



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### *Why are people fleeing now?*

Voices in Congress and the media have attempted to discredit the idea that violence in Central America is the key factor pushing millions of Central Americans from their homes. While it is true that Central America has a history of continued violence, falsely conflating U.S. immigration policies with the current humanitarian crisis in Central America portrays a fundamental misunderstanding about how displacement happens and evolves.

### VIOLENCE

1. Community leaders in both Honduras and El Salvador report gangs have grown more aggressive in recent months, instituting “join or die” policies <http://tpr.org/post/streets-honduras-look-what-driving-thousands-children-us> in some neighborhoods.
2. While 2011 was reported to be the peak year for the homicide rate in Honduras (a country that continues to hold the dubious distinction of having the highest murder rate in the world for four straight years), the rate of forced disappearances increased in 2013 (reported disappearances of women and girls increased by 281% in 2013 when compared to data from 2008: <http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/12582>), leading analysts to conclude that the homicide rate may not have actually gone down but rather that victims’ bodies are being disposed of more discretely or that government data was being manipulated.
3. In El Salvador there was a 93% increase in disappearances <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/el-salvador-travel-warning.html> in 2013 according to the U.S. State Department.
4. In Honduras the youth murder rate has surged over the first 5 months of 2014, rising from an average of 70 children and youth killed per a month in 2010-2013 to an average of 90 children <http://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/policiales/647527-96/reportan-muerte-violenta-de-270-hondure%C3%B1os-menores-de-23-a%C3%B1os> and youth



JUSTICE *and* ADVOCACY MINISTRIES

killed per a month in 2014. May 2014 saw the heaviest death toll for children and youth with 102 murdered that month <http://hoy.com.do/mas-de-100-menores-de-23-anos-fueron-asesinados-en-honduras-en-mayo/>.

5. In Honduras from 2005 to 2012, murders of women and girls increased 346%. Murders of men and boys increased by 292% over the same time period.<sup>4</sup> [http://www.observatoriodeseguridadciudadanadelasmujeres.org/materiales/INFORME\\_VCM\\_C.A..pdf](http://www.observatoriodeseguridadciudadanadelasmujeres.org/materiales/INFORME_VCM_C.A..pdf)
6. “Although Salvadoran police statistics show a decrease in annual homicides during 2012 and 2013, the homicide rate has been rising steadily since August 2013,” according to the U.S. State Department. <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/el-salvador-travel-warning.html>
7. 130,000 people were displaced one or more times in El Salvador in 2012 alone in a country of roughly 6 million people <http://rsq.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/06/10/rsq.hdu008.full.pdf+html>

IMPUNITY

1. Impunity also appears to be on the rise in the region. During the past three years, 48,947 people were murdered in the Northern Triangle, the most violent region of the world. Countries achieved convictions in 2,295 of those homicide cases, representing a regional impunity rate of 95 percent for homicides during that three-year period. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/the-northern-triangle-the-countries-that-dont-cry-for-their-dead>
2. Only 20 of every 100 murders are ever investigated in Honduras according to official data of the Honduran Public Ministry. <https://news.vice.com/article/honduras-is-combating-its-homicide-epidemic-with-militarization>

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4 It bears mentioning that the murder rate, according to uncorroborated government statistics, dropped in 2013, so a recent analysis found the murder rate for women and girls rose 263% between 2005 and 2013. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48241#.U9bCFvldXnJ> However, this perceived drop in the murder rate may be (bump up to previous page) attributable to the dramatic 281% increase <http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/12582> in forced disappearances of women and girls over the last five years in Honduras.



## COMPLICITY AND CORRUPTION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT

1. In September 2013, a new law gave the military full policing powers in Honduras, despite objections from the nation's Human Rights Ombudsman who called the move clearly unconstitutional <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/09/military-given-full-powers-to-fight-crime-in-honduras/>. Women's groups in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, where the police were illegally militarized a year before, have reported soaring levels of sexual assault and violence against women after the military police take over. <http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/12582>
2. Since July 2011 the government of Honduras has refused to share its homicide <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/the-northern-triangle-the-countries-that-dont-cry-for-their-dead> data with the independent analysts at the Violence Observatory at the National Autonomous University of Honduras or any other independent group, leading to allegations that the government may be manipulating crime data.
3. In Honduras the police are deeply penetrated by organized crime. A Feb. 2014 report by the leading newspaper "El Heraldo" found that over 200 national police were implicated in killings for hire, drug theft, and corruption. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/the-northern-triangle-the-countries-that-dont-cry-for-their-dead>
4. In Honduras, there are substantiated reports <http://www.elheraldo.hn/csp/mediapool/sites/ElHeraldo/Sucesos/story.csp?cid=621908&sid=293&fid=219> of police forming and participating in death squads and committing extra-judicial executions in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa.