

Directorate General for External Policies

Country Security Assessment (CSA)

Delegation for Relations with Central America / Mission to Honduras: 31 Oct - 4 Nov 2011

Date: 11-10-2011

Author of CSA: Mario NEGRE

AD responsible for delegation: Walter GOEZT

1. Global Political Situation:

Porfirio Lobo was elected president in November 2009 and took office on 27 January 2010, ushering in a period of relative stability. This effectively ended a convulsive phase initiated with the ousting and forced exile of former President Manuel Zelaya by the army, followed by an interim civilian government. Since the democratically elected government took office, many governments have recognised its legitimacy and re-established the ties cut during the height of the crisis Zelaya managed to have an appeal court in Honduras drop all corruption charges against him which prompted his return in May 2011. President Porfirio Lobo is struggling to maintain control within his ruling party, as a recent cabinet reshuffle demonstrates. Security issues remain problematic, with plans to introduce a security tax attracting strong political resistance from business groups. Violent land conflicts and the deaths of prominent resistance activists and journalists have strained reconciliation processes. Overcoming the security situation will remain essential if Honduras is to guarantee stability, as violence is spilling over from ongoing drug-related feuds in.. Endemic corruption, human rights violations, and high levels of violent crime further afflict the country, making it one of the poorest and least stable in Latin America.

2. Internal Security Trends (on the basis of open sources, Commission etc.):

The security environment does not present any great risk targeting foreign businesses or foreigners specifically. Nonetheless high crime rates are a major concern, as reflected in worrying homicide rates. Other security issues include kidnapping, extortion, and organised crime. Honduras, like most of its Central American counterparts, suffers from the heavy presence of gangs (maras) operating in the country and linked to the drug trade. These violent gangs of youths' ranks are thought to be around 40,000 strong. Violence is exemplified by machete killings, mainly affecting locals, and gang rivalries. There is much room for improvement in the security environment, and the situation has indeed deteriorated.

Kidnappings in San Pedro Sula, Santa Barbara Tegucigalpa, La Ceiba and on the Bay Islands are on the increase. Armed robberies are the order of the day. Honduras has the world's highest per capita rate of murders: 77 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. Taking a taxi is considered to be dangerous as there are reports of "cloned" taxis, which copy official numbers and colour. Therefore, the use of radio taxis whose respective data of vehicle and driver is registered by the central taxi office is recommended. Care should be taken at and around banks and internationally connected ATMs.

3. Specific advice should a delegation be sent:

Mission planning should continue in cooperation with the European Commission delegation in the destination country and the authorities and subject to revision should there be a change in the local security situation:

It is recommended that additional preparation for this mission should include specific briefings, incl. where possible from the Council's Situation Centre (SitCen), or advice from the EP's Security Directorate:

The high risk nature of this destination requires additional specific advance preparation for the delegation and practical security arrangements to be put in place in the destination country before travel:

In addition required training for the outgoing delegation:

DG EXPO obligatory training for outgoing delegations:

DG EXPO training tailored to the specific mission destination:

Visa of the HoU: Etienne BASSOT

p.d. Pierre Nahel

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Sources/contacts used: open sources and Global Insight

For pre-mission briefings from the Council contact: G. QUILLE (email: gerrard.quille@europarl.europa.eu or tel:32260)

This Country Security Assessment (CSA) has been drawn up on request by the concerned delegation. The author does not accept responsibility for any decisions, or actions taken, by the competent authorities of the European Parliament to send a delegation to this country based upon the information provided in this CSA.



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Direction Générale pour les Politiques Externes de l'Union
Direction des Régions
Département Thématique Relations Extérieures
Le Chef d'Unité

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Bruxelles, 19 juillet 2011

Note à l'attention de M. L. Marco Aguiriano Nalda, Directeur général

Objet : Délégation de signature

Pendant mon absence, la délégation de signature est donnée à

- **M. Pekka HAKALA**, du 10 au 17 octobre 2011

Etienne Bassot

Copie: M. Ciril STOKELJ, Directeur
M. Jean-Louis BERTON, Directeur
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