



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Information received from Honduras on follow-up to the concluding observations on its ninth periodic report*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. Honduras appeared before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its 1922nd and 1924th meetings, at which the country's ninth periodic report was considered.¹ The Committee adopted its concluding observations² and requested information in writing, within two years, on the measures taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 (d), 25 (d) and 39 (b) and (c) thereof.

2. In response, Honduras has prepared the present follow-up report on the implementation of those recommendations, through the Ministry of Human Rights, which is responsible for the coordination of human rights reports.³ The information was provided by the relevant State institutions that form part of the Honduran Recommendations Monitoring System.⁴

3. Honduras reaffirms its determination to fulfil its international commitments and undertakes to submit its next periodic report in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the concluding observations.

II. Follow-up information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 (d), 25 (d) and 39 (b) and (c) of the concluding observations (CEDAW/C/HND/CO/9)

A. Recommendation contained in paragraph 15 (d)

4. The Protection of Witnesses Involved in Criminal Proceedings Act⁵ establishes a witness protection programme, which is under the authority of and coordinated by the Public Prosecution Service. In 2017, the Public Prosecution Service adopted the Special Regulations for the Protection of Witnesses Involved in Criminal Proceedings Act.⁶ In addition, the mechanism that will govern the operation of the witness protection programme has been comprehensively set out.

5. Through the Specialized Comprehensive Care Unit, attached to the Public Prosecution Service, the Government continues to provide specialized care to victims of gender-based violence, vulnerable groups and witnesses, and to protect their rights and ensure the prompt delivery of evidence to the criminal justice system. It uses techniques that prevent revictimization, such as Gesell Chambers, as part of a victim-centred model.

6. Through Agreement No. FGR-002-2024,⁷ an action protocol for the Specialized Comprehensive Care Unit was adopted, with a view to optimizing the Unit's work and making its operational units more agile. The aim is to ensure that priority attention is given to minors, pregnant women, older persons and vulnerable persons with disabilities. The 2024 budget for the Specialized Comprehensive Care Unit was 14,308,341 lempiras (L), and for the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the Protection of Women the budget was L 30,763,972.

¹ CEDAW/C/HND/9.

² CEDAW/C/HND/CO/9.

³ Executive Decree No. PCM-055-2017, art. 87-D, Gazette No. 34,441.

⁴ Executive Decree No. PCM-028-2017, Gazette No. 34,410. Available at <https://simoreh.sedh.gob.hn/>.

⁵ Legislative Decree No. 63-2007.

⁶ Agreement No. FGR-012-2017, Gazette No. 34,456.

⁷ Gazette No. 36,531.

7. The Public Prosecution Service promotes human rights, especially women's human rights, by improving the response to complaints through institutional support and training for prosecutors, judges and police. During the period 2022–2024, its training school delivered workshops on human rights and gender-based violence. This included delivering 10 editions of a specialized course on gender-based violence, for 230 participants in 2022 and 100 in 2023, in addition to training 65 people in the period 2023–2024.

8. The Shelters for Women Victims and Survivors of Violence in Honduras Act⁸ was adopted in 2024 to provide support and comprehensive care to women victims of the various forms of gender-based violence. The Act will regulate the operation of protection shelters for battered women, women who have been displaced by violence and those who are victims of trafficking in persons.

9. Through the Women's Care and Rights Protection Unit of the "Women's City" programme, comprehensive measures to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, and to prevent revictimization, continue to be implemented. Legal advice and representation, psychological and social care, police assistance and life plans to support victims' recovery are provided at the six national Women's City centres.⁹ In addition, the programme institutionalizes a comprehensive model of care by providing more than 70 free services for women's holistic well-being. In 2023, it provided 277,634 comprehensive services to women, and 973,787 discrete services,¹⁰ with an average of 266 services provided every day.

10. The Women's City centres, through the Economic Independence Unit, continue to contribute to women's economic empowerment by providing support services for women's entrepreneurship and joining of professional associations, technical business training and support, financial assistance and education, support accessing credit, formal education, vocational training, and labour orientation and mediation.

11. The Solidarity Government substantially increased the budget allocated to the National Directorate for the Women's City programme, from L 83,150,047 in 2021 to L 149,892,382 in 2023, an increase of more than L 66 million; the budget was executed at 94.72 per cent. The budget for 2024 is L 168,581,863.¹¹

12. The judiciary has taken steps to assist and protect women victims of gender-based violence and uphold their rights.

(a) It has introduced a manual for dealing with cases of violence against women, in collaboration with the German Agency for International Cooperation. This document is an essential guide that supports legal officers in the interpretation and application of international standards in this area. The incorporation of these guidelines into day-to-day practice is contributing to a more coherent and effective judicial response to gender-based violence.

(b) Specialized protocols and institutional strategies for data collection have been developed to make gender-based violence more visible.

(c) As part of a project entitled "Strengthening the Rule of Law in Central America and the Caribbean", capacity has been boosted to provide psychological support to Indigenous women victims of violence, and coordination with justice sector operators and other bodies has been enhanced.

⁸ Legislative Decree No. 28-2024, Gazette No. 36,251.

⁹ Information accessed at: https://www.ciudadmujer.gob.hn/?page_id=718.

¹⁰ Information accessed at: <https://www.ciudadmujer.gob.hn/>.

¹¹ Legislative Decree No. 62-2023. General income and expenditure budget of the Republic for fiscal year 2024. Gazette No. 36,437.

(d) In 2024, training on access to justice, prosecution of gender-based violence, and issuance of judgments informed by gender and human rights perspectives was provided to judges, legal officers and other judicial personnel. The training also covered the proper implementation of conventions and treaties. At the most recent course, in October, 30 officials received gender and human rights training.

(e) A project to establish a registry of people who have attacked women has been initiated, with a view to strengthening protection against and prevention of gender-based violence. The registry will facilitate identification and monitoring of those convicted of such crimes, thereby improving control, punishment and victim safety.

(f) In October 2024, the Committee for Women's Access to Justice, composed of women Supreme Court justices and women members of the National Congress, presented the Offender Registry Project to representatives of State and municipal institutions and of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).¹²

B. Recommendation contained in paragraph 25 (d)

13. On 25 January 2024, by means of Decision No. AS335/23, the 1-1-4 MUJER "Live Without Fear" hotline was established. This service, available 24/7, illustrates the commitment of President Xiomara Castro to women's safety and well-being.

14. Through the 1-1-4 MUJER hotline, comprehensive assistance, legal guidance, social support, crisis containment and emergency responses are provided, with a view to protecting women's rights and combating inequality. Since its launch, it has been a key resource for victims of violence and has ensured an effective response. Publicity strategies have been put in place to expand its reach and promote its use by Honduran women.

15. The hotline has a fully trained team of five operators available to receive complaints of domestic violence and sexual, psychological, economic and property-related aggression. They receive between 160 and 250 calls for help each day.¹³ The hotline is managed by a woman, a Chief Police Commissioner, who indicated that there had been an investment of L 40 million for communications equipment, personnel and logistics, enabling immediate responses to incidents.

16. In addition, it is worth highlighting the following specialized units of the Ministry of Security that address issues relating to women's rights and violence prevention.

(a) Gender Equity Division: this is a specialized body for women's rights and social equity. It coordinates with various directorates and units, strengthening national and international cooperation. The Division's objective is to ensure equality of rights and opportunities within the National Police.

(b) Gender Violence Response Unit: the Unit is attached to the National Prevention and Community Safety Directorate and assists victims of domestic and gender-based violence. On 25 January 2024, on the occasion of Honduran Women's Day, offices were inaugurated in Metropolitan Units Nos. 1 and 4 in Tegucigalpa.

¹² Information accessed at: <https://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/Noticias/SitePages/NPPJ221020242.aspx>.

¹³ Information accessed at: <https://tnh.gob.hn/nacional/linea-114-ya-esta-disponible-para-denunciar-violencia-contra-la-mujer/>.

(c) Gender-Based Violence Immediate Response Unit: it is responsible for providing personalized care for all women victims of gender-based violence. The Unit supports victims through an immediate response, ensuring prompt attention and investigation.

(d) Automated Information Support and Response Unit (Chatbot MARIA): this is a free virtual assistant that provides information and guidance with regard to violence against women, girls and adolescents. It is available 24/7, provides confidential assistance and connects users with professionals.¹⁴

(e) Police Gender Response Unit: the Unit is responsible for designing and implementing primary and secondary prevention programmes and projects at the community level in order to strengthen coordination among the various police departments and other State, municipal and private institutions, and improve their joint work on the processes and services for comprehensive support for women victims of violence.

17. The Shelters for Women Victims and Survivors of Violence in Honduras Act establishes:

(a) The National Shelter Programme, whose purpose is to ensure inter-institutional coordination among the national, departmental and municipal public and private entities that provide shelters for women victims of violence and their families.

(b) The Special Shelters Commission of Honduras, which is a deliberative inter-institutional coordination body responsible for the proper implementation of the aforementioned Act. The Commission is chaired by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and includes one representative of each of the Public Prosecution Service; the Ministry of Children, Adolescents and the Family; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Security; and the Ministry of Human Rights; three representatives of women's organizations with experience in violence against women; and three representatives of shelters operated by women's organizations, with experience in shelter administration.

18. The general State income and expenditure budget for fiscal year 2023 provided that the Ministry of Finance would allocate L 30 million to the Ministry of Women's Affairs for the construction, fitting out and maintenance of shelters and L 20 million for violence-prevention activities.¹⁵

19. The shelters provide temporary and safe accommodation for women and their children at risk of violence and offer comprehensive care through psychological, legal, educational and health support services.

20. In August 2023, a shelter for women victims of domestic violence was inaugurated under an agreement between the Mayor's Office of San Pedro Sula and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The centre offers comprehensive care, protection programmes, psychological support, food and round-the-clock support. In addition, it coordinates with the National Police and the courts of the Office of the Prosecutor for Women, of the Public Prosecution Service, to ensure victims' safety.

21. In December 2023, the Municipal Mayor's Office of the Central District and the Ministry of Women's Affairs established an expert committee to oversee the construction of the first State-run shelter.

¹⁴ Chatbot MARIA: <https://maria.policianacional.gob.hn/>.

¹⁵ Legislative Decree No. 157-2022, art. 17. Gazette No. 36,127.

22. In order to comprehensively and adequately support women and girls who are victims of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, the Solidarity Government has adopted the following measures and instruments:

(a) A manual for the care of victims of trafficking in persons developed by the judiciary in 2022, as part of the project “Empowering Agents of Change against Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons, especially Women and Girls”. The aim of the manual is to guide men and women judges in the creation of an appropriate environment that facilitates the comprehensive protection of victims and persons at risk. This project is benefiting from financial support from the Government of Canada.

(b) A protocol for the comprehensive care of victims of sexual violence, launched in December 2022 by the Ministry of Health. The protocol is a technical tool to support public and private healthcare providers to offer comprehensive and timely care. In addition, workshops have been organized to train physicians, psychologists and sexologists on its application.¹⁶

(c) Article 53 of the Prevention of Internal Displacement and Care and Protection for Internally Displaced Persons Act¹⁷ establishes that forcibly displaced persons, in particular women, girls, boys and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, must be protected against sexual violence. In addition, they must have access to emergency medical and psychosocial assistance provided by State services, civil society organizations or international bodies. The National Forced Internal Displacement Response System, which includes the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, is required to adjust its programmes and policies to address gender-based violence at every stage of displacement.

(d) In April 2023, an expert committee was established to monitor the implementation of the Special Domestic Violence Act. The committee is coordinated by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and works to improve inter-institutional coordination to ensure a better response for women survivors of domestic violence. The committee met three times in 2023.¹⁸

C. Recommendation contained in paragraph 39 (b)

23. With respect to access to, and distribution and sale of, the emergency contraceptive pill, in March 2023 the President of the Republic and the Minister of Health signed Agreement No. 75-2023, providing for access to and the use, purchase and sale of the emergency contraceptive pill and rendering null and void the agreement that had previously prohibited its use and sale.¹⁹

24. To guarantee safe access to the emergency contraceptive pill, the Health Regulation Agency approved the health registrations necessary for its sale and ensures strict compliance with manufacturing and labelling standards.²⁰ The Agency verifies compliance with the quality, safety and efficacy standards for contraceptive pills by carrying out inspections in pharmacies and grocery stores.

25. In order to guarantee access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, for women and girls living in remote areas, the Ministry

¹⁶ Available at: https://www.poderpopular.hn/vernoticias.php?id_noticia=3007.

¹⁷ Legislative Decree No. 154-2022, Gazette No. 36,184.

¹⁸ Available at: <https://n9.cl/dha95>.

¹⁹ Agreement No. 75-2023, Gazette No. 36,174.

²⁰ Information accessed at: <https://gobiernosolidario.sgjd.gob.hn/6808/la-arsa-autoriza-nuevos-registros-sanitarios-para-la-comercializacion-de-la-pae/>.

of Social Development, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has implemented the following projects:

(a) Leave No One Behind project: this project is focused on reducing adolescent pregnancies in Creole, Garifuna and Miskito communities on the Caribbean coast. Project staff worked with young people and women in seven municipalities. Activities included strengthening comprehensive sexuality education, improving sexual and reproductive health services, strengthening leadership, and visiting local stakeholders and health facilities to identify challenges to the development of strategies for reducing adolescent pregnancies. A community diagnostic assessment was also conducted through focus groups involving young people from the municipalities.

(b) A project to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and young people, which included planning workshops with local teams in priority municipalities. Participants developed an action plan to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and young people and prevent adolescent pregnancies and gender-based violence, with emphasis on sexual violence.

26. With regard to pregnancy prevention, the Ministry of Education carried out follow-up activities to assess the results of the adolescent pregnancy prevention strategy.

27. In June 2023, a discussion was held to establish the fundamentals of the regulations governing the application of the Comprehensive Education for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy Act. Six teachers' organizations, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Confraternity, academia and other sectors took part. The statistics on adolescent pregnancies for the period 2018–2022 were presented at the event: the Ministry of Health had registered a total of 139,343 pregnancies.²¹

D. Recommendation contained in paragraph 39 (c)

28. In Honduras, cervical cancer is a public health problem and the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women, with an estimated 800 new cases and 480 deaths per year.²²

29. The Ministry of Health implements strategies to prevent and treat cervical cancer and reduce deaths among women, including through screening and testing for human papillomavirus (HPV). Screening is performed at the primary level of care using visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA), making it possible to provide an immediate response.²³

30. The Ministry of Health also provides training to health personnel on elimination strategies and new screening and treatment methods, and has established a methodology for training health volunteers in VIA and palliative treatment.

31. With the support of UNFPA, VIA screening and palliative treatment are being offered in four regions: Santa Bárbara, Gracias a Dios, Intibucá and the San Pedro Sula metropolitan area. In addition, through a EUROSAN project, screening is being

²¹ Information accessed at: https://www.se.gob.hn/media/files/articles/29_06_NP_Desarrollan_conversatorio_sobre_la_Ley_de_Educacion_Integral_de.pdf.

²² Available at: <https://honduras.bvsalud.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/PROTOCOLO-DE-TAMIZAJE-Y-TRATAMIENTO-DE-LESIONES-PREMALIGNAS-PARA-LA-PREVENCION-DEL-CANCER-CERVICOUTERINO.pdf>.

²³ Information accessed at: <https://www.sshome.salud.gob.hn/index.php/component/k2/item/1203-mujer-informate-y-examineate-previene-el-cancer-de-cervix>.

extended to 40 poor municipalities across the country, making it possible to meet targets for the populations of 91 municipalities in 15 departments.

32. According to Ministry of Health data, in the period 2018–2022, the incidence rate of cervical cancer stood at 17 per 100,000 women, with 254 women dying from the condition. Women 25 to 64 years of age are at risk.²⁴

33. In terms of the dissemination of information to prevent cervical cancer, the Ministry of Health is carrying out various activities to raise awareness and prevent this disease. In March 2024, as part of activities marking World Cervical Cancer Elimination Day, the Ministry of Health, with the support of UNFPA, provided information to women who were walking through the central park in Tegucigalpa in the form of educational materials (videos, brochures and promotional objects aimed at preventing cervical cancer).

34. As part of a campaign called “Rapid detection and treatment for a cervical cancer-free future”, the Ministry of Health carried out HPV testing in the municipalities of Roatán and Santos Guardiola in the Department of Islas de la Bahía, as well as performing colposcopies and providing ablative treatment.

35. To commemorate World Cancer Day, the Ministry of Health, together with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Solidarity Action programme of the Ministry of Social Development, organized a “pink walk” with the theme “United in the Fight Against Cancer”. During the event, participants walked to the central park in Tegucigalpa.

36. The Sexual and Reproductive Health Units of the Women’s City centres provide women with comprehensive healthcare, with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health. They offer services aimed at reducing women’s mortality from cervical and breast cancer, as well as from chronic noncommunicable diseases. A total of 13,257 mammograms were performed at the Women’s City centres in 2023.

37. In March 2024, the Ministry of Health approved the updated version of a cervical cancer prevention protocol specifically on screening for and treatment of premalignant lesions.²⁵ The protocol is for use by public and private primary and secondary healthcare providers that serve sexually active women.

38. In July 2024, the Ministry of Health submitted the second draft of a comprehensive plan to prevent cervical cancer. The plan is a policy document aimed at establishing protocols and treatments for premalignant lesions as a preventive measure against this type of cancer. The plan includes an expansion of HPV vaccinations for girls and women.²⁶

39. The plan provides a scientific basis for, and medical guidance on, the performance of screening tests and the handling of women with positive results, demonstrating a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to this issue.

40. With these measures, the incidence of this disease and the associated mortality rate are expected to fall significantly.

²⁴ Information accessed at: <https://www.sshome.salud.gob.hn/index.php/component/k2/item/1203-mujer-informate-y-examineate-previene-el-cancer-de-cervix>.

²⁵ Decision No. 02-DGN-2024. Available at: <https://honduras.bvsalud.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/PROTOCOLO-DE-TAMIZAJE-Y-TRATAMIENTO-DE-LESIONES-PREMALIGNAS-PARA-LA-PREVENCION-DEL-CANCER-CERVICOUTERINO.pdf>.

²⁶ Information accessed at: <https://tnh.gob.hn/nacional/sesal-presenta-plan-integral-para-prevenir-cancer-cervical/>.