
Honduras's Institutional Crisis Deepens Ahead of the 2025 Elections

A Summary of Facts and Statement by the Association for a More Just Society (ASJ), Honduran Chapter of Transparency International.

SUMMARY

This brief outlines the key developments shaping Honduras's current political context and underscores the urgent need for sustained international observation and engagement to safeguard the credibility of the 2025 elections. In the brief, we cover:

- Politicization of the Attorney General's Office and selective prosecutions that undermine judicial independence and electoral fairness.
- Legislative paralysis and competing claims to congressional authority, weakening checks and post-election governance.
- Escalating conflicts within the National Electoral Council and growing military overreach, threatening the neutrality of the electoral process.
- Persistent civic mobilization and the vital role of international and civil-society engagement in defending electoral integrity.

INTRODUCTION

Honduras is approaching its presidential elections on 30 November 2025 amid a deepening political and institutional crisis, accompanied by widespread public concern over the transparency and integrity of the electoral process. The situation escalated sharply following the public release by the Attorney General's Office on Wednesday October 29 of unverified [audio recordings](#), allegedly implicating a member of the National Electoral Council (*Consejo Nacional Electoral*, CNE) in a conspiracy to influence electoral outcomes.

The crisis intensified on Saturday November 1 when the President of Congress installed [a Standing Commission](#) empowered to act on behalf of Congress during recess periods — notably excluding representatives from the two major opposition parties. This move came despite a majority of legislators voting on Tuesday October 28 to [extend the legislative session until January next year](#). Consequently, **two rival bodies now claim to legitimately represent Congress** — one led by a legislative majority, and the other by the President of Congress, who is aligned with the LIBRE government.

These events are unfolding in a context of [widespread discontent with the LIBRE government's performance](#) in recent years, which has left the party's candidate, Rixi Moncada, significantly trailing behind opposition contenders in the polls. A [survey conducted by Le Vote for the Justice Institute](#) showed a substantial gap between candidates: Salvador Nasralla of the Liberal Party leads with 40% of the vote, followed by Nasry Asfura with 31%, and Moncada in third place with 25%. [Across existing polls](#), Nasralla leads in 9 out of 14 published surveys, Asfura in 3, and Moncada in 2—averaging 31% for Nasralla, 27% for Asfura, and 24% for Moncada. The two polls indicating a Moncada lead have both been widely criticized by credible sources for dubious methodologies (in the case of [Tresearch](#)) and potential ties to the incumbent government (in the case of [Opinómetro](#)). LIBRE's poor standing in the polls appears to have motivated the party to leverage its influence over state institutions in ways that could undermine the integrity of the upcoming elections.

POLITIZATION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

The current Attorney General, Johel Zelaya, was initially appointed in a highly controversial process, by a nine-member Congressional commission aligned with the LIBRE party, bypassing parts of the [constitutional framework and due process for the appointment of attorneys general](#). His position has since been ratified by Congress. Since then, the Attorney General has taken selective and highly public actions that have fueled

political tension ahead of the elections. For instance, through criminal prosecution against Congressional representative of the National Party [Nelson Márquez](#), retired general [Romeo Vázquez](#) and the presidential candidate for the National Party [Nasry Asfura](#).

Meanwhile, the Attorney General has failed to pursue corruption cases involving figures close to the government, including President Castro's brother-in-law, [Carlos Zelaya](#)—seen in a viral video negotiating campaign support from convicted drug traffickers—as well as LIBRE Congress member Isis Cuellar and former Minister José Carlos Cardona over [alleged misuse of social welfare funds](#). In our analysis, such selective inaction has eroded trust in the Attorney General's independence and fueled concerns that the office may be used to target opposition figures or influence elections.

PARALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

The National Congress has [not convened a plenary session since August 27, 2025](#)—nearly nine weeks of legislative paralysis that have stalled essential oversight and lawmaking. The President of Congress has allegedly refrained from calling sessions to prevent the opposition from advancing legislation unfavorable to the current government. In response, a majority of legislators convened outside the congressional building during the latter half of October, prompting the President of Congress, Luis Redondo, to request that the [Attorney General initiate legal action against opposition members](#).

The recent developments in Congress echo a similar [institutional breakdown in 2023](#), when a [four-month legislative impasse culminated in the controversial appointment](#) of the Attorney General described above. This pattern of institutional standstills raises serious concerns that legislative checks could be further weakened, electoral oversight diminished, and key post-election decisions made outside the ordinary plenary process.

ROLE OF THE MILITARY

Article 272 of the Honduran Constitution gives the Armed Forces the responsibility for the custody, transportation and safeguarding of the election material (ballots) and public security related to the elections. However, they have been at the center of controversy. [Rixi Moncada](#) was appointed as Defense Minister in September 2024 in response to the virilization of the Carlos Zelaya video scandal described above. She remained in that capacity until May 2025, while simultaneously campaigning as presidential candidate,

raising **concerns over the politicization of the military and the blurring of civil–military boundaries.**

During the March 9 primary elections, the military oversaw logistics amid [significant delays](#). By 1 p.m. on election day, 40% of the polling stations in the two main cities had not yet received voting materials. These issues contributed to public concerns regarding the impartiality and effectiveness of the Armed Forces in electoral matters. The delays meant that at least [460,000 people in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula](#) had not voted by midday, and thousands waited [more than 16 hours](#) to cast their vote. Others were forced [to vote a week later](#).

In May 2025, the military accused journalists of being “[Hitmen of Truth](#)” in their official newspaper. This raised concerns **that the military was acting beyond their electoral mandate and intimidating journalists, potentially leading to self-censorship and closing of civic space.**

On 24 October 2025, the Chief of the Armed Forces requested direct access to [presidential-level voting records \(actas\)](#) from the CNE, an unprecedented step that raised alarms about potential overreach and interference in the upcoming general elections.

NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL

A concerning feature of the Honduran electoral system is that the National Election Council (CNE) is [directly managed by the nation’s three major political parties](#) which invariably politicizes the process. Each party appoints one representative as council member. Legal ambiguities have led to several conflicts among the council members who repeatedly have accused each other of undermining the election process. During the [logistical challenges](#) of the primary elections in March 2025, internal tensions within the CNE were already evident and escalated in the following months.

In early July, tensions rose significantly over disputes related to the [preliminary vote counting system \(TREP\)](#). The LIBRE council member, Marlon Ochoa, demanded [publicly that the results be transmitted electronically as ballots were received](#), while the other council members insisted on prior human verification. This disagreement paralyzed the CNE for almost a month, delaying the implementation timeline, putting at risk the readiness of key election components. A compromise was reached on August 4 allowing preliminary results to be transmitted as they are received, and human verification of disputed ballots to be conducted the following day.

On 16 July, Liberal Party council member, [Ana Paola Hall](#), announced her resignation, citing political pressure, then retracted her resignation. She currently continues in her role. **These tensions are further intensified by instances of lawfare, as council members repeatedly file legal complaints against one another, undermining institutional trust.**

On October 29, 2025, the Attorney General's Office publicly released audio recordings obtained without a judicial order by CNE council member, Marlon Ochoa implicating National Party council member Cossette López, a military officer and a Congressional Representative in an [alleged conspiracy](#) to manipulate the election results.

At a press conference, Attorney General Johel Zelaya announced an investigation into those involved in the audio recordings without having verified the origins or the validity of the recordings. This could lead to charges against Cossette Lopez for conspiracy to manipulate electoral results and treason. In response, Cossette López vehemently [rejected the recordings](#) as falsified. Meanwhile, opposition parties and electoral-observer groups have urged clarity and transparency.

Following these events, LIBRE candidate Rixi Moncada called on her supporters and affiliated LIBRE groups to march toward Tegucigalpa in a “[national mobilization with no turning back](#).” These mobilizations are expected to involve *colectivos*, groups linked to the LIBRE party that have previously been associated with tension and violence. In the past, these groups have [forcefully occupied public hospitals](#), blocking access to care for patients in order to demand employment. On one occasion, their occupation at one national hospital resulted in them being formally [hired as security personnel](#) despite their lack of appropriate training. They have also resorted to physical violence against political opponents; for example, during a crisis in the National Congress, a LIBRE activist struck opposition Congressional representative Toño Rivera on the head with a bottle, [causing bleeding that required emergency medical attention](#).

CIVIL COMMITMENT REMAINS HIGH

Despite these challenges, civil society has remained engaged. In August 2025, Catholic and Evangelical groups organized a nationwide [Walk for Peace and Democracy](#) where an estimated 300,000 people took to the streets to call for transparent elections. Polling data indicates that [at least 62% of eligible voters intend](#) to vote in the upcoming elections.

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing politization of the Attorney General's Office, the dispute over the legitimacy of Congressional representatives and the impartiality of the Armed Forces. These factors put elections and democracy at significant risk.

We invite election observers, donors, and the international community to closely monitor the situation in Honduras in the thirty days leading up to, during, and after the general elections on 30 November. **Your engagement and continued support for ASJ and for Honduras are vital to ensuring a free and fair electoral process, which is essential to building a more just society for all Hondurans.**

Events are evolving rapidly, and we will continue to monitor and report on developments in the coming weeks.

ABOUT: The Justice Institute is a think tank of the Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa (ASJ), the Honduran chapter of Transparency International. This analysis reflects the current power dynamics related to the upcoming elections regardless of who is in office. Read more about the [Institute on our Spanish website](#).

