government in January 2026 opened up the possibility of restoring safeguards, renewing public dialogue and strengthening transparency. However, violence, impunity, intimidation and the prosecution of journalists, human rights defenders and community leaders continued. Social protest remained a constant feature, and there were worrying incidents of the use of force, particularly during demonstrations by feminist and student organisations. At the regulatory level, no substantive changes were identified in the system for registering organisations, but [Decree 107-2026](#) introduced measures relating to occupations and blockades that could pose risks to protest and territorial defence if applied without regard to the principles of necessity, proportionality and consultation. There were specific opportunities for funding and institutional progress, such as the declaration of an ‘Open Congress’, transparency agreements and sectoral forums for dialogue. However, these measures do not yet constitute a stable, inclusive and verifiable mechanism for State–civil society participation. The digital environment remained vulnerable to attacks, stigmatisation and the absence of a comprehensive data protection law. The overall assessment is one of limited formal openness, with conditions that inhibit the safe, autonomous and sustainable exercise of civic action predominating.

Reporting period: This report covers the period 1 February 2026 to 30 June 2026.

CONTEXT

Honduras entered the period under review following a closely contested political transition. Nasry Asfura took office as President on [27 January 2026](#), against a backdrop of polarisation, institutional mistrust and demands for transparency, security and accountability. Although the transition reduced immediate uncertainty, it did not resolve the tensions inherited from the 2025 electoral cycle, nor the structural problems of corruption, impunity, violence and institutional weakness.

The lifting of the state of emergency on 26 January marked a formal restoration of civil liberties after more than three years of extraordinary measures. However, the [United Nations’ findings regarding violations committed whilst the state of emergency was in force](#) underscore the ongoing need for investigation, redress and institutional oversight. Consequently, the lifting of the state of emergency cannot, in itself, be interpreted as a substantive improvement in civic space.

Between February and June, civil society continued to carry out functions relating to monitoring, on-the-ground support, the defence of rights, humanitarian response and the formulation of public proposals. The environment, however, combined new institutional opportunities with physical, legal, discursive and digital risks, particularly for those working in the fields of freedom of expression, environmental advocacy, land rights, anti-corruption and social protest.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

The period saw a formal improvement following the lifting of the state of emergency, but without a corresponding transformation in the actual conditions for exercising the freedoms of expression,

peaceful assembly and the defence of rights. The UNAH's University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security recorded [148 collective actions between January and April 2026](#) – approximately one protest per day – taking place across all 18 departments. The scale of the mobilisation demonstrates an active citizenry, but also social unrest that demands state responses based on dialogue and human rights. With regard to the containment of protests, the report documents a police or military presence at 33 collective actions and the use of force in 9 of them; it also notes that the actions are primarily directed at the government in general and at government ministries, reflecting strong public scrutiny of the institutions responsible for addressing social, economic and territorial issues.

In April, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed [concern over acts of violence during a student protest](#) and called for an investigation into the serious injury sustained by a student. This incident reinforced warnings regarding the use of force, the protection of protesters and the obligation to guarantee the right to peaceful protest without reprisals or stigmatisation.

Freedom of expression remained under pressure. C-Libre documented [41 reports of attacks during the first four months of 2026](#), an increase of 46.4 per cent compared with the same period in 2025. The main forms of such attacks were intimidation, obstruction of information, prosecution and stigmatisation. These patterns affect journalists and the media, but also have a chilling effect on human rights defenders, organisations, and leaders who engage in public criticism or social oversight.

Added to these pressures were new risks of criminalisation arising from proposed legal reforms. In April, the Centre for Studies on Democracy (CESPAD) and the Observatory on Socio-Territorial Conflict warned of initiatives aimed at imposing harsher penalties for the [offence of land encroachment](#), proposed with the rationale of strengthening legal certainty regarding property rights. According to these organisations, the reforms could shift long-standing land-related conflicts into the criminal justice system, intensify the judicialisation of rural communities and land defenders, and reinforce the stigmatisation of those participating in protests, peaceful occupations or land rights campaigns. This development is a significant indicator for the enabling environment, as a predominantly punitive response may restrict the defence of collective rights and weaken the democratic mechanisms for dialogue and the resolution of socio-territorial conflicts.

In a significant institutional move, [on 26 June the National Protection Council](#) held a working session aimed at strengthening security measures and policies for human rights defenders. During the meeting, weaknesses and obstacles in the implementation of the National Protection Mechanism, existing gaps in the Protection Act, and proposals relating to beneficiaries of precautionary measures were examined. Although this forum represents an opportunity to strengthen coordination and the institutional response, its results must be assessed on the basis of the effective implementation of the agreed measures.

2. Supportive legal and regulatory framework

During the period under review, no substantive reforms were identified to the general procedures for the registration, legal status or operation of civil society organisations. Constitutional guarantees of freedom of association, assembly and expression remain in place, alongside sector-specific legislation on participation and transparency. However, the effectiveness of the legal

framework continues to depend on administrative enforcement, institutional independence and the non-discriminatory application of criminal law.

One significant change was the publication, on 26 June, of [Decree 107-2026 on the protection of the agro-industrial, energy, tourism and livestock sectors](#). The decree includes references to prior consultation on registered lands of indigenous and tribal peoples, but also mandates immediate action against occupations, land grabs and blockades of roads or ports. Its implementation may increase legal uncertainty for communities and land defenders if the authorities automatically equate collective claims or peaceful protest with criminal behaviour.

The central challenge lies not only in the formal content of the regulations, but in ensuring that measures to protect property and economic activity are applied whilst respecting consultation, due process, proportionality, freedom of assembly and collective rights. The absence of clear criteria and operational safeguards may facilitate evictions, criminalisation or selective enforcement.

3. Accessible and sustainable resources

Access to resources continued to be characterised by a reliance on projects, competitive calls for proposals and external funding of limited duration. The costs of compliance, auditing, procurement, security and mobilisation absorb a significant proportion of the capacities of small and local organisations, whilst institutional or core funding remains scarce.

During the six-month period, new opportunities arose, including the [European Union's 2026 call for proposals for civil society organisations](#) and a [UNDP call for community-based biodiversity and climate projects](#). Meanwhile, the [2026 Humanitarian Action Plan](#) estimated a requirement of USD 75 million to assist 825,000 people. This estimate highlights the scale of humanitarian needs and the existing resource gap in meeting them. It also presents the challenge of mobilising sufficient, timely and accessible funding for national and regional organisations directly involved in the response.

Institutional sustainability continues to be constrained by the limited availability of resources for administration, innovation, comprehensive staff protection, digital transformation and territorial presence. This situation limits the autonomy of CSOs, undermines the continuity of advocacy processes and increases vulnerability to changes in cooperation priorities.

4. Open and responsive state

The past six months have seen formal signs of openness. The National Congress approved [Resolution 6-2026 declaring it an 'Open-Door' Congress](#), incorporating commitments relating to transparency, accountability, citizen participation, the proactive disclosure of information and parliamentary ethics.

Subsequently, the National Congress and the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) signed an [agreement to audit the legislature's electronic voting system](#). This development is particularly significant in a context marked by public scepticism regarding transparency, the traceability of public decisions and institutional trust following the 2025 electoral process. Although the agreement relates to the internal legislative voting system and not to the national electoral system, its implementation may help to strengthen the transparency and verifiability of decisions taken by Congress.

Furthermore, the National Congress and the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) have announced new [inter-institutional agreements aimed at strengthening transparency, municipal integrity and access to information](#).

These advances must be set against shortcomings in implementation. The website of the Ministry of the Interior, Justice and Decentralisation reported that [it did not have any mechanisms for public participation during 2026](#) due to institutional restructuring processes. Furthermore, the forums for dialogue identified were mainly sector-specific, such as the [National Roundtable on Education](#) and the [forum on disability and social inclusion](#), and do not yet constitute a national, regular and inclusive mechanism for dialogue with the full spectrum of civil society.

During this period, the [National Strategy for Transparency and the Fight against Corruption 2026–2030](#) was also approved and publicised through Executive Decree PCM-011-2026. The strategy aims to strengthen transparency in public administration, prevent and combat corruption, promote accountability and improve coordination between state institutions. Its adoption represents a regulatory step forward, although its effectiveness will depend on the availability of resources, the definition of institutional responsibilities, the effective participation of civil society and the existence of public monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

5. Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society

Public attitudes towards civil society were mixed. The period began against a backdrop of uncertainty and polarisation stemming from the tensions surrounding the 2025 electoral process and the government transition. During his inauguration, President **Nasry Juan Asfura Zablah** [called for national unity and for an end to division, insults and political confrontation](#). This speech was an initial sign of moderation; however, its translation into sustained practices of dialogue, recognition of criticism and civil society participation requires monitoring.

Against this backdrop, civil society organisations continued to carry out their roles of analysis, monitoring, policy advocacy and influence. [The Centre for the Study of Democracy \(CESPAD\) presented a critical assessment of the government's first hundred days](#), focusing on the rule of law, human rights, transparency, the fight against corruption and environmental justice. For its part, the **Honduran Social Forum on External Debt and Development (FOSDEH)** [drew up a proposal addressed to the new administration, calling for a socio-economic, political and national reconciliation pact, accompanied by mechanisms for monitoring, transparency and accountability](#).

These interventions demonstrate their continued role as actors in the democratic debate, capable of evaluating public administration, placing concerns on the agenda and presenting policy alternatives. The public circulation of these analyses shows that there continued to be a space for citizen criticism and proposals, although this does not necessarily imply a receptive response from the State or greater social and institutional recognition of CSOs.

The information reviewed does not allow us to confirm the existence of a single, systematic official discourse directed against civil society organisations as a whole. However, specific statements were identified that may undermine the legitimacy of protest, territorial defence and other forms of civic participation by attributing partisan or ideological motivations, or illegitimate interests, to them.

Following the student protests in April, for example, the Speaker of [the National Congress](#) stated that young people should not be used for political or ideological conflicts and described the

mobilisation as unnecessary. Although the statement was presented as a call to avoid violence, such statements can divert attention away from the students' demands, the state's obligations to provide protection, and the investigation into the use of force, by suggesting that youth participation is primarily a result of political manipulation.

In response, the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras \(OACNUDH\)](#) reiterated that isolated acts of violence should not be attributed to the other participants, to those who organised the demonstration, or to the protest as a whole. This observation is relevant because it warns of the risk of generalising responsibility and stigmatising the legitimate exercise of the right to peaceful assembly.

When such narratives come from public authorities, they can deepen polarisation, undermine the social legitimacy of the mobilisation and have a chilling effect on individuals and organisations that engage in criticism, public denunciation, the defence of rights or social oversight.

The transition of government included calls for unity and some opportunities for sectoral dialogue. Organisations such as CESPAD and FOSDEH continued to fulfill their role of analysis, proposal-making and monitoring in public, through [assessments of the government's first hundred days](#) and [policy proposals for the new administration](#). No single, systematic official discourse directed against all organisations was identified during the period.

However, public criticism, protest and the defence of territorial rights continued to be subject to narratives attributing partisan motives or illegitimate interests to civil society actors. Following the student protests in April, for example, legislative authorities stated that young people should not be used for political or ideological conflicts – a [formulation that risks diverting attention away from the demands and obligations to protect them](#). When such narratives come from the authorities, they can deepen polarisation and undermine the social legitimacy of the protests.

6. Access to a secure digital environment

Digital platforms continued to be essential for providing information, organising actions, documenting abuses and sustaining local networks. At the same time, they increased exposure to threats, smear campaigns, identity theft, surveillance and harassment. The rise in alerts [recorded by C-Libre](#) during the first four months of the year included intimidation and stigmatisation that also spill over onto social media, leading to self-censorship and greater needs for digital security.

Disinformation and digital conflict have continued following the election period. Reports from eMonitor+ and Chekiá, implemented by the Central American Technological University (UNITEC) with support from [the United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#), show the persistence of a highly confrontational environment. Toxic communication accounted for 90 per cent of the posts analysed in April, rose to 93 per cent in May and remained at 91 per cent in June. In June, 94.9 per cent of the posts were rated negatively, and no positive mentions were recorded.

With regard to the protection of personal data, the Institute for Access to Public Information has published a [draft bill](#); however, as of the end of June, no comprehensive legislation had been passed, nor was there any official evidence of substantive legislative progress during the first half of the year. Honduras therefore continues to lack a comprehensive framework to regulate data processing in the public and private sectors, establish an independent supervisory authority and guarantee effective redress mechanisms.

Future regulation must protect privacy and security without becoming a means of restricting legitimate speech, journalistic investigation or public reporting through broad definitions of hate speech, defamation or cybercrimes. Response protocols, capacity-building and resources are also required for the digital protection of organisations and individuals, including human rights defenders.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR JULY– DECEMBER 2026

Priority challenges

1. Investigate and ensure accountability for violations committed during the state of emergency, preventing extraordinary practices from becoming normalised in security policy.
2. Ensure that Decree 107-2026 is not used to criminalise peaceful protest, territorial claims or the defence of collective rights.
3. Transform the ‘Open Congress’ declaration and transparency agreements into verifiable mechanisms for access to information, consultation, participation and accountability.
4. Make progress towards a comprehensive law on the protection of personal data, with an independent authority, procedural guarantees and safeguards for freedom of expression.
6. Expand access for CSOs, particularly local and community-based organisations, to flexible, direct, multi-annual funding that is also earmarked for institutional strengthening and protection.

Opportunities

1. Establish a national and regular mechanism for dialogue between the State and civil society, with representation from all regions, as well as from women, young people, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and human rights organisations.
2. Utilise the Open Congress commitments, the electronic voting audit and the transparency strategy to improve public trust and citizen oversight.
3. Coordinate calls for cooperation using core funding, simplified procedures and the direct participation of community organisations.
4. Develop a national agenda on information integrity, media literacy and digital protection that safeguards open and pluralistic debate.
5. Strengthen partnerships between CSOs, academia, the media and oversight bodies to generate evidence, monitor policies and trigger early responses to restrictions on civic space.

