HiiL
user friendly justice

Justice Needs and Satisfaction in **Honduras**

2024

Access to Justice Gap
for Internally Displaced People

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UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Glossary

Below is a list of terms that can be helpful to understand the context, data and findings presented in this report. The definitions are HiiL's, for the most part. When they are not, we include the source. We believe that justice should be accessible and easy to understand, and that includes the information gathered about it.

Domestic violence: It is used in this report to describe the types of violence that take place within the home or family between intimate partners as well as between other family members.[1]

Gender-based violence: An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (that is, gender) differences between males and females. This includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering; threats of such acts; and coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.[2]

Internally displaced person (IDP): "An individual who has been forced or obliged to flee from his home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."[3]

Justice demand: People with legal problems, who need a fair resolution of these problems, in such a way that resolutions result in positive and sustainable outcomes.

Justice gap: People who are not able to resolve their legal problems, either because they are still waiting for a resolution or have abandoned any hope of resolution, and those who resolve their legal problems but perceive the resolution as unfair.

Justice intervention: Refers to a particular action that a provider can perform when engaged in a dispute resolution process, such as providing advice, mediating actively between the parties, deciding on the matter, or referring to another third party.

Justice journey: Refers to the journey a person takes from the moment they recognize they have a legal problem until an eventual resolution. The journey includes the search for legal information and advice and taking actions to try to resolve the problem, either by directly engaging the other party, via a third party or through a combination of both.

Justice need: The need to have a legal problem resolved in a way that is fair, affordable, accessible, easy to understand, and results in an outcome that positively relieves the person of the most negative consequences of the problem.

Justice provider: A person or organisation that is involved to more or less systematic extents in resolving legal problems. In this report, providers are also referred to as "third parties".

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1 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2015), *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery.*

2 UNHCR (1951), *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, article 1A(2); UNHCR (1969), *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*, article 1(2).

3 Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 1997/39. Addendum: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, UN Commission on Human Rights, 11 February 1998, available at https://www.refworld.org/es/ref/polilegal/unchr/1998/es/31759

Justice supply: Justice providers from both the formal and informal sectors and/or a combination of both.

Justice user: A person with a justice need who engages a justice provider in a dispute resolution process.

Legal advice: People seeking to resolve a legal problem may seek personalised advice as to how to address their legal problem.

Legal aid: A system of providing subsidised legal services to justice users who cannot afford to obtain legal services from the market.

Legal information: People seeking to resolve a legal problem may seek legal information. We make a distinction between legal information and legal advice. Legal information is obtained through public sources such as the Internet, radio, books and radio. Legal advice is the provision of personalised legal information tailored to a specific justice user and her legal problem.

Legal problem: A legal problem refers to a problem that takes place in daily life – a dispute, disagreement or grievance for which there is a resolution in the (formal or informal) law. In justice needs research, the term 'justiciable events' is also used. The resolution of the problem could be through an intervention of a third party – i.e. adjudication, administrative process, arbitration (decision) or

mediation or through negotiation or reconciliation between the parties. It is not necessary that the respondent know or recognize its legal aspects. It is also possible that nothing has been done to resolve the problem.

Resolution (of a legal problem): Resolution refers to the status of the problem; whether the respondent considers it resolved (completely or partially), ongoing and waiting or expecting to be resolved, or abandoned without expectation of the problem being resolved.

Stakeholder group: justice field experts, decision makers and justice providers.

Triangulation workshop: activity from the JNS methodology in which the preliminary results of the survey are presented, discussed and validated with the stakeholders group. It is an in-person event, carried out as a roundtable discussion.

People-centred justice: Justice that is affordable, accessible and easy to understand based on evidence of what works for people seeking to resolve their legal problems. It places the user at the centre of the delivery of a justice service.

Problem prevalence: refers to the proportion of the population that reported at least one legal problem in the previous four years.

Above all, the main thing would be, as they say, justice. Sometimes it's complicated to talk about these topics when you have fear.
— 21 year old woman interviewed in Tegucigalpa

Executive summary

The justice gap is wide

The security situation in Honduras is critical. The homicide rate in 2023 was 34 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants[4], remaining one of the highest in the region. Threats and extortion by criminal groups are equally visible. This has led to a deterioration of the social fabric, a loss of trust among Hondurans, fear of reporting and discussing conflicts, and perhaps most gravely, the accumulated displacement of at least 250,000 people[5].

In this context, UNHCR and The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) partnered to conduct a Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) survey along with a series of interviews, with the intention of **understanding the legal needs of internally displaced persons and those at risk of displacement in Honduras**. This is the fourth study within the framework of the UNHCR and HiiL alliance and the first conducted in Latin America.

Through the JNS, we listened to 2,010 adults (18 years or older) in eight municipalities in Honduras identified by UNHCR as having displacement dynamics. We placed an emphasis on the displaced population to capture their experiences and satisfaction with justice. All populations have legal problems and needs, but not all have access to effective justice to resolve them. To complement the quantitative survey, we spoke with 59 people in qualitative interviews convened by UNHCR, which helped us understand more deeply the relationship between legal problems, access to justice, and displacement.

Approximately 31% of Hondurans[6] have experienced at least one legal problem in the past four years. The prevalence varies according to the level of vulnerability: **over 40% of the population at risk of displacement report at least one legal problem[7], while internally displaced persons have a problem prevalence of 52%.** These problems are highly serious, with most people rating them with a severity of 10 on a scale where 10 is the maximum value.

We consider it possible that there is an underreporting of legal problems in the survey due to intimidation and fear of speaking by the respondents—the suspicion that "*personas banderas*" (informants for criminal groups) might be listening or that the results could be used to identify someone makes people prefer to remain silent. This underreporting occurs in many legal needs surveys, but it is even more

evident in Honduras. The selected fieldwork locations correspond to some of the areas with the highest insecurity and violence problems in the country—territories even disputed by criminal groups such as gangs, maras, and drug cartels. Therefore, during the study, we sought to maximize the quality of the collected data without jeopardizing the safety of the data collection teams and the people who spoke with us.

The most common problems in Honduras are related to **crime (20%), neighbours (16%), and employment (14%)**. IDPs experience a higher rate of issues related to domestic violence and family matters, compared to non-IDPs.

The qualitative interviews tell a similar story. Crime and violence are part of daily life for Hondurans, with many interviewees sharing stories that included threats and violent acts against them or their relatives.

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4 Honduras' Police Statistics Department (2024). Historical Homicide Rates. Available at https://www.sepol.hn/sepol-estadisticas-honduras.php?id=138

5 Data as of the end of 2022. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2024). Global Report on Internal Displacement. Available at https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2024/

6 To make the report easier to read, we use the term "Hondurans" when talking about the survey findings, although the sample is only representative of the municipalities surveyed.

7 Category made up of respondents that expressed their intention to change places of residence in the next year.

The rooted impact of legal problems

Similarly, **many displaced women associated the cause of their displacement with violence from their partners or family members**[8].

Legal problem resolution is a challenge – 65% of problems are either abandoned or awaiting resolution. The most common resolution status (37% of all problems) **is "the problem continues"**, meaning the issue persists and is awaiting resolution. Additionally, 28% of problems have been abandoned, with no expectation of resolution. The low resolution rates reflect the limited access to justice in Honduras, especially for IDPs. People encounter legal problems in their lives but are unable to resolve them through formal or informal justice systems.

Approximately 35% of the problems are resolved, either completely or partially, and these resolutions are generally considered to be fair. In fact, more than half of the resolutions obtained are deemed as fair or very fair. However, the remaining 46% are considered unjust resolutions. **Given the low number of resolved problems in the first place, the high percentage of unjust resolutions widens the justice gap.**

Approximately 75% of people with legal problems reported at least one negative consequence as a result. **Hondurans primarily experience consequences associated with loss of income and health problems due to stress.** Stress-related affectations are much more pronounced among IDPs (49%) compared to non-IDPs (35%), as well as damage to family relationships, job loss, and personal violence.

Interviewees shared that **displacement often means starting anew**, leaving behind not only their homes and belongings but also their jobs, and, most importantly, their community and family. This **generates stress, anxiety and depression.** Many interviewees mention that among

the support received from NGOs, psychological support is the most appreciated; other interviewees who did not receive support expressed a desire to protect their mental health.

Moreover, we measured the impact of problems over five specific dimensions: financial well-being, personal relationships, mental health, physical health, and work performance. On the one hand, legal problems seem to have a lesser impact on work performance and the physical health of Hondurans. On the other hand, and in line with the most reported consequences, financial well-being, personal relationships, and mental health are the dimensions most often reported as the most aggravating.

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8 The interviewees were gathered by UNHCR and are, for the most part, victims of displacement. Therefore, this is a biased sample and it is not possible to generalise their experiences to the entire Honduran population.

Conflict resolution is a challenge

A little over half of Hondurans (53%) take action to resolve their most serious legal problems. In other words, **nearly half of people with problems do not take action to resolve them**, which in turn makes obtaining resolutions more difficult. IDPs (58%) and people at risk of displacement (55%) have a higher action rate compared to non-IDPs (48%).

The predominant reason for not taking action is the anticipation of an unfavorable outcome: nearly 40% of individuals who refrained from taking action cited this reason. **Hondurans perceive effective justice that addresses their needs as unattainable.** This sentiment is echoed by the interviewees: the majority assert that the authorities either cannot or do not wish to act, and engaging with them, particularly with the police, is a waste of time.

Therefore, it is not surprising that **most people prefer to speak directly with the other party to resolve the problem**—60% of those who

took action opted for this source of help. The police is the second most consulted source of help (18%) and the most prevalent for crime-related issues. However, it seems the police mainly handle "minor" crimes, such as theft, and not more serious acts, such as homicide or extortion.

The most severe crimes are typically those that result in displacement; almost all displaced interviewees recounted experiences of threats, extortion, forced recruitment, and the murder of close associates. These issues are not likely to be resolved through dialogue with the other party (the perpetrator) and are not addressed by the police. For victims of these crimes, the lack of access to justice is even more severe: it necessitates displacement as the only viable solution to ensure their safety and protection from violence.

Hondurans rarely resort to informal third parties, even those recognized by the State, such as judicial facilitators. Informal or community justice is

not evident in the JNS. Interviews do not indicate this type of justice for internally displaced persons either— the support from informal third parties, such as family and friends, focuses on minimizing the impact of displacement, for instance, by offering a place to stay or monetary aid. This suggests that Hondurans do not have a viable alternative when formal justice, in which there is little trust, does not meet their needs.

The absence of visible informal justice may be associated with the deterioration of the social fabric in Honduras; people do not trust each other or the institutions. Many opt to speak directly with the other party, but this option remains dangerous. Suspicion and distrust of those outside one's intimate circle is the norm, making direct negotiation difficult for those who fear their surroundings the most. Interviewees highlight this sentiment by noting that it is not possible to know if a neighbor is part of or associated with a gang, in a context where, in several neighborhoods, "order" is established by criminal groups. **This limits people's options and access to justice, creating greater obstacles to resolve even the**

simplest and more common legal problems, such as disputes with neighbours.

We observe a high percentage of Hondurans reporting their most serious legal problems[9] as unresolved—around 60% of them have no resolution, in contrast to the 39% who have a full or partial resolution. Amongst the unresolved cases, 35% are ongoing and awaiting a solution, and 26% are abandoned. Those who do not take action have more abandoned problems, once again showing that the lack of accessible and effective justice affects people's ability to obtain solutions for their pressing issues.

Regarding satisfaction with the quality of the process, people who take action and obtain a resolution are moderately satisfied with procedural aspects, such as being treated with respect, having their voices heard, and the clarity of the process. It is positive that the processes uphold the dignity of individuals as this can increase thier willingness to take measures to resolve their issues. In contrast, several displaced persons interviewed reported that when they approached the authorities, they were not heard

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9 Respondents could report up to 10 legal problems at the start of the survey, but to keep the size and length of the survey manageable we asked them to choose the most serious problem to respond to questions about consequences, sources of help and resolution.

and encountered highly bureaucratic and complicated processes, which discouraged them from continuing.

On the other hand, dimensions related to the quality of the outcome (restoration of damages and fair distribution) generate the least satisfaction for people. It is imperative to improve the quality of the resolutions that people receive, particularly for IDPs; there can be no lasting solutions without guaranteeing access to a type of justice that meets people's needs. Notably, **very few crimes have been resolved, and those that have been resolved have yielded unsatisfactory results that do not generate positive impacts on people's lives**.

The evaluation of outcomes in both the qualitative and quantitative data allows us to conclude that Hondurans seek and value feeling protected – this is especially true for victims of domestic violence. Dimension of seeking justice for the purpose of protection, primarily, aims to safeguard victims or eliminate harm, while the dimension or function of justice to "punish" or sanction takes a secondary role. **Person-centered justice and its focus on the outcomes obtained by individuals suggest that justice in its protective purpose (relative to the victim) surpasses or is more relevant than its punitive dimension (relative to the perpetrator).**

Displacement and justice needs are intrinsically related

IDPs often face more obstacles in resolving their legal problems – as their access to justice is not guaranteed. In Honduras, displacement is a last resort to protect oneself from violence and legal problems encountered in everyday life. **Displacement is seen as a solution when authorities do not act, but it can never be a just solution.** It is a self-protection measure that provides temporary relief but deepens both new and existing vulnerabilities for those who are displaced. These vulnerabilities, along with the lack of social and community ties, and the barriers to access formal and informal justice mechanisms to solve their problems, expose IDPs to greater or new justice needs, which can be very difficult to resolve.

Among the **main causes of forced displacement in Honduras are lack of security, widespread violence and human rights violations.** These issues can be exacerbated by limited economic opportunities and a lack of basic public services such as education and healthcare.

Overall, **violence perpetrated by criminal groups is an omnipresent threat to individual and community**

safety in Honduras. Other forms of violence visible in the JNS, and especially in interviews, include domestic and politically motivated threats and assaults. Thus, violence is a common presence in entire communities, with insecurity permeating both the present and future lives of people in Honduras.

In the presence of such levels of violence, **lack of justice becomes a crucial factor contributing to displacement in Honduras.** Testimonies suggest a widespread negative perception of what justice entails, encompassing not only judicial institutions but also security actors and the executive branch. There is a shared sentiment that state or community institutions do not provide protection. The little support that IPDs receive comes primarily from their personal networks (family and friends), international organisations, and national and international NGOs.

This support mitigates the impact of displacement and its negative consequences but usually does not constitute legal aid, nor can it resolve the root causes that forced them to displace. **The Honduran state needs to improve its support for displaced individuals and align it with their needs**, for instance, focusing on their mental health and providing justice that is timely.

Displacement is the only viable response to a severe and difficult to resolve justice problem in Honduras. There is a direct and cyclical relationship between lack of access to justice and displacement— absence of timely, accessible, and effective justice leads to displacement as a form of protection. In turn, displacement exacerbates the difficulty of accessing justice to resolve both new and pre-existing legal issues.

Recommendations for improved access to people-centred justice

Based on the findings and conclusions from the JNS survey and the in-depth interviews, we have developed the following series of recommendations for the justice sector in Honduras:

- **Keep measuring justice from the perspective of the people affected:** Studies like the JNS complement the efforts of national institutions and civil society organisations to collect data on access to justice, violence and displacement. We recommend conducting legal needs assessments that can cover more departments and establishing a research infrastructure that provides evidence for policy development, measurement, accountability, and evaluation.

- **Focus on vulnerable populations:** Internally Displaced People, those in poverty, women, and children are among the groups that tend to suffer more consequences and impact from legal problems. It is essential to recognize the different experiences of vulnerable groups to design access to justice pathways that address their different needs.

- **Prioritise local policies that answer to specific contexts, which can later be scaled up:** The types and dynamics of violence are not uniform across Honduras; they vary across regions and the affected populations. Recognizing this helps in crafting public policies that work in specific contexts and can later be scaled to other areas of the country. Promoting governance and coordination among local and national institutions to address complex issues, like safety and displacement, is the way forward.

- **Simplify and streamline crime reporting procedures for victims and witnesses:** Trust in the police and judicial system is low. People believe institutions are ineffective. When they approach them to report crimes and seek help, they encounter excessively bureaucratic procedures. The crime reporting process should be simplified and expedited.

- **Foster justice innovation:** The distribution of justice providers that people commonly go to shows a significant opportunity for innovation. Few non-legal sources of help are utilized. Civil society organisations, informal mediators, and community leaders are some of the actors that can provide an affordable and accessible informal justice complementary to the formal system.

- **Enabling environment to address the root causes of displacement and provide holistic support for victims:** The national policy for displacement prevention, as outlined in the 2023 Displacement Law, must effectively address the root causes of the problem. Preventing forced displacement requires decisive public action to take on its root causes: insecurity, violence, and human rights violations. At the same time, displacement affects many other rights, such as those related to education, employment and housing, potentially leading to new changes of residence as people move again in search of work or because they cannot afford housing in their host communities. Recognizing and

understanding these post-displacement impacts is essential for ensuring the protection of displaced individuals, and thus, promoting the achievement of durable solutions, which includes access to justice. Justice should also act as a mechanism to satisfy these and other rights violated by displacement.

- **Strengthen Honduras' social fabric and guard it against violence:** Societies with high levels of trust prevent and resolve many legal problems. Public policies should be developed that focus on repairing the social fabric and the trust of people in institutions and in their communities, which have been mainly torn apart by violence. We are aware of the size of the challenge. Security, fostering trust, and a sense of community are pieces of the puzzle, but a comprehensive and strategic approach is needed to address violence. The only way to improve justice, and many other aspects of Honduran life, is to provide sustainable solutions to the violence faced by the Honduran people.

I think no one would think of leaving their country, because we love our country. Honduras is our country, but it's sad to live in fear.

— 41 year old woman
 interviewed in Tegucigalpa

1

Introduction

In the mid 2010's, Honduras had one of the highest murder rates in the world. This violence produced displacement. Between 2004 and 2018, at least a quarter million people were internally displaced in the country[10]. Since then, the population has been constantly affected by violence and internal displacement.

Sometimes, people are forced to be displaced as they try to protect themselves from violence and legal problems. But displacement is not a fair solution. It perpetuates injustice.

In late 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) commissioned The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) with a Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) study in Honduras. It was the fourth study under the UNHCR-HiiL framework partnership, after Ethiopia (2020), Burkina Faso (2022) and Iraq (2023).

Honduras, like other countries in the Americas, has been struggling with safety and security in the past years,

which has led to an invisible and silent crisis: displacement and the risk it implies, both inside and outside the country. We call this situation, which has been exacerbated by the lack of access to justice, the cycle of displacement.

Legal problems seem to spread fast in this context. In the words of a woman from Tegucigalpa: *"The problem is that things always happen. Not to you, but to other people in the same community. And you realise and say it's not good."* The sole possibility that other people are being extorted dissuades others from taking action. Therefore, silence or displacement appear on the horizon.

In this report, we present the stories of those who had the possibility to speak up. We analyse the patterns and the silence in the data. This report therefore intends to understand the role of justice in the cycle of displacement, map out the justice needs, actions and resolutions of internally displaced persons in Honduras.

This study contributes to evidence-based policymaking and programming that can improve the protection of everyone in displacement-affected areas inclusively.

People-centred justice (PCJ) means justice that is accessible, understandable, affordable and effective. Procedures and solutions work for the users because the users are at the centre of people-centred justice. The outcomes of people-centred justice procedures can bring out the truth, restore relationships, and compensate for damages. PCJ is justice that allows people to continue with their lives. It supports progress. It increases social cohesion and unity where there have been few reasons to trust the neighbour.

The situation of internal displacement in Honduras is complex and multifaceted. It has been driven by human-made and environmental

factors. According to data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the Americas region accounts for approximately 8% of the global share of displaced population at the end of 2023. Honduras appears in the list of the top 5 countries with the highest number of displaced people[11]. More than a quarter million people were displaced between 2004 and 2018 –about 2.5% of its population[12]. In proportion, the size of the problem is similar to that of Ethiopia (2.4%) and larger than that of Nigeria (1.7% approximately). However, in comparison to other countries, Honduras' crisis tends to be invisible due to the persistent risks IDPs face if they decide to speak up or report the situation[13].

According to the INFORM Severity Index, a composite indicator that measures the severity of humanitarian crises, Honduras scores 3.6 out of 5, which means it is in the category of

10 Inter-institutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced due to Violence (2019). Study on the characterization of internal displacement by violence in Honduras 2004-2018. Available at https://www.refworld.org/es/ref/infortem/cippdvhond/2019/es/134248

11 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2024). Global Report on Internal Displacement, p. 81. Available at https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2024/

12 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2023). Prevention, Care, and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons Law in Honduras and the work of UNHCR. Available at https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/100262

13 Norwegian Refugee Council (2023). The world's most neglected displacement crises in 2023. Available at https://www.nrc.no/feature/2024/the-worlds-most-neglected-displacement-crises-2023/

"High risk", the second most vulnerable category in the methodology[14]. It is stated as a complex crisis, as opposed to one with a concrete and easily identifiable cause.

It is therefore of utmost importance to listen to the voices of regular Hondurans: men and women who have been displaced, are at imminent risk of displacement or simply live in some of the most difficult areas in the country.

In April 2023, Honduras enacted the Prevention, Care and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons law. This law aims to protect the rights of individuals displaced within the country and establishes mechanisms for prevention, care and assistance to those affected by displacement. The report you have in your hands, or your screen, aims at supporting the implementation of the law.

Given the multifaceted nature of the crisis in Honduras, we opted for a mixed-methods approach. We conducted a JNS quantitative survey of more than 2000 Hondurans in four departments and interviewed almost 60 people using a qualitative interview method. Together with the inputs of experts and stakeholders from the Honduran Government, Judiciary, Academia, CSOs and UN system[15], we created an effective approach that provided the basis for safe and secure fieldwork for everybody involved. Alongside this group, we also conducted validation rounds that answered many questions and opened others.

This report is organised as follows. **Chapter 2** lays out the **methodology** of the study. **Chapter 3** provides an overview of the survey and interview **samples**, including the **identification of displacement** among the sample. **Chapter 4** develops the notion of the **Justice Gap** in Honduras, based on the analysis of all the legal problems collected in the quantitative survey.

Chapter 5 explores the **impact** that legal problems have on people's lives. **Chapter 6** discusses the justice journeys Hondurans travel in their **dispute resolution** processes when they take action. **Chapter 7** presents the most common **interventions** of sources of help to resolve problems. **Chapter 8** explores the **cycle of injustice in displacement**, using both qualitative and quantitative data. The final **Chapter 9**, provides the **findings and implications** derived from the data, including the potential way forward to decrease the justice gap and alleviate the cycle of injustice in Honduras.

We invite you to read what the displaced, those at risk of displacement and those who stay in their places of residence in Honduras have to say, either with their words, actions or silence.

Enumerators training session

Data triangulation session

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14 Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the European Commission, INFORM REPORT 2024: 10 years of INFORM, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/555548

15 For more information on the stakeholders group, please go to page 187.

HiiL–UNHCR Partnership

This report is the fourth in a series of JNS surveys conducted as part of a partnership between HiiL and UNHCR initiated in 2019.

HiiL is a leader in justice innovation. It is known particularly for its Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) survey, which it has spent years refining and is an internationally recognised methodology for measuring justice, including in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Open Government Partnership (OGP). The surveys take a people-centred justice approach, focusing on understanding needs from the perspective of the justice users. HiiL has extensive datasets, with citizens and non-citizens surveyed in over twenty countries so far.

UNHCR is mandated to work with States to provide international protection and to seek permanent solutions for persons under its mandate. These include refugees, refugee returnees, stateless persons and internally displaced populations. Key to fulfilling this mandate is supporting States in ensuring that these populations have access to rights at the same level as nationals or legal residents of a country, without discrimination.

In 2015, HiiL started including samples of displaced populations as part of general population studies in Ukraine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Nigeria. The HiiL-UNHCR partnership was initiated in 2019 to improve the methodology for doing so more systematically and at scale.

The data that HiiL-UNHCR can collect together provides for a better understanding of inequalities, discrimination and potential triggers for conflict that might exist among and between different population groups. It provides a basis for innovation in justice delivery to forcibly displaced and stateless populations and their host communities; a basis for improving social cohesion and inclusion.

This information is critical for ongoing and future programming by governments and humanitarian, development and other partners engaged in the justice or social sectors and/or in responses to forced displacement and statelessness. It is key to fulfilling the central premise of the 2030 Development Agenda to leave no one behind.
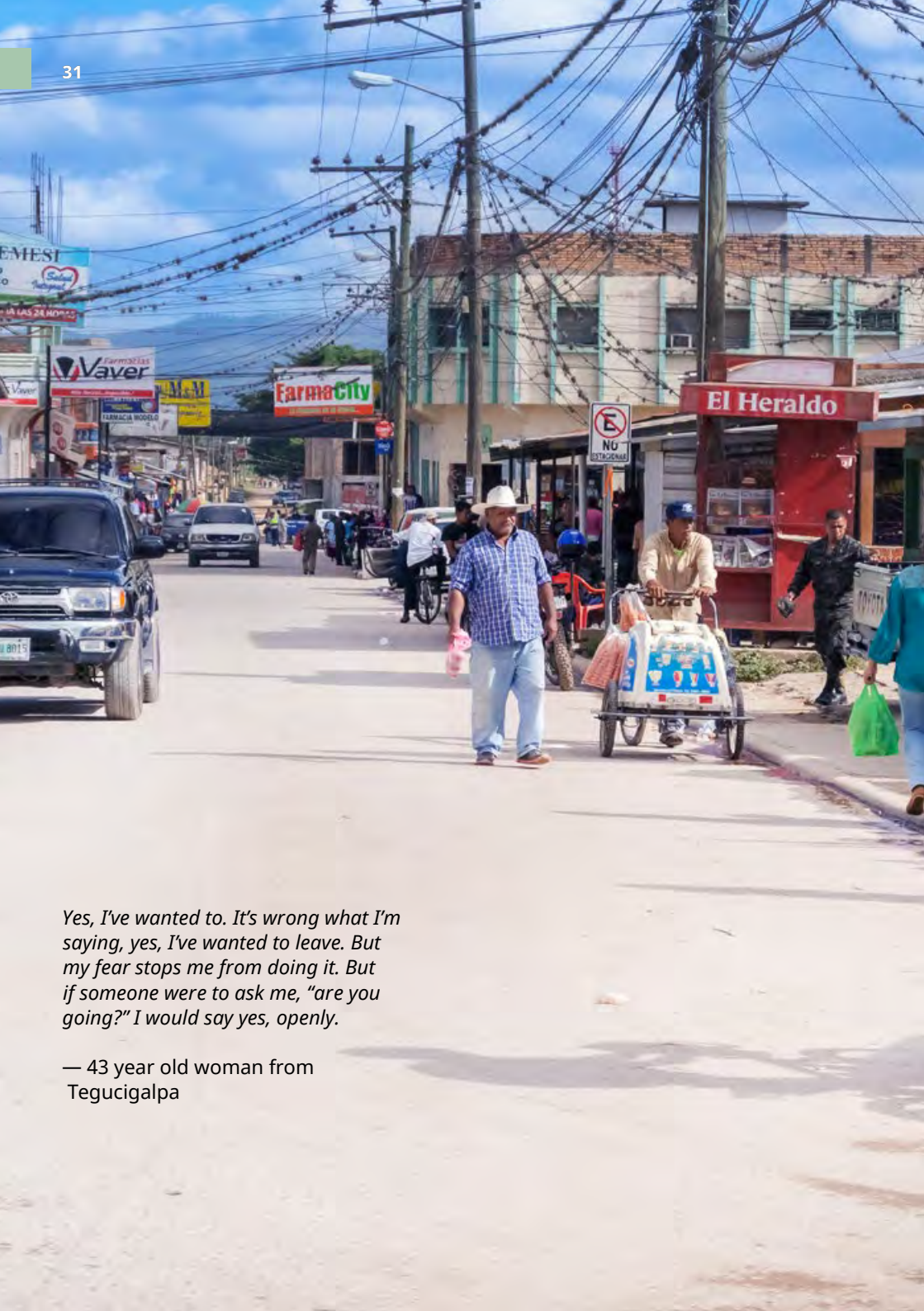
Yes, I've wanted to. It's wrong what I'm saying, yes, I've wanted to leave. But my fear stops me from doing it. But if someone were to ask me, "are you going?" I would say yes, openly.

— 43 year old woman from
 Tegucigalpa

2

Methodology

HiiL has extensive experience conducting Justice Needs and Satisfaction (JNS) surveys, having applied the methodology in over 23 countries. This study builds upon such previous experiences, especially on JNS surveys focused on IDPs and refugees that were conducted in Ethiopia (2020), Burkina Faso (2022) and Iraq (2023), with the support of UNHCR. However, the particularities of the Honduran context required new methodological adaptations to accurately capture the justice needs of IDPs. Thus, we decided to implement a mixed methods approach.

A mixed methods approach implies a research design that collects both quantitative and qualitative data and conducts an analysis based on both streams of data. This approach enables us to glimpse at the macro-level of justice needs (patterns, proportions and differences), as well as the micro-level (experiences and attitudes)[16].

Between March and April 2024, enumerators from the leading local data collection company, Le Vote, went to the houses of 2010 randomly selected Hondurans from 4 departments to talk about their experiences with justice. Shortly after, interviewers from the same company conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews of 59 people from the same surveyed communities, summoned by UNHCR. In these conversations, which took place in safe community spaces arranged by UNHCR, interviewees voiced their concerns and their relationship with displacement and justice.

Previous to fieldwork, in February and March 2024, we conducted a series of adaptation workshops with stakeholders, experts and practitioners of the justice sector, who contributed to adapt key elements of the questionnaire to the Honduran context, such as the list of legal problems and

of justice providers. During these workshops, the objective of the study was presented, and several discussions were held regarding our approach, our focus population (IDPs and people at risk of displacement) and the best ways to identify it.

After this methodology adaptation, HiiL's team conducted an in-person two-day training session for enumerators in Tegucigalpa, explaining the survey methodology to over 25 participants. A piloting phase followed this training, after which the adaptation process was considered finalised. The result was a questionnaire relevant to the Honduran context, applicable and easy to understand for the potential respondents.

Once data collection had been finalised, preliminary results were presented and discussed with the stakeholders group and with UNHCR experts at data triangulation workshops held in June, 2024. In this space, justice experts and practitioners shared their thoughts and possible explanations for the data, providing us with valuable insights about legal problems in Honduras.

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16 Thaler, K. M. (2017). Mixed Methods Research in the Study of Political and Social Violence and Conflict. Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 11(1), 59-76. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689815585196

Measuring access to justice

The JNS methodology implements HiiL's approach to people-centred justice. It starts from the perspective of people, mapping their problems and their actions to try to resolve them. The quantitative survey measures the base of the pyramid, focusing on justice users and their problems, needs, actions, and satisfaction. Respondents talk about their experiences only, the problems they personally face. The qualitative interviews go deeper into the circumstances that led to displacement or that made people consider leaving their homes, as well as focusing on people's feelings and attitudes during their justice journeys.

Population of interest

Enumerators talked to 2010 legal adults (18 years and older) in 8 municipalities of Honduras. The municipalities and communities inside them were defined alongside the UNHCR's Honduras office as these are territories where they either have an active presence or know that displacement dynamics exist. The data collection company then conducted a cluster sampling[17] inside each municipality, surveying one person per household. This resulted in a heterogeneous sample that reflected the gender distribution of the national population, and that has a sampling error of less than 5% for each municipality, which is to say, the sample is consistent with the general population parameters.

To best characterise the sample, we included several demographic variables like age, place of residence (urban or rural), education level, disability status[18], and subjective financial situation. To facilitate analysis, we recoded certain variables into more standardised categories.

- Age was reported in years by the respondents, however, a new 4-category variable was created by grouping ages. The 4 age groups are based on other HiiL surveys and are as follows: Youth (18 to 24 years old), Young adulthood (25 to 39 years old), Middle adulthood (40 to 64 years old), and the Elderly (over 65 years old).

- The education level variable was transformed from 13 answer options into 3 broad categories: a) Incomplete primary or lower, for those who have no formal education or didn't graduate primary education; b) Basic education (complete or incomplete),

for those who completed primary and coursed any level of secondary education; and c) Higher education (complete or incomplete), for those who attended college or university, regardless of if they graduated or not.

- The final recoding was the subjective financial situation. People could report their economic situation on a scale of 4 options ranging from "not able to afford the basics'' to "able to buy almost everything". A binary variable was created from these answers: a) Can't cover basic needs for those who said they could not afford them; and b) Can cover basic needs for those who answered any of the other 3 options[19].

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17 Statistical sampling method in which the population is divided into groups (clusters) before randomly selecting respondents from within the groups. In this study the clusters were defined by neighbourhoods within the municipalities.

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18 Individuals could report if they had a health, physical or mental condition that they had suffered from for more than 6 months that represented a disability - questions about the specific type of disability were not included.

19 The response options to the question "Which of the following statements best describes your (family) financial situation?" are: "We do not have enough money for basic needs", "We are able to buy what is necessary", "We are able to buy more expensive goods", "We can afford almost whatever we want" and "Do not want to answer".

Identifying Internally Displaced People in Honduras

In previous IDP-focused JNS surveys, HiiL used a direct identification approach in which people were plainly asked if they were an IDP or not. Local experts, both from UNHCR and from the stakeholders group, warned us that such an identification strategy would not work in Honduras as people often did not recognise themselves as IDPs, be it out of fear, because they have normalised displacement, or they don't know what exactly IDP means. Even with the law on Prevention, Attention and Protection of Forcibly Displaced People adopted in March 2023 by the Honduran government, which recognises displacement as a policy issue and establishes legal protections for those internally displaced, forced displacement is still not a widely known concept in the country.

This, combined with the fact that the present JNS wasn't conducted in refugee or IDP camps, presented us with the challenge of properly identifying displaced people and achieving a critical mass to conduct a meaningful analysis. The solution to this challenge was twofold. First, the municipalities and communities identified by UNHCR were selected for being both places of origin and host communities of IDPs, increasing the chance of naturally finding displaced people. Second, an indirect identification approach was used instead of the direct question on IDP status.

The **indirect identification approach** was based on recommendations by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)[20] and consisted of three questions. The first question was if the current place of residence of the respondent was their community of origin[21], they could answer yes or no. The second question asked people how long they have lived in their current home, answers spanned from less than 6 months to more than 3 years. The third one inquired whether the person had moved in an unexpected and unplanned manner, answer options were also yes or no.

The third question was the main driver of the identification strategy. Those who answered "yes" were considered as IDPs and were asked a follow-up question regarding the motive for their unexpected change of residence to validate[22].

Those who didn't move unexpectedly received the question: "What would you like to do in the future (one year from now)?" and could answer with the following options: staying at their current residence, moving inside Honduras, moving abroad, or other. Those who answered any of the moving away options were considered as populations at risk of displacement and were asked why they were considering relocating.

This approach allowed us to create 4 in-sample categories for our analysis:

Population category	Identification question	Response givenww
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	"Have you ever left your place of residence in an unplanned way?"	"Yes"
Non-IDPs	"What would you like to do in the future (1 year from now)?"	"Remain in your place of residence"
Population at-risk of displacement	"What would you like to do in the future (1 year from now)?"	• "Move inside the country" • "Move abroad"
Other/No Answer	"What would you like to do in the future (1 year from now)?"	• "Other" • "Prefer not to answer"

---

20 JIPS (2021). Identifying Internally Displaced Persons in surveys, approaches and recommended questionnaire module. Available at https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/identifying-internally-displaced-persons-in-surveys-approaches-and-recommended-questionnaire-modules-jips-2021/

21 The answers to this question are subjective, the question allows for the respondent's own interpretation, given that there are people who were not born in a community, but consider it as their place of origin.

22 We recognise that an indirect identification approach can't guarantee that everyone who moved unexpectedly is indeed displaced, however, our findings show that these respondents have different experiences with justice compared to their counterparts, they are more vulnerable. This gives us confidence that we are dealing with internally displaced people.

Measuring the justice gap

The line of research in this report corresponds to the legal needs survey guidelines, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). HiiL's Justice Needs and Satisfaction survey is specifically designed to measure justice needs in societies based on the premise of people-centred justice. The tool consists of a questionnaire with over 100 questions about people's justice journeys. The questionnaire addresses the types of legal problems people encounter, the resolutions they achieve through a wide variety of actions, how they seek legal advice and information, and how they experience the resolution process and outcomes.

The survey starts by asking people if they have experienced a justice problem in the last four years. People can select up to 10 problems from a list of 99 options presented to them using a physical list of legal problems. These problems can include disputes related to land, crime, neighbours, public services, among many others. The 99 specific disputes are organised in 14 different broad categories that aid the respondent in identifying their problem[23].

There are several daily life problems that have a justice component, but most people's legal problems don't ever reach the formal justice system. For this reason, we don't focus on the cases and sentences of the formal courts, but on people's needs in terms of problem resolution. This means, we do not evaluate formal or informal actores, nor their operation, but focus on the experiences and satisfaction of people with the justice they seek and obtain. Thus, respondents are asked whether each reported problem is solved or not, how fair was the resolution, if achieved, and if it was implemented. By identifying any mismatches between the needs of people and the fair solutions available to them, or the lack thereof, we are able to measure the "justice gap".

Measuring the impact of legal problems

Different legal problems affect people in different ways. To measure these impacts, the survey focuses on the most serious legal problem, as selected by the respondent. People are then asked about the possible consequences the problem caused in their lives; as problems can be dynamic and multifaceted, people can report more than one consequence. Additionally, respondents receive questions on the level of affectation the problem had on five dimensions: personal relationships, financial well-being, mental health, physical health and performance at work.

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23 See Annex 1 at the end of the report with the list of legal problems used and their categories.

Measuring the justice journeys

People use various mechanisms to try to resolve their legal problems. The sequence of steps taken to solve a problem is what we call the "justice journey". The justice journey begins when the person takes action for the first time to solve the problem and finishes when the dispute is resolved by mutual agreement or by the decision of a third party; however, the justice journey can also end when the person gives up and abandons the problem.

The JNS maps the justice journeys taken by people and their satisfaction with the process and the resolution if it is achieved. HiiL's approach is to acknowledge all possible justice journeys, formal or informal, to properly understand what people do when faced with legal problems.

After mapping the justice journey, the JNS survey measures how people evaluate the resolution process and the possible outcomes they receive. We measure their perceptions of three dimensions of their justice journey: the process, the outcomes, and the costs involved. Questions about these dimensions are categorised and displayed in ten easy-to-understand indicators, as per the table below.

Respondents are asked to rank their satisfaction with the above ten indicators of the cost and quality of access to justice on a scale of 1 to 5 – with 1 being very dissatisfied, and 5 being very satisfied.

COSTS OF JUSTICE	
Money spent on the process	Monetary costs for legal fees, travel, advisors
Time spent on the process	Time spent searching for information, evidence, attending hearings, travel, and other logistical expenses
Stress and negative emotions	Stress and negative emotions attributed to the process of resolution

QUALITY OF PROCEDURE	
Voice and neutrality	Process control, decision control, neutrality, consistent application of rules
Respect	Respect, politeness, proper communication
Procedural clarity	Timely and accurate explanation of procedures and rights

QUALITY OF OUTCOME	
Fair distribution	Distribution is fair according to needs, equity and equality criteria
Damage restoration	Fair compensation for monetary loss, emotional harm and damage to relationships

Measuring the role of justice in the cycle of displacement

This study's special interest is determining the relationship between access to justice and displacement. A person can be displaced because of a serious legal problem that has not been resolved, and the only way to "solve the matter" is by fleeing. Once displaced, people encounter new legal problems, which are added to the ones they already had, and face more challenges to access justice. The lack of access to justice and displacement enter into a cyclical relationship.

With this in mind, we included a series of new questions in the JNS survey that delve into the relationship between legal problems, displacement, and perceptions of justice.

The questions are:

Is your legal problem related to your displacement?

What problems do you believe people in your community face and that would be cause for moving?

What authorities can deal with this type of problem [problems that cause displacement]?

Would you move if that would guarantee better access to justice?

To complement these questions and dig deeper into the cycle of displacement, a qualitative guide was prepared and applied to 59 people summoned by UNHCR's Honduras offices[24]. The respondents gave their informed consent to be interviewed and were given a small transportation reimbursement to reach the interview site. All responses are anonymous, and only extracts are used in this report.

The qualitative guide goes beyond legal problems and justice journeys. It contains four main sections:

1. Life circumstances: provides a small characterisation of the respondent and the context in which he or she lives.

2. Displacement circumstances: determines if the person is an IDP and what led to their displacement. If the person is not displaced, we inquire if they are considering moving and why.

3. Experiences with legal problems: people could report legal problems in the interviews. If they did, we explored if the problem was associated with the displacement of people and how the respondents felt during their justice journeys to solve the problem.

4. Perceptions of justice: explores the importance people assign to justice in their daily lives and the ways they believe it can be improved.

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24 The participants of the qualitative phase were different from participants of the quantitative phase.

A word of caution about data

Every data collection effort, no matter how rigorous, has limitations and possible errors.

A small number of the findings are based on the answers of a small sample, particularly when we approach the end of the justice journeys or focus on a specific problem type with low report rates. To better understand the ways in which people deal with specific problem types or engage with certain justice providers, bigger and/ or different samples are needed; for example, a survey focused solely on IDPs or on victims of organised crime violence[25].

Additionally, people tend not to report certain problem types. For example, domestic violence incidents are often considered sensitive topics, reducing the rate at which they are reported.

Other examples include problems that are not seen as legal problems even when they are (like neighbour disputes), or problems that can be seen as "victim-less", like corruption.

For the present study, enumerators reported fear and intimidation ever-present during fieldwork. This leads us to believe that there is an important underreporting of legal problems in Honduras. The mixed methods approach allowed us to obtain more transparent answers on delicate topics by building proper rapport and a trust environment during interviews.

With these limitations in mind and in a constant effort to maintain the quality and integrity of the data and the findings, we only report findings that are significant at a p-level <0.05, when tabulating differences[26]. Regarding

the qualitative data, we recognise that, although they are of great use to provide contextual insights, the interviews conducted are not representative of any and have no extrapolation value.

Finally, our results mainly reflect the tendencies of the surveyed areas, and cannot be extrapolated to the whole country. When we use the term "Hondurans" to refer to the surveyed population, we do so to focus on the people and their problems, and to maintain the simplicity of the report, in terms of writing and readability.

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25 This JNS focused on different populations (IDPs, people at risk of being displaced and non-IDPs) to be able to compare the experiences of each population. In the Introduction chapter we delve deeper into it.

26 This means that we report differences between populations for which we can say with 95% confidence that they reflect reality and do not respond to random relationships.

How to read the sample used in graphs

We interviewed **2010** people in Honduras

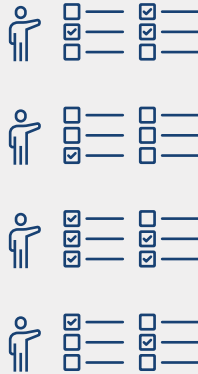First, we asked them whether they experienced legal problems in the past four years

**621** people reported they had justice problems

**1389** people stated they do not have justice problems

These 621 people reported **868** legal problems (multiple problems per person possible)

Every person with legal problems must select their most serious problem. That amounts to **621** most serious legal problems (single choice question from the list of legal problems they experienced)
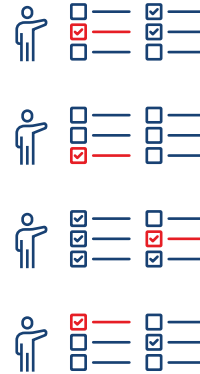
329 out of 621 persons with legal problems took one or more actions (multiple selection allowed)
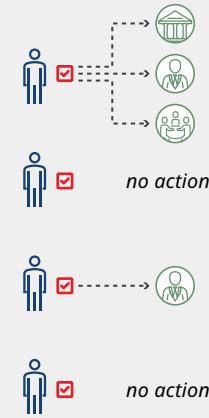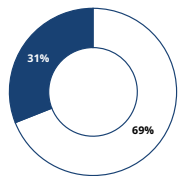
no action

no action

Every action taken can (potentially) provide multiple ways to help (if any- We call it *"interventions"*)

Advice
Decision

no intervention

Mediation

Advice
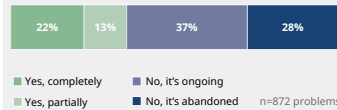Representation

Examples of graphs in the report

SAMPLE SIZE
2010
people

LEGAL PROBLEMS PREVALENCE

31%

69%

☐ No legal problems reported
■ One or more legal problems reported

n=2010

RESOLUTION STATUS OF ALL PROBLEMS

22%	13%	37%	28%

■ Yes, completely   ■ No, it's ongoing
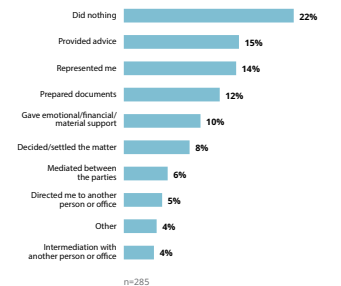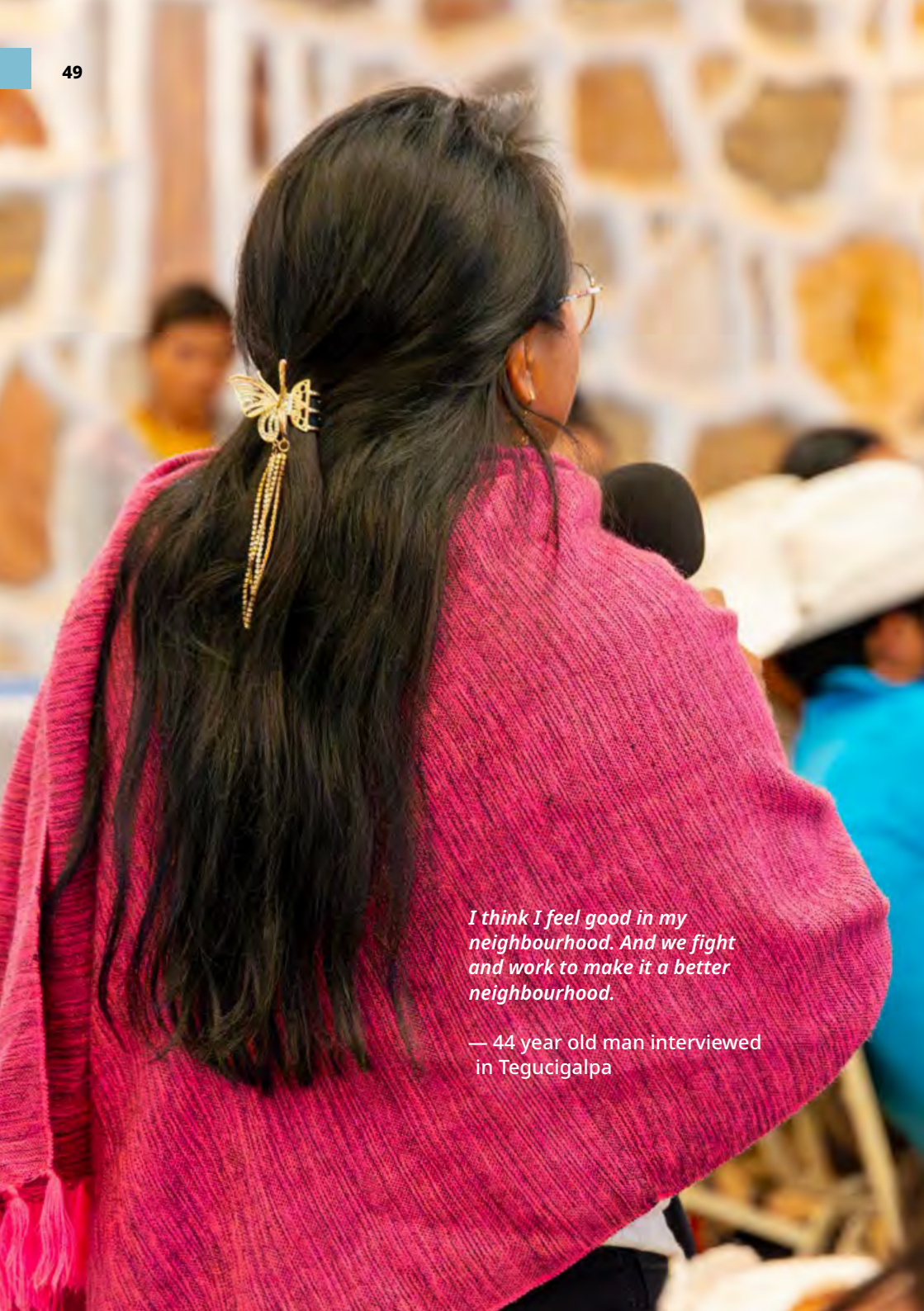■ Yes, partially   ■ No, it's abandoned   n=872 problems

From this moment on, all graphs concern only the most serious legal problems selected by each person (1 person = 1 problem)

MOST COMMON ACTIONS

Talking directly with the other party	61%
Police	18%
Local public authority	8%
Family members	7%
Private lawyers	7%
Formal courts	5%
Other	5%
Neighbour	3%
Community leader	2%
National public authority	2%
Public Ministry	2%
Public defender	2%
Friend	2%

n=310
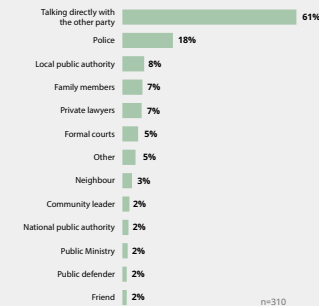
INTERVENTIONS BY SOURCES OF HELP

Did nothing	22%
Provided advice	15%
Represented me	14%
Prepared documents	12%
Gave emotional/financial/ material support	10%
Decided/settled the matter	8%
Mediated between the parties	6%
Directed me to another person or office	5%
Other	4%
Intermediation with another person or office	4%

n=285

I think I feel good in my neighbourhood. And we fight and work to make it a better neighbourhood.

— 44 year old man interviewed
 in Tegucigalpa

3

Sample and Implementation

Characteristics of the sample

2010

The number of Hondurans surveyed who spoke with us about their own and their community's legal problems

59

People who participated in in-depth interviews on forced displacement in the same surveyed municipalities

Source: Author's own elaboration with geospatial data captured in 1,968 of the 2,010 surveys conducted by the Le Vote Honduras team.
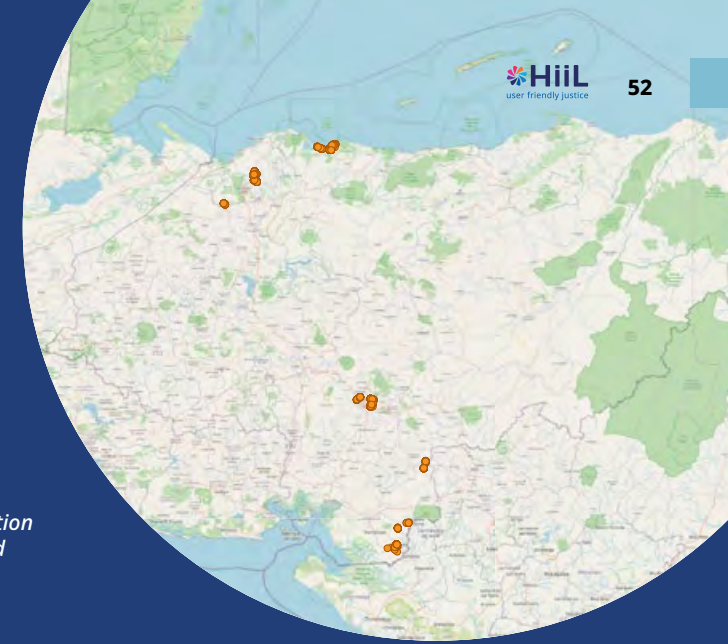
Sampling procedure

Quantitative survey

Cluster sampling was carried out, and all the households within the cluster were interviewed. Only one survey per household was conducted. Inside the dwelling, a demographic quota sampling (by gender) was used[27].

Municipality and sample size

Distrito Central	583
El Triunfo	202
Concepción de María	100
Duyure	100
Tela	407
San Pedro Sula	104
Choloma	514
TOTAL	2,010

Map: Surveyed Departments

Qualitative interviews

The target was the adult population (18 years and older) who had experienced forced displacement in the surveyed departments. All interviewees were summoned by UNHCR local operation offices in the communities.

Department and sample size

Francisco Morazan	23
Choluteca	11
Cortés	25
TOTAL	59

27 Enumerators chose who the respondent inside the house would be seeking to maintain the national gender distribution.

The sample reflects the national population of Honduras in key parameters, such as gender and age distribution, as reported by Honduras' National Institute of Statistics (INE)[28].
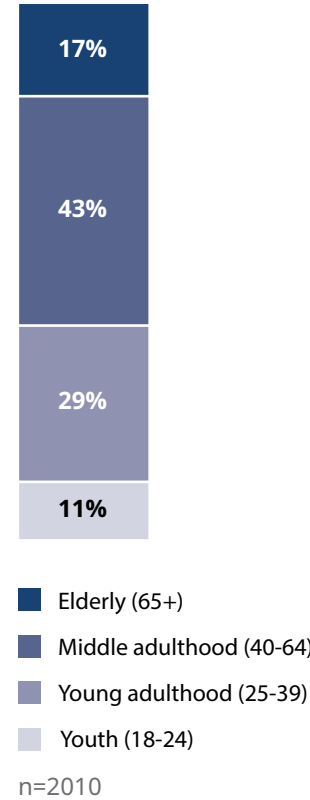
The sample is evenly distributed between men and women.
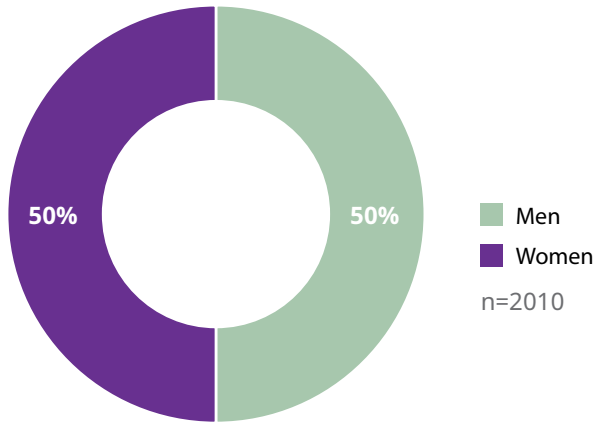
Looking at the distribution of age groups, almost half of the sample (43%) is between the ages of 40 and 64. 29% of respondents are between the ages of 25 and 39, while 17% are older than 65 years of age. The age group less represented in the sample are the youth, with 11%.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

| 17% |
| 43% |
| 29% |
| 11% |

■ Elderly (65+)

■ Middle adulthood (40-64)

■ Young adulthood (25-39)

□ Youth (18-24)

n=2010

46 years

– The average age of the sample

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

50%   50%

■ Men
■ Women

n=2010

The majority of the sample has achieved up to basic education, including 22% who have achieved up to incomplete primary education. The analysis is conducted using a three-level recodification of the actual answers.

Subjective income, or the idea that people can place themselves on a continuum based on their perceived ability to afford a basket of basic goods or more, shows a distribution of more than two-thirds of the sample stating they can cover basic needs and a third that cannot.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

13%

65%

22%

■ Higher education
(complete or incomplete)

■ Basic education
(complete or incomplete)

■ Incomplete primary
or lower

n=2010

SUBJETIVE INCOME

32%

68%

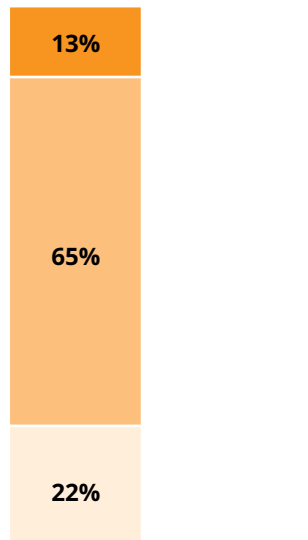□ Can not cover basic needs

■ Can cover basic needs

n=2010

IDP identification strategy

The methodology chapter explains in detail the theoretical and practical aspects of the identification of IDPs in this study.

The following graphs show the results of the battery of questions used to identify IDPs in the context of territories with a high incidence of violence and insecurity in Honduras, as they appeared in the questionnaire. The purpose of this battery was to have an indirect strategy to identify IDPs, starting from seemingly innocuous

questions and having a key question inserted in the middle of the battery.

The first question inquired whether the respondent was living in their community of origin.. The answers produced a ⅓ - ⅔ split in the sample, with two out of three people stating that they were living in their place of origin. We cannot assume that the third who stated they were living in a different community was displaced, as this question did not request any additional information from the respondent.
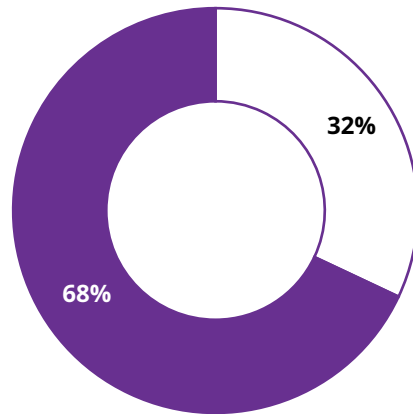
IS THIS COMMUNITY YOUR PLACE OF ORIGIN?

35%

65%

■ Yes

□ No

n=2010

Second, every person in the sample was asked when they had last changed their place of residence as a way to gauge mobility. The research team hypothesised that people who have lived for a short period of time in their current location may be IDPs, particularly if combined with those not living in their place of origin.

This question, however, did not provide us with identification output, as nine out of 10 people stated that they had been living in their current location for more than three years. It does suggest, though, that people in the sample have settled down in their place of residence for a considerable period of time and, therefore, are less mobile than expected.
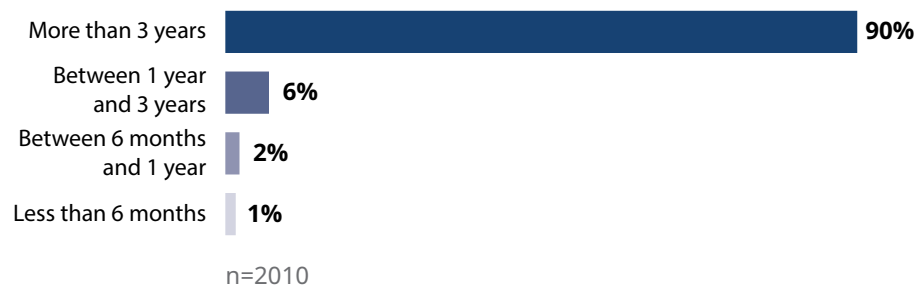
The third question was the most important one for analytical purposes. We included a qualifier in the question: "Have you ever left your place of residence in an unplanned way?" This restrictive interpretation of the act of moving from one place to another, as opposed to a careful, planned movement, hints at a possible situation of forced displacement.

8% of the sample replied positively to the question and they became the sub-sample of IDPs in the study. The remaining 92% of the sample became the non-IDP subsample.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN YOUR CURRENT RESIDENCE?

More than 3 years	90%
Between 1 year and 3 years	6%
Between 6 months and 1 year	2%
Less than 6 months	1%

n=2010

DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

8%

92%

■ IDPs
□ Non IDPs

n=2010
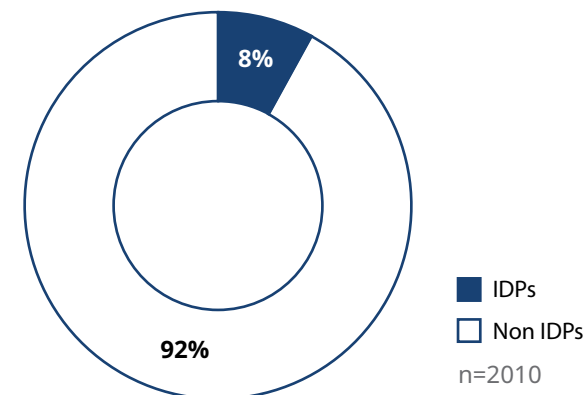
In the following table we can see the IDP population by the territories included in this study. Taking into account that the sample is selected from neighbourhoods affected by violence, these percentages should not be interpreted as representative of the entire department.

Department	Studied areas (Neighbourhoods)	IDPs

Cortés	Choloma
	    Residencial Lomas de Cascadas
	    Colonia INFOP
	    Barrio El Chaparro
	    Barrio ADHE
	    Colonia La Granja 1 y 2
	    Residencial San Carlos
	    Colonia La Victoria
	San Pedro Sula
	    Cofradía
		9%

Atlántida	Tela
	    Tornabé
	    San Juan
	    La Ensenada
	    Triunfo
		9%

Francisco Morazán	Tegucigalpa
	    San Miguel
	    Nueva Capital
	    Rosalinda
	    Los Pinos
	    La Era
	    La Izaguirre
	    Villanueva
	    Nueva Suyapa
		7%

Choluteca	El Triunfo
	    Macila
	Duyure
	    Liraqui
	Concepción de María
	    Guaruma
		6%

DISPLACEMENT STATUS AND TIME IN THE CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE
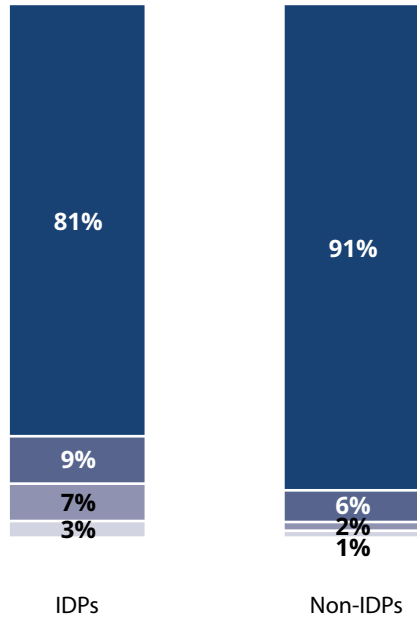
- ■ More than 3 years
- ■ Between 1 year and 3 years
- ■ Between 6 months and 1 year
- ■ Less than 6 months

n=2009

By cross-referencing the questions about the last change of residence and moving in an unplanned way, we found that those identified as IDPs are more mobile than those who have not been displaced. Nearly 20% of IDPs have lived in their current residence for less than three years, compared to 9% of non-IDPs. The fact that 81% of IDPs report having lived in their current residence for more than three years does not contradict their displacement status, as we did not include a time frame for the question about an unplanned change of residence. That is, a person may have been displaced more than three years ago and have been living in the same place since then.

For those who became part of the non-IDP subsample, the research team included another substantive question. Even if they had not been displaced, the goal was to learn about their future intentions in regard to mobility. Would they want to stay where they live? Would they intend to move internally within Honduras? Or perhaps move abroad? Something else? All this in a one-year time frame.

Three out of four non-IDPs stated they would want to keep living where they were. The 25% remainder was distributed mostly between those who wanted to move abroad (13%) and

those who wanted to move somewhere else in Honduras (5%). The research team, therefore, made the analytical decision to combine the information from this and the previous question to make a classification of subsamples based on actual (assumed) and prospective displacement, which are the following:

- IDPs
- Non-IDPs
- The population at risk of displacement (either internal or external)
- Other/No answer

Participants in the justice data workshop discussed and endorsed the categories above and suggested

that the Other/No Answer category, while residual, may be explained by people who are torn between wanting to stay and hoping to leave. These are people who may be under pressure and unable to make up their minds. Leaving means leaving behind family and their social network, but leaving may also mean safety and security. Another possible explanation for those who respond "Other" or decide not to respond is that they do not trust the enumerator enough to tell them about their future plans, which might include irregular migration.

WHAT ARE YOUR INMEDIATE FUTURE PLANS (1 YEAR FROM NOW)?
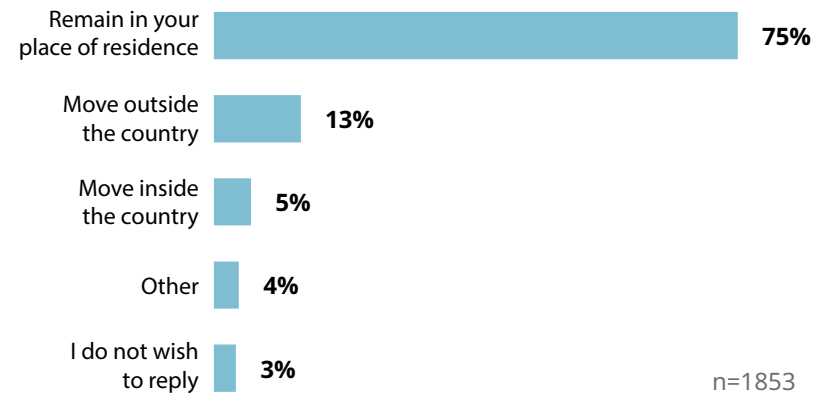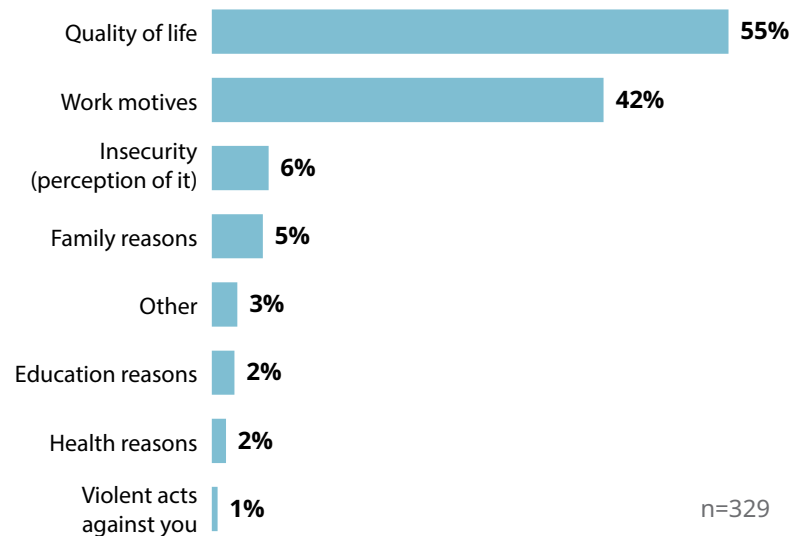

n=1853

We asked the people who expressed their desire to leave about their reasons. In a multiple choice question, the majority of them expressed they wanted to seek a better quality of life and work motives. Insecurity appears later in the list, with about 6% of the people. The limits of survey data imply that it is not possible to infer whether quality of life or work motives are or are not related to forced displacement, but qualitative interviews provide a glimpse of what people consider in these situations.

REASONS FOR WANTING TO MOVE
Only answers with more than 1%

Quality of life	55%
Work motives	42%
Insecurity (perception of it)	6%
Family reasons	5%
Other	3%
Education reasons	2%
Health reasons	2%
Violent acts against you	1%

n=329

A middle-aged woman from Tegucigalpa was considering leaving her home due to the violence in her neighbourhood, but when she explained her reasons, she alluded to the well-being and not directly to a threat or crime, she said: "we have to find a way to get out of here for everyone's well-being. Because it's distressing". Similarly, a middle-aged man in Cortés abandoned his home because he couldn't afford keeping his business open due to the extortions from criminals, but he saw his situation as a matter of subsistence and economy and not of violence; he explained: "I didn't receive [threats] because I only got the note. So before that happened to me, I better left. If I kept staying, I would have had to pay everything they asked me for".

Better quality of life may hint at a safer life or better access to material goods. Work motives may relate to being able to be a small entrepreneur who is free to have their kiosk without fearing extortion or having access to better salaries. From the qualitative interviews, we can also say that work motives can simply mean being able to find a job, because it seems to be hard for a lot of Hondurans right now. In that vein, it is not unusual for people (specially the youth) who live in neighbourhoods controlled by criminal groups to be discriminated against when trying to find a job: employers disqualify them under the supposition that they are part of a gang[29]. There's also the problem of lack of proper public transport, which affects people's ability to find a job or go to their job. Both issues have to do with quality of life, but stem from gang and other criminal groups violence.

This points towards a normalisation of violence: crime, gang activities and violent acts are all seen as part of daily life. Improving life conditions in Honduras implies being able to leave violence behind, to live peacefully. A middle-aged woman in Tegucigalpa who isn't displaced stated: "It's right for me to change homes; I do it because I feel panicked, I can't even sleep at night".

29 Kids in Need of Defense (2019). Everyday Life is Fear: Violence Against Children and Youth in Honduras. Available at https://supportkind.org/resources/everyday-life-is-fear/

Remember that justice in a place, if it is 100% done, one will live peacefully, right? Because I think that justice is the one that really protects the citizens. So then, if there is justice, one feels protected. But if there is no participation of justice, where do we go?

— 36 year old woman
 interviewed in Tegucigalpa

4

Justice Gap

At least one in three Hondurans faced legal problems in the past four years

A justice journey starts when a situation or dispute has a tangible effect on people's lives.

The justice gap is the difference between the legal problems resolved in a timely and fair manner, and the problems that remain unsolved, are abandoned, or are considered unfairly resolved.

Every person in the sample could examine a list of 99 specific legal problems grouped into 14 overarching categories[30]. People could select up to 10 specific legal problems. If a person experienced at least one legal problem, then they are considered within the legal problems prevalence number.

In this chapter, we analyse the Hondurans who experience legal problems, the types of problems they face and, for each specific problem

they shared with us, its overall seriousness, its resolution status, the fairness of the resolution (in case it had been solved already) and whether the outcome has been implemented if an outcome was obtained.

Additionally, people identified as displaced were asked whether their problems were related to their displacement.

We invite you to follow the start of thousands of justice journeys and explore what the justice gap in Honduras looks like.

LEGAL PROBLEMS PREVALENCE

31%

69%

☐ No legal problems reported

■ One or more legal problems reported

n=2010

The youth (37%) and young adults (35%) in Honduras have a higher problem prevalence than the older age cohorts. The Elderly are the ones who report problems the least, with a prevalence of 20%.

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30 Please see Annex 1 for the full list of legal problems and categories.

There are subtle differences between departments, with Cortés having the lowest reported prevalence (one in four people interviewed). Francisco Morazan, Tegucigalpa's department, shows the highest overall prevalence, with around 10 percentage points more than Cortés.

PROBLEM PREVALENCE BY DEPARTAMENT

64%	67%	70%	74%
36%	33%	30%	26%
Francisco Morazán	Atlántida	Choluteca	Cortés
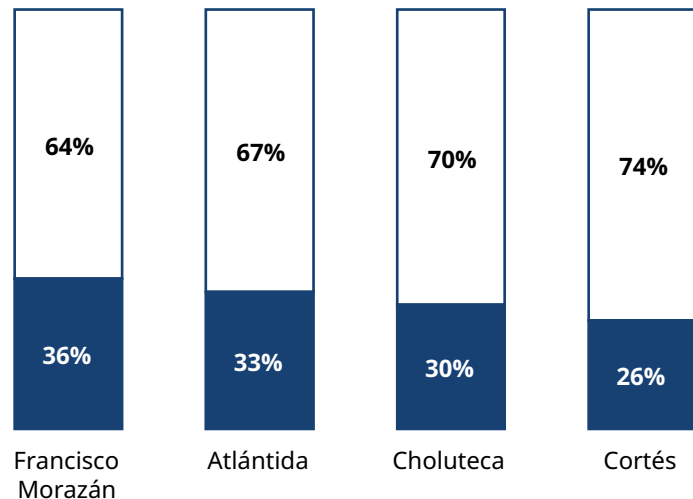
☐ No legal problems

■ One or more legal problems

n=2010

We suspect some people did not disclose their problems. Field reports from the survey data collection suggest that people asked the interviewer to lower their voice, using non-verbal communication, signalling the presence of gang members or snitches (personas "bandera") in the proximity[31]. Furthermore, some of the survey participants stated that they did have problems, but due to security reasons, they didn't want to talk about them in detail. Some interviewees also highlighted this lack of trust and suspicion in daily life.

❞ *There's no trust because you talk to people and you don't know who you're talking to, or what they're involved in* (60 year old woman from Tegucigalpa).

❞ *I was always scared to report [to the police] what I was going through, because it was a risk for my children, as well, because if I was going to report them, it wouldn't do me any good* (35 year old woman from Cortés).

Participants in the data workshop suggested that fear and intimidation are part of Hondurans' daily lives, particularly in the most violence-ridden areas, such as the ones where the survey was carried out. They say that there is a significant level of fear regarding neighbours, especially when there is suspicion or knowledge that the neighbour might be involved in criminal activities. This fear contributes to a lack of reporting and an unwillingness to engage in conflict resolution.

31 This term refers to a type of people who, voluntarily or forcibly, perform an informational and surveillance function for criminal groups.

The Cortés Paradox

The Cortés department is home to the highest percentage of IDPs in the sample. Interviews in this department were conducted in Choloma and San Pedro Sula, cities that, as much of the Honduran territory, have suffered from violence, organised crime and insecurity.

Even though IDPs in the sample report problems more often than any other subgroup, Cortés shows the lowest prevalence among departments. This suggests that fear and distrust are elevated in the area. According to the field team report, in Choloma, those surveyed seemed more reluctant to answer the questions. Some said that if they spoke, they would be killed. In recent years, the municipality of Choloma has been considered one of the most dangerous in Honduras.

Displacement is the continuation of injustice

The prevalence rate of legal problems approaches 50% for populations who have experienced displacement or are considering changing their place of residence.

This suggests that displacement and legal needs are inherently related.

PROBLEM PREVALENCE BY IDP OR AT RISK STATUS

59%	54%	48%
41%	46%	52%
Move inside the country	Move abroad	IDPs

☐ No legal problems

■ One or more legal problems

n=488

Participants in the data workshop discussed the relation between injustice and displacement. In their experience, from a territorial perspective, if there is no access to justice, there will be displacement. If there is no access to land (in the sense of housing or land protection) or water, there will be displacement. The condition of displacement itself is a "protective measure" that people use, but it is the continuation of an injustice. That injustice is sometimes caused by not having access to education, health and other services and rights, and sometimes it is due to violence, motivated by the violent expression of injustice: when an agent forces people off their home.

Crimes, neighbour–related and employment problems are the most common legal problems in Honduras

One in five Hondurans with legal problems experienced at least one crime in the past four years, followed by neighbour-related problems. The fact that these two categories top up the distribution of legal problems was validated by the participants in the data workshop.

Honduras has suffered from intense gang-related criminal activity. In regards to neighbour-related problems, the experts that participated in the triangulation said that these problems may be related to living together or to criminal activities in the neighbourhood. Honduras' social fabric is fragile.

Given that 90% of people have lived in their current homes for more than three years, it is likely that the most common problems aren't occasional or context-dependent, that is, they don't respond to a concrete situation but to long-established dynamics. People aren't finding crime or neighbour problems because they have arrived in

1.4
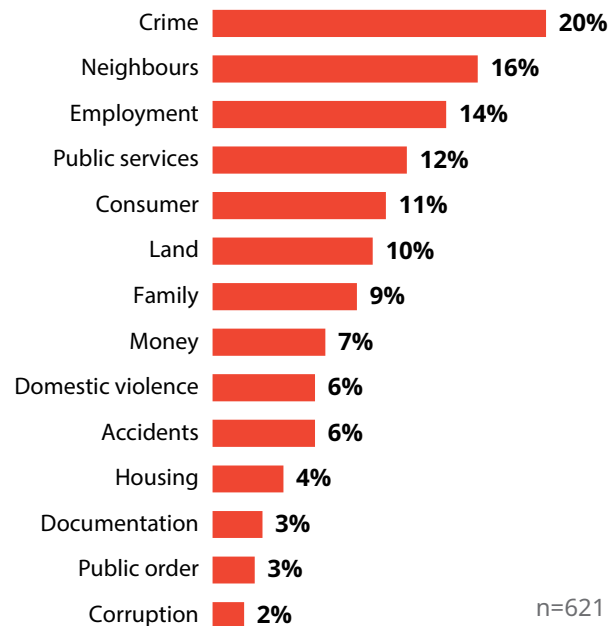– The average number of legal problems per person

unfamiliar communities in which they don't know how to act. On the contrary, these types of problems are common in all communities and affect everyone.

While the JNS methodology is not intended to measure the level of corruption in a country, participants in the data workshop discussed the location of corruption at the bottom of the distribution: "People do not feel the problem of corruption directly, but it is

the consequences of corruption that create problems. They cannot turn to the authorities because of corruption. It is not that there is no corruption, but it's not what people experience firsthand". This suggests that people do not see corruption as a dispute, but that it has been normalised to a certain extent, and has created other problems in turn.

MOST COMMON LEGAL PROBLEMS' CATEGORIES

Category	Value
Crime	20%
Neighbours	16%
Employment	14%
Public services	12%
Consumer	11%
Land	10%
Family	9%
Money	7%
Domestic violence	6%
Accidents	6%
Housing	4%
Documentation	3%
Public order	3%
Corruption	2%

n=621

Domestic violence, family and money–related problems are the distinctive problem categories of people who haveexperienced displacement

We didn't find significant differences in the type of problems reported among demographic variables such as gender or age. Future justice needs studies may capture these differences. However, we did find significant differences related to the displacement condition.

While the top of the distribution of categories is the same for IDPs and non-IDPs, the former have experienced three times more domestic violence, and twice more money-related

problems[32]. We emphasise again that problems such as those associated with domestic violence are often underreported and their rate of occurrence is likely to be even higher.

The distribution of specific problems by displacement status relies on a very small number of observations per each problem. Therefore, we refrain from making conclusions. However, we can show the most common specific problems per category.

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32 Money problems are not directly associated with poverty or unsatisfied needs, but with situations such as debts with illegal moneylenders, disputes over insurance claims, fraud or scams, among others. For more information, see Annex 1 at the end of the report with the list of legal problems.

The most common specific problem relates to access to public services (healthcare)

MOST COMMON LEGAL PROBLEMS BY IDP IDENTIFICATION

Crime — IDPs **22%**, Non-IDPs **20%**
Neighbours — IDPs **19%**, Non-IDPs **16%**
Employment — IDPs **16%**, Non-IDPs **14%**
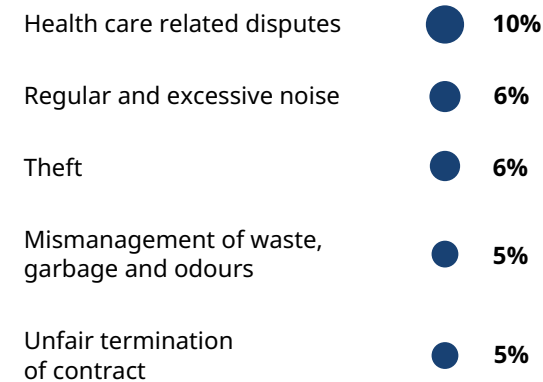Domestic violence — IDPs **15%**, Non-IDPs **5%**
Family — IDPs **14%**, Non-IDPs **8%**
Money — IDPs **12%**, Non-IDPs **6%**
Land — IDPs **9%**, Non-IDPs **10%**
Housing — IDPs **6%**, Non-IDPs **4%**
Consumer — IDPs **5%**, Non-IDPs **11%**
Public services — IDPs **4%**, Non-IDPs **13%**
Accidents — IDPs **2%**, Non-IDPs **7%**
Corruption — IDPs **2%**, Non-IDPs **2%**
Documentation — IDPs **1%**, Non-IDPs **3%**
Public order — IDPs **1%**, Non-IDPs **3%**
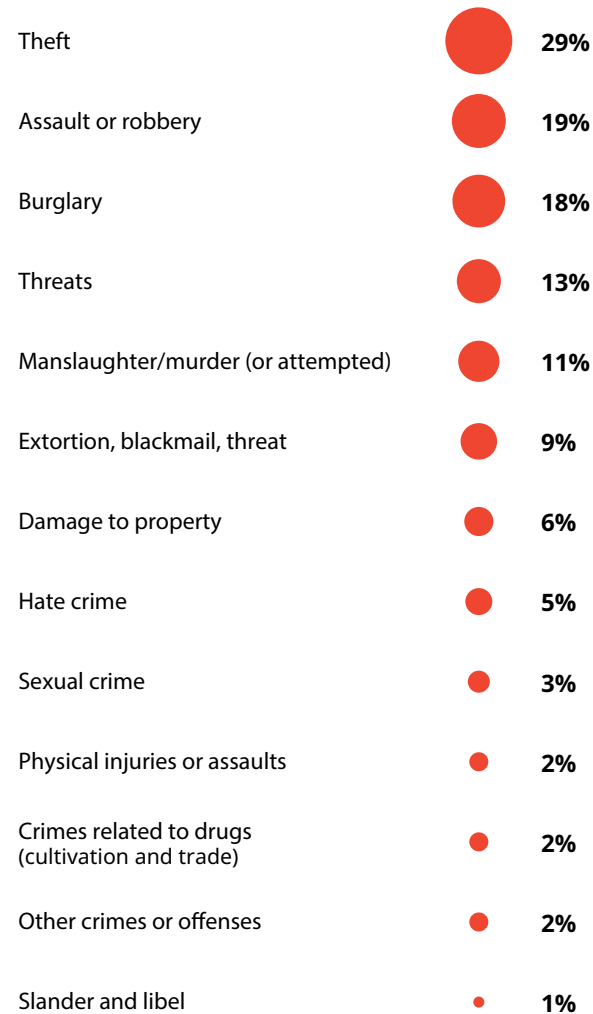
■ IDPs
□ Non-IDPs

n=621

This is explained by the fact that non-displaced Hondurans report very often legal problems around public services. Other problems relate to neighbours, crimes and employment.

It may be surprising that only one crime appears among the top five problem categories, but zooming in on the categories shows that specific legal problems around crime are very dispersed, meaning many different types of crimes occur, instead of one or two concentrating the distribution, as in other categories.
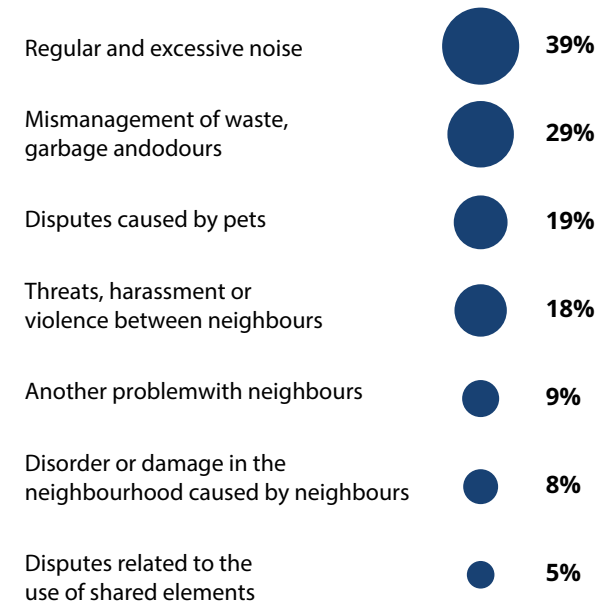
TOP 5 SPECIFIC LEGAL PROBLEMS

Health care related disputes   **10%**

Regular and excessive noise   **6%**

Theft   **6%**

Mismanagement of waste, garbage and odours   **5%**

Unfair termination of contract   **5%**

LEGAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO CRIME

Theft	29%
Assault or robbery	19%
Burglary	18%
Threats	13%
Manslaughter/murder (or attempted)	11%
Extortion, blackmail, threat	9%
Damage to property	6%
Hate crime	5%
Sexual crime	3%
Physical injuries or assaults	2%
Crimes related to drugs (cultivation and trade)	2%
Other crimes or offenses	2%
Slander and libel	1%

n=127

About one in three people who experienced crimes reported theft (with no violence). The top three specific crimes are associated with some form of property theft. The most serious crimes, like threats, (attempted) murder and extortion appear in a second level.

LEGAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO NEIGHBOURS

Regular and excessive noise	39%
Mismanagement of waste, garbage andodours	29%
Disputes caused by pets	19%
Threats, harassment or violence between neighbours	18%
Another problemwith neighbours	9%
Disorder or damage in the neighbourhood caused by neighbours	8%
Disputes related to the use of shared elements	5%

n=101

# When Hondurans report legal problems, these problems are severe

From this subsection onwards we change the unit of analysis from people to problems as we move towards the chapter's main idea: the evaluation of the justice gap in Honduras[33].

We captured almost 900 specific legal problems Hondurans have experienced in the past four years. For each problem experienced, we asked a battery of questions that allowed us to quantify the size of the justice gap.

Almost half of the legal problems experienced by Hondurans in the surveyed areas have a severity score of 10 out of 10, making it the modal value by a considerable distance[34].

PROBLEM SEVERITY

n=872 problems
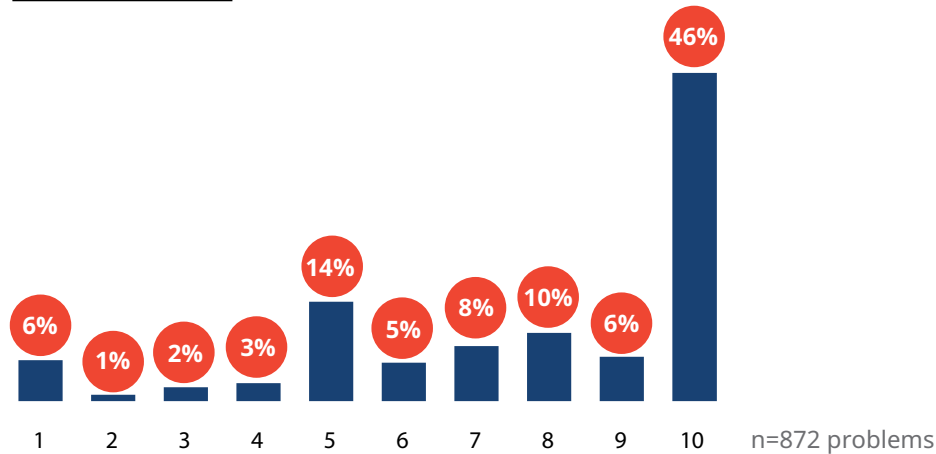
33 For an explanation on how to read the data, go to page 47.
34 The value that is repeated the most in the observations.

One-third of the problems reported by IDPs are related to their displacement

This means that two out of three problems of IDPs seem to be related then to the daily occurrences in Honduras that don't result in displacement. IDPs experience more problems, but not all of their problems are related to their displacement status. These problems, therefore, are not circumstantial but structural.

IS THE PROBLEM RELATED TO YOUR DISPLACEMENT?
Answers solely from IDPs
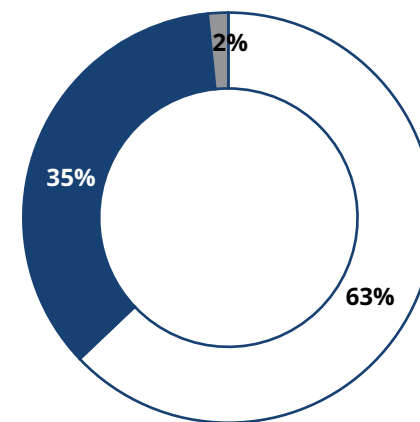
No   Yes   No answer   n=124 problems

The justice gap in Honduras is wide

Very few problems have been resolved in the past four years. The most common resolution status is that the problem is ongoing, meaning that people are still waiting for a resolution at the time of the interview. More than a third of the problems (37%) are in this status category. More than a quarter of the problems are abandoned (28%), without any hope for resolution. About a third of the problems (35%) are considered resolved, completely or partially.

Out of the few resolved problems, many are resolved in a non-fair way

It is the non-displaced populations the ones who tend to have their problems ongoing, while IDPs have a slightly greater proportion of partially resolved problems. In Chapter 6, where we talk about dispute resolution, we go deeper into these differences between populations.
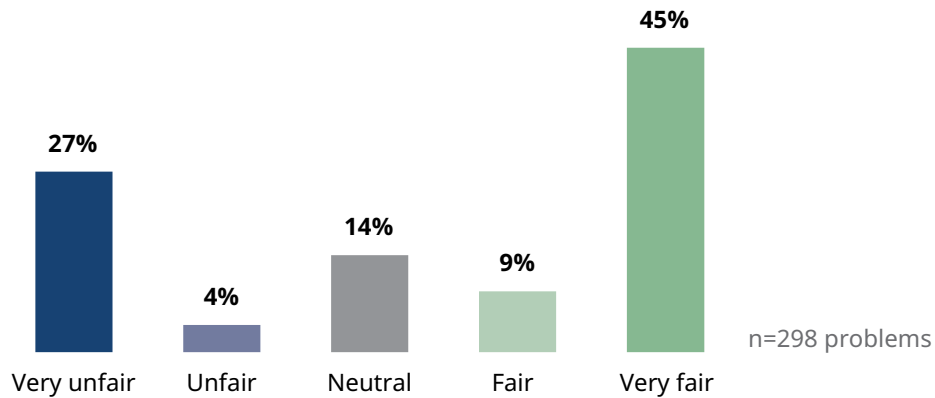
RESOLUTION STATUS OF PROBLEMS

22%	13%	37%	28%
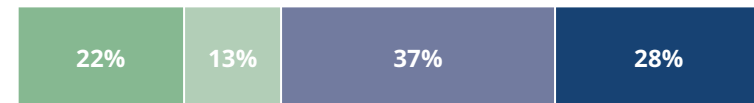
- Yes, completely
- Yes, partially
- No, it's ongoing
- No, it's abandoned   n=872 problems

FAIRNESS OF RESOLUTION

27% Very unfair
4% Unfair
14% Neutral
9% Fair
45% Very fair

n=298 problems

HAS THE SOLUTION BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

24%
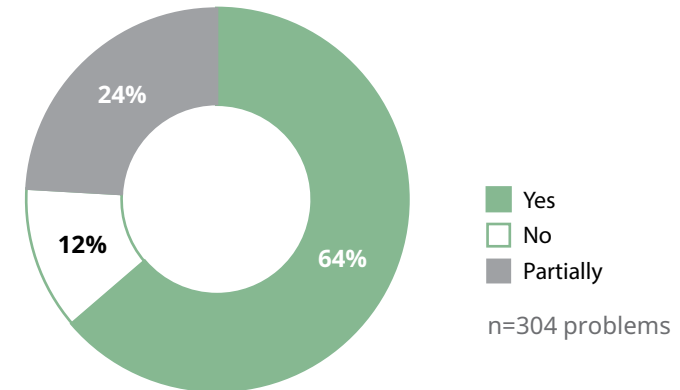12%
64%

Yes
No
Partially

n=304 problems

While 54% of the resolved problems are perceived as resolved in a fair or very fair way, the remaining 46% are not, showing that the justice gap is not only the unresolved problems but also the ones resolved in a less than fair way. In other words, more than a quarter of the resolved legal problems –which by themselves are not many– is considered to have a very unfair resolution (27%).

We also asked whether the solution had been implemented in practice. The results show that in only two-thirds of the problems the solution had been implemented.

Hondurans have a hard time resolving legal problems, which is a clear challenge and a present opportunity for the justice sector, both formal and informal.

It's just that moving was an option, yes. I decided to move, but it wasn't peaceful. It was a mix of everything. All I wanted was to get out. All I wanted was not to be there. I thought it would make me feel better. But now, I still feel that thing, the fear.

— 27 year old man
 interviewed in Cortés.

5

Impact

Legal problems affect Hondurans' income and mental health

This chapter shows how people's lives change when they face legal problems. We look at how these problems affect them and their well-being. From this point onwards, we focus on the most serious problem, which is selected by the respondents directly.
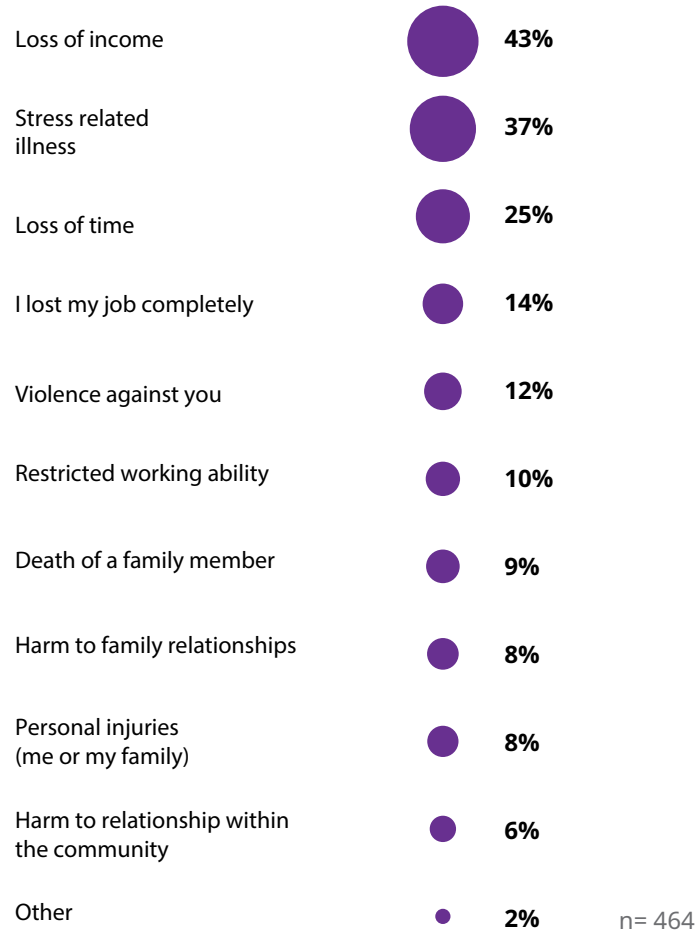
Three out of four people with problems reported at least one consequence due to their most serious legal problem. Out of them, the only demographic variable that has an influence is the urban/rural divide. Urban inhabitants, at almost 80%, are more likely to report consequences than rural residents (64%).

The distribution of consequences shows that among those who reported at least one consequence, the most common one is loss of income,

followed by stress-related illness at around the 40% mark. Participants in the data workshop recognized the ubiquity of mental health issues around legal needs: people in the communities tend to request mental health support.

Women (46%) experience substantially more often than men (29%) stress-related illness, while men report more often than women loss of income (50% v 35%).

CONSEQUENCES OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM

Loss of income	**43%**
Stress related illness	**37%**
Loss of time	**25%**
I lost my job completely	**14%**
Violence against you	**12%**
Restricted working ability	**10%**
Death of a family member	**9%**
Harm to family relationships	**8%**
Personal injuries (me or my family)	**8%**
Harm to relationship within the community	**6%**
Other	**2%** n= 464

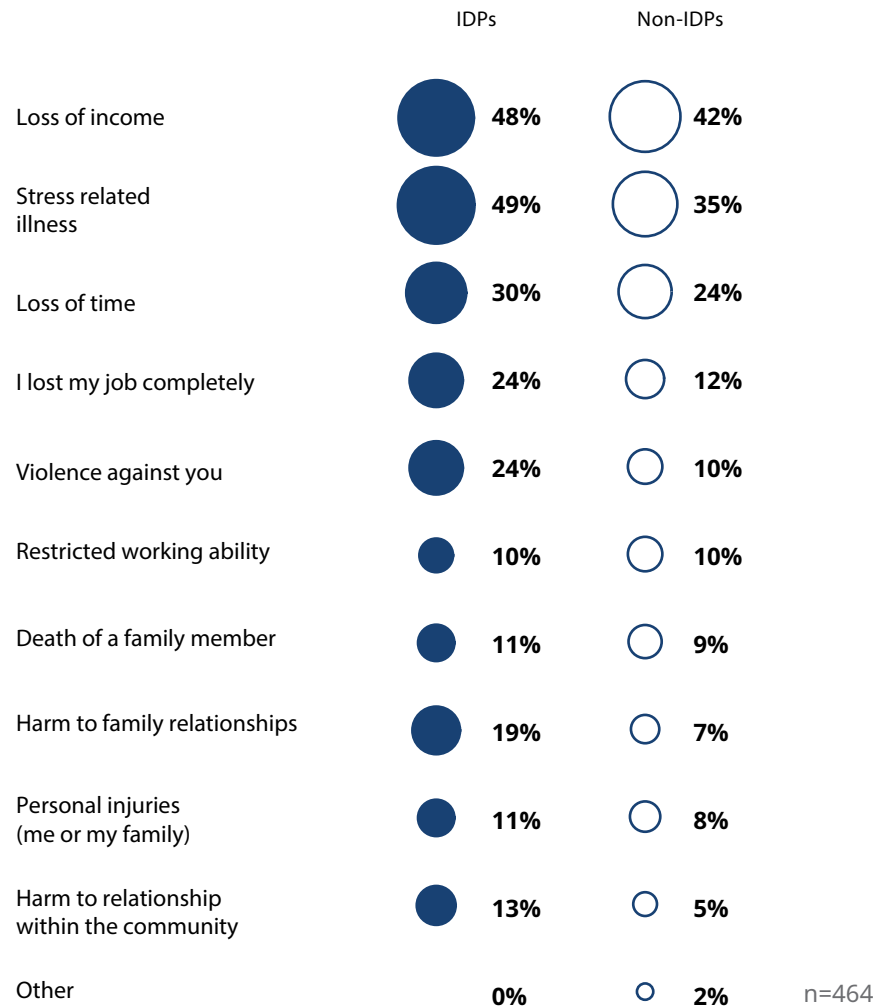# One in two IDPs who report consequences suffers from mental health issues

IDPs report more consequences than non-IDPs (with an average of 2.4 compared to 1.7 of the other groups). In general, they experience most of the consequences more often than what other groups do. Violence against them, harm to family relations and complete loss of their job appear systematically more often among the consequences reported by this group as well.

Death of a family member seems to be a disproportionately common consequence of legal problems in Honduras. Compared to Iraq, for instance, this consequence never appears in more than 5% of the cases, across all subsamples, while in Honduras it appears in 11% of the cases[35].

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35 You can consult the report of Justice Needs and Satisfaction of Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities in Iraq (2023), here: https://www.hiil.org/research/justice-needs-and-satisfaction-of-forcibly-displaced-persons-and-host-communities-in-iraq

CONSEQUENCES BY IDP STATUS

	IDPs	Non-IDPs
Loss of income	48%	42%
Stress related illness	49%	35%
Loss of time	30%	24%
I lost my job completely	24%	12%
Violence against you	24%	10%
Restricted working ability	10%	10%
Death of a family member	11%	9%
Harm to family relationships	19%	7%
Personal injuries (me or my family)	11%	8%
Harm to relationship within the community	13%	5%
Other	0%	2%

n=464

The interviews greatly support this as well. Violence towards respondents and harassment or death of family members were frequently expressed by interviewees as reasons for or consequences of displacement, as gangs retaliate against people related to or close to the IDPs.

99 *They [gang members] killed my 16 year old girl and the girl was walking on the street, sweeping, working for the town hall, and as they fight, as I said, among several of them, they came and grabbed the girl and they put her in a car and about 15 minutes later I went to find her in a bag in the street.*
(57 year old man from Tegucigalpa).

99 *Yes, they threatened us that if we didn't work for them [gang members], they would give us two hours to accept or kill us. They sent hitmen outside our house. They kicked us out of our house.*
(woman of Choluteca).

99 *So they [gang members] find ways to always be there, bothering you. Since I completely distanced myself from them, I left there, they started with my brother now. They would look for him at home, try to get him out of the house, and so on.*
(27 year old man from Cortés).

Legal problems affect family relationships, particularly among women

More than 50% of people with problems state that their most serious problem has a substantial effect on their financial well-being (values 4 and 5 on the scale). Impact on family relations is next, followed by impact on mental health, with more than 40% of the people stating a substantial impact.
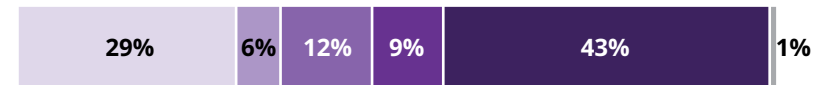
Legal problems in Honduras seem to affect less the work performance and physical health of the person experiencing the problem, in comparison to the other dimensions measured. The graphs below show the distribution of the perceived impact in five dimensions for the entire population of people with problems.

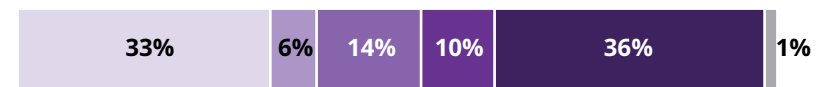Regarding demographic differences, we found that:

- Women, despite identifying loss of income less often than men as a consequence of their problem, said that the problem affected their financial well-being to a great extent more than men. Women also state the same in terms of impact on mental health.

- Similar to women, IDPs report a more severe impact on mental health and personal relationships than the non-displaced or at-risk people.
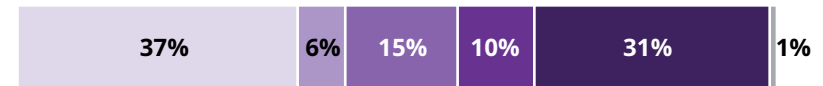
IMPACT IN...

...FINANCIAL WELLBEING

| 29% | 6% | 12% | 9% | 43% | 1% |

...PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

| 33% | 6% | 14% | 10% | 36% | 1% |

...MENTAL HEALTH

| 37% | 6% | 15% | 10% | 31% | 1% |

...PHYSICAL HEALTH

| 49% | 8% | 11% | 7% | 25% | 0% |

...WORK PERFORMANCE

| 51% | 6% | 12% | 7% | 24% | 0% |

- Very small extent/ not at all
- Small extent
- Moderate extent
- Large extent
- Very large extent/ fully
- Do not want to answer
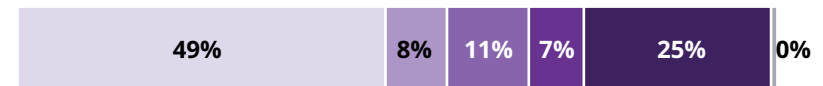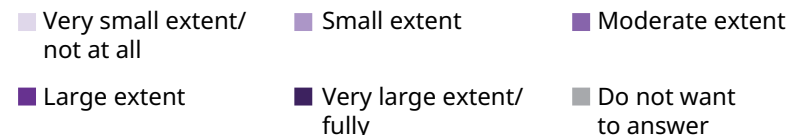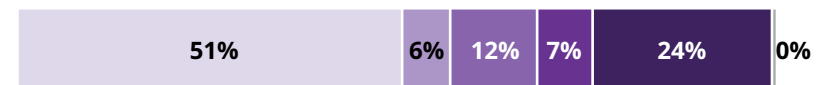
Vulnerable populations suffer more from legal problems

To simplify the story of the impact of legal problems on people's lives, we calculate a unified measure of the impact. This aggregated impact score considers the effect of the most serious problem on the five dimensions of well-being presented above[36]. The impact score is normalised, so it ranges from 0 (no impact on any dimension) to 1 (effects to a great extent on every dimension).

0.46

– Average impact score of legal problems in Honduras

In comparison, other countries and their subsamples in the HiiL-UNHCR partnership show the following average impact scores:

Iraq (2023)
- IDPs: 0.63
- Host community of IDPs: 0.57
- Refugees: 0.56
- Host community of refugees: 0.75

Ethiopia (2020)
- General population: 0.39
- Host community: 0.38
- Refugees: 0.41

Honduras has an impact score that is higher than Ethiopia's, but lower than Iraq's.

As hinted in the previous subsection above, the impact is not equally felt across groups in Honduras:

- **0.57** – Average impact score for people in Cortés.

- **0.53** – Average impact score for IDPs.

- **0.51** – Average impact score for people who cannot cover their basic needs.

- The average impact score increases with age: the youth has the least impact (**0.37**), they are followed by young adults (**0.43**), and middle adults (**0.51**) and the elderly (**0.5**) have the highest impacts.

- The average impact decreases as education increases (from **0.51** for people with less than primary education to **0.39** for people with high education).

- **0.5** – Average impact score for women.

Cortés, the department with the highest proportion of IDPs in the sample, but the lowest legal problems prevalence, has the highest average impact score across all subgroups. This suggests that there is a relevant portion of severe legal problems in the department, but people there do not feel free enough to disclose them, despite the best efforts of the research team. This is a situation in which the silence in the data says more than what it hides.

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36 Please refer to https://dashboard.hiil.org/justice-needs-and-satisfaction-survey-methodology/ for a more detailed explanation of how we measure the impact of legal problems.

Crime and employment problems also have a high impact

The graph below shows that legal problems, which are otherwise not that frequent – or at least not reported, substantially impact people's lives. The blue line shows the average impact score of the problem category, while the bar height shows how many observations there are per category in the pooled sample.

Domestic violence is the category with the highest average impact score, above 0.60, followed by two categories that are not usually reported: state services and corruption. Regarding the most common problem categories, crime and employment problems have impacts above 0.50, which indicates that they are not only frequent problems but also have a high impact on people. Neighbour problems, conversely, are quite frequent, but have the lowest aggregated impact among all categories, being around 0.30.

## A note on neighbour-related problems and their impact

Participants in the data workshop suggested that the ubiquity of neighbour-related problems was something they experienced daily. They agreed with the notion that these problems are the ones that escalate into violent acts, partly because the neighbours may also be part of criminal groups.

Therefore, while currently of low impact, neighbour-related problems can become the murder that appears in the news. Participants said that neighbour problems are difficult because of the uncertainty around them: "When the police attempt to capture a high-profile criminal, they go with their guns.

However, were the police to engage in a neighbour conflict, they're more at ease, they do not engage with their guns, but there might be a hidden danger that is not easily perceived".

AVERAGE IMPACT BY PROBLEM CATEGORY

n=621

6

Dispute Resolution
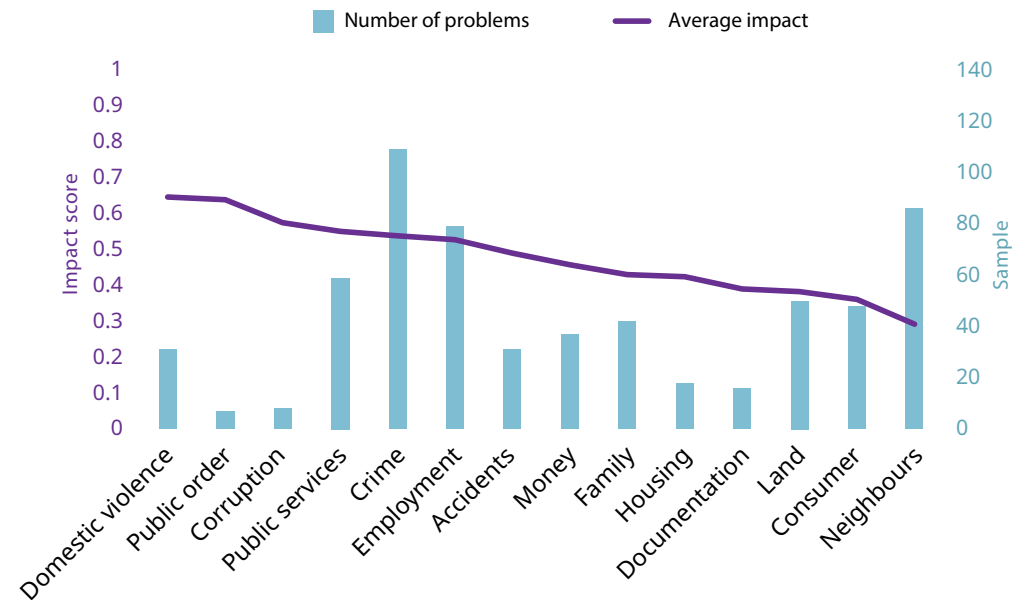
That they wouldn't let cases go unsolved, for example, that they would care about resolving them. That they would investigate. That they would take the cases seriously and not abandon them, because, just like me, there are thousands of mothers going through this, I'm not the only one.

— 52 year old woman interviewed in Choluteca

One out of two Hondurans with problems take action to resolve their most serious problem

Justice journeys can take different forms. People can decide to take action by talking to the other side of the dispute or by involving a third party, they can opt to engage with formal or informal sources of help, or they can choose to do nothing regarding their legal problems. In this chapter we explore the rate at which Hondurans take action to try to resolve the problem they consider to be the most serious, the sources of help they most commonly use, what these sources do and how this can lead to the resolution of legal problems.

Almost half of the people with legal problems in Honduras do not take action to resolve it. Around 53% of those with a problem reported taking at least one measure to try and resolve their problems.
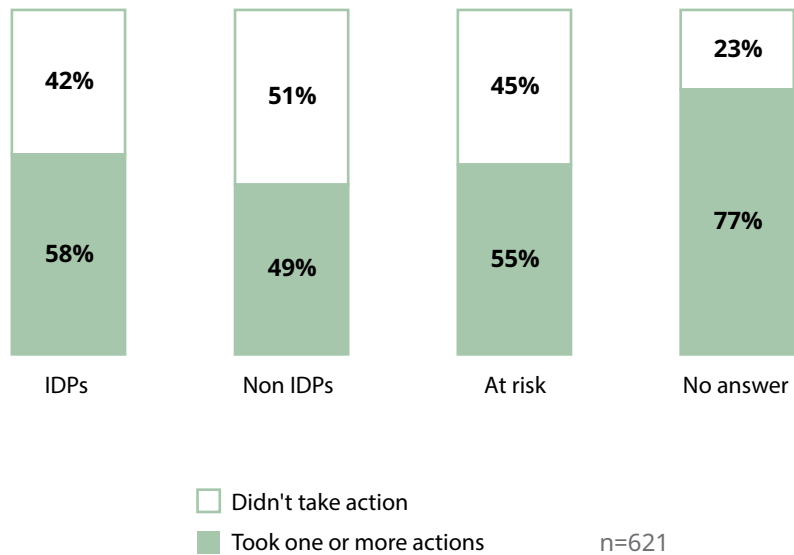
DID YOU TAKE ACTION TO RESOLVE YOUR MOST SERIOUS LEGAL PROBLEM?

47%

53%

☐ No action

▩ At least one action

n=621
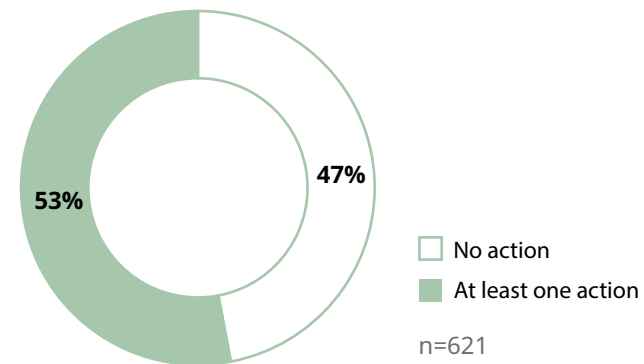
Action rates differ among the different vulnerability categories. IDPs and at-risk populations are more likely to take action when faced with a legal problem than non-IDPs, who have the lowest rate of action among all the categories. Those who answered with "Other/No Answer", whom we cannot identify in a set category, have the highest action-taking rate; however, they have the smallest sample size (26 observations), making it difficult to derive meaningful conclusions about the population of IDPs.

ACTION TAKING BY VULNERABILITY CONDITION

IDPs	Non IDPs	At risk	No answer
42%	51%	45%	23%
58%	49%	55%	77%

☐ Didn't take action

☐ Took one or more actions   n=621

Action and types of legal problems

Victims of crime (36%) and those with public service problems (34%) are less likely to take action. In turn, neighbour disputes and employment issues are the top problem categories for which action is usually taken (with rates over 55%). Furthermore, there's a clear gap in the rates at which people take action between crime, public services and consumer problems, compared with the rest of the categories: 1 in 3 people who face a problem in these categories take action to resolve them.

Family disputes, domestic violence and traffic accidents are the categories for which people are more likely to take action, with around 3 in 4 people with such problems doing something to resolve them. Documentation, public order, and corruption problems have too few observations to properly interpret their results[37].

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37 The action rate for corruption, in particular, is an outlier, as it is the problem with the fewest reports: only 12 people having it as their most serious problem.

ACTION TAKING BY MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM CATEGORY

☐	No action
▧	At least one action

n=621

Those who do not take action cite less hope of achieving a fair result
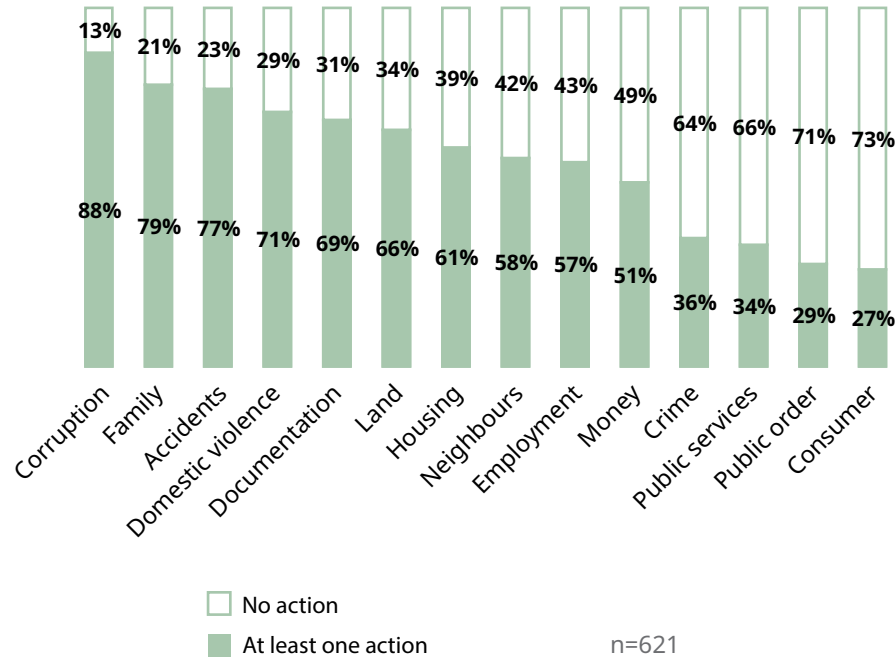
A young woman in Cortés expressed:

> *You can't do anything because who knows what will happen, you can't do anything there because heaven forbid.*

Almost 40% of people that didn't take action say they abstained from doing so because they did not expect a positive outcome. Examples of this reason were found during the qualitative interviews. An elderly woman from Cortés said the following on why she didn't denounce her abusive partner: "I saw examples of women who reported their husbands, and the next day, they were out and the husband remained the same, (…) so I thought, if I report him, it won't do me any good, it's better to defend myself". A further 16% of those that didn't take action report they didn't know what to do to solve their problems, like a young woman from Choluteca that was expelled from her home and expressed: "I felt desperate, yes, because I didn't know what to do, I didn't know where to go".

The reasons for not taking action vary by problem type. Not expecting a positive result is more frequent for public services problems (51%) and

neighbour disputes (47%). This implies that people are more pessimistic about problems in which the other party is the State, but also about problems that occur in their immediate surroundings. Participants in the triangulation session suggested this is a symptom of the low interpersonal trust levels in Honduran society, fueled by the fact that people in certain communities cannot be sure if their neighbours are gang members, or are linked to them, or not.

Victims of domestic violence know less what to do compared to people facing other problems; 33% of them reported this as a reason for not taking action. This signals an opportunity to keep improving and increasing the available information on resources for dealing with domestic violence. As a middle-aged woman from Cortés that suffered such violence said: "It was like I was blind (…) like I was in the dark, I would say they should orient women [victims of domestic violence] more".
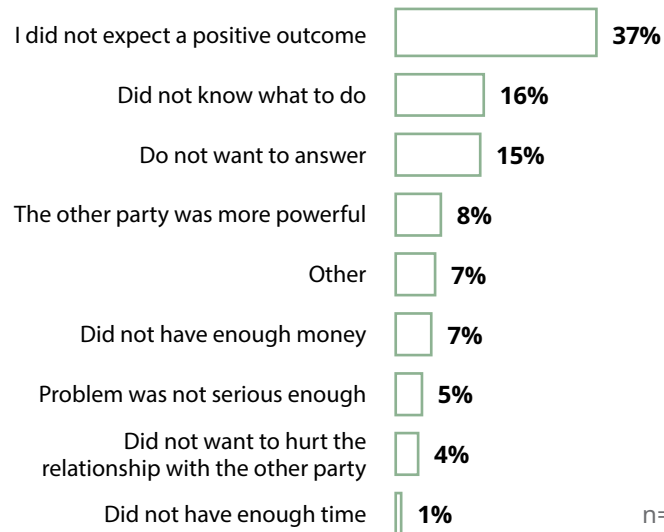
Beyond them, 15% of people refused to provide an answer to this question. When looking at the breakdown by problem category, family disputes and domestic violence have a higher proportion of the "prefer not to

answer" option (22% for both) than the other categories, suggesting intimidation or dissuasion might be at play in these types of problems. A young woman from Choluteca, victim of domestic violence, showcased this by saying: "Yes, one day I wanted to go [to seek help]. (…) I was afraid that if he found out that I'm doing these things, I thought he might take away the girl from me later, because he says with money we can [do it]."

Finally, 8% of respondents state that the other party was more powerful

and because of that they didn't try to resolve the problem. This answer is more prevalent for land (18%) and employment problems (15%), which tend to have hierarchical relationships (landlords and employers v their counterparts), but it is also a common response for crimes (14%). This is related to the territorial control that gangs exert, which gives power to their members and deters people from confronting them.

REASONS FOR NOT TAKING ACTION

Reason	%
I did not expect a positive outcome	37%
Did not know what to do	16%
Do not want to answer	15%
The other party was more powerful	8%
Other	7%
Did not have enough money	7%
Problem was not serious enough	5%
Did not want to hurt the relationship with the other party	4%
Did not have enough time	1%

n=292

Talking directly with the other party is the most common source of help by a wide margin

Taking action implies involving someone else in the resolution process, be it the other party or a third party. We now focus on the sources of help that people engage to solve their problems. People could select from 27 sources of help, from talking to the other party and people from their personal circle, all the way to civil society actors and State institutions.

The graph below shows that out of those who take action, an overwhelming majority (61%) do so by talking directly to the other party of the dispute. The police are the second most common source of help, with 18% of people engaging them to solve their most serious problems.

Participants of the data triangulation workshop were slightly surprised by the prevalence of the police as the most used source of help. Although there's low trust in the police, people still believe it is the institution responsible for their security and protection. As a young woman in

Tegucigalpa said: "Sometimes support from the police post is needed, for example, because sometimes problems occur"; while another young woman directly expressed: "I do not trust the police, but I knew they had to support me when I left. So, I decided to call them".

However, the reigning sentiment during the interviews was that the police are not useful and are unable, or unwilling, to deal with people's problems[38]. Given the high prevalence of crime problems and violence in Honduras, a middle-aged woman in Tegucigalpa explained that increased police presence wouldn't help with anything because "the same thing always happens, whether the police are there or not". And a young woman from Cortés that tried to report threats against her denounced that the police had a "lack of empathy and professionalism, (…) because that's their role and motto, to serve and protect citizens, and at that moment, as I said, their response was this sarcastic

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38 Chapter 8: The role of (in)justice in the Cycle of Displacement will present more information on this subject.

one, (…) that made me understand even more that they definitely weren't doing anything".

Distrust in the police is rampant. A middle-aged man from Cortés explained: "Street knowledge doesn't make you go to the police to file a report because (…) if you go to the police to file a report, you're taking a risk. (…) Maybe the police will listen to you or maybe they're telling on you, like look, this is the guy." While a middle-aged man in Tegucigalpa bluntly said: "If the police protect me, I'll be killed faster".

A group of third parties appears below the police, made up of local public authorities (8%), family members (7%), private lawyers (7%), and judges (5%).
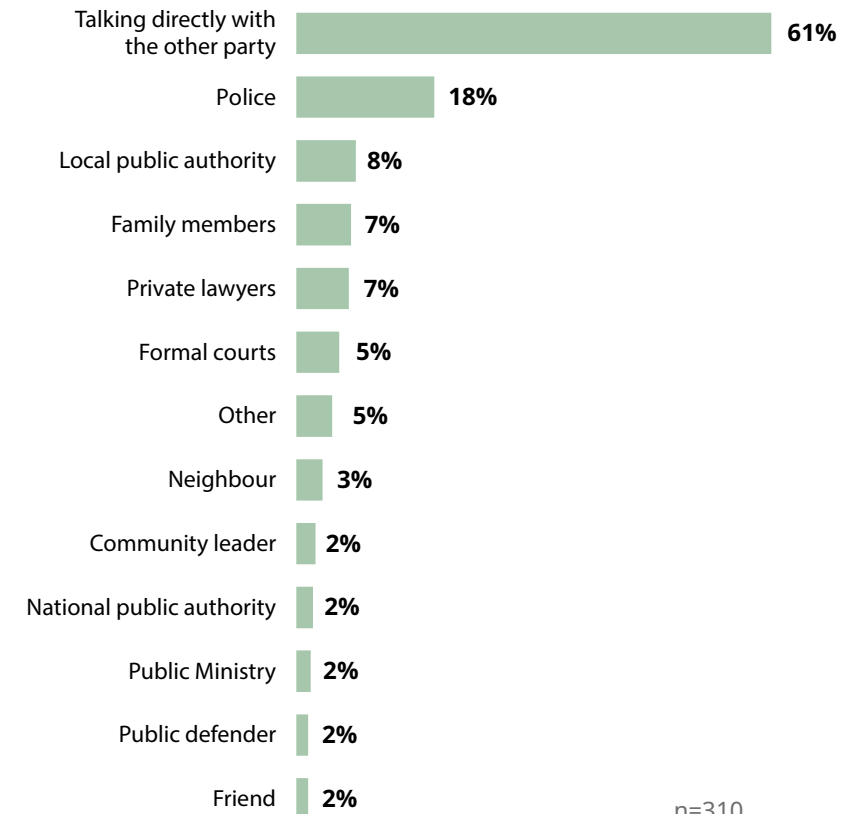
Justice journeys in Honduras are short. Hondurans often only go to one source of help to try to resolve their most serious problem; on average, they engage 1.2 sources of help. For instance, people can talk directly with the other side of the dispute, or go to the police or another third party, but rarely do they involve more than

one mechanism in their resolution processes. Further research is required to know the reasons behind this behaviour.

When a third party is involved, the justice journey seems highly formal: leaving direct negotiation aside, 4 out of the top 5 third parties belong to the formal justice system. Family members are the only non-professional informal third party to whom more than 5% of respondents involve, while other informal parties, such as neighbours, friends and community leaders, appear with under 3% of answers.

The absence of informal or community justice limits people's options for taking action. For those who do not expect positive results or who distrust state authorities, informal third parties often become viable options for accessing justice in a quick and timely manner. By not considering informal third parties viable, Hondurans encounter greater obstacles to resolve even their legal problems, even the simplest ones, which in turn exacerbates the justice gap.

MOST COMMON SOURCES OF HELP
Only answers with more than 2% of report

Source	Percentage
Talking directly with the other party	61%
Police	18%
Local public authority	8%
Family members	7%
Private lawyers	7%
Formal courts	5%
Other	5%
Neighbour	3%
Community leader	2%
National public authority	2%
Public Ministry	2%
Public defender	2%
Friend	2%

n=310

Ethnic authorities, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), religious leaders, health professionals, teachers, NGOs, international organisations, and gangs[39], among others, were listed as possible sources of help but didn't receive more than 2% of answers.

Education is the only demographic variable that has a significant difference regarding the sources of help consulted. Hondurans with a complete basic education or less are more likely to talk directly with the other party compared to those who have attained a higher degree of education. In turn, people in the highest tier of education engage more often with local public authorities and private lawyers.

The police are the second most common source of help for all age groups, but people who didn't complete primary school engage the police less often (13%) than those with secondary (18%) and higher (19%) education.

People prefer to talk directly with the other party for all problem types, except for crimes

The following graph is a heatmap showing the most common sources of help (rows) for each problem category (columns)[40]. The colour code goes from white for low frequencies, to darker shades of green for those more frequently selected. We keep showcasing only the sources of help with more than 2% of reports.

Given the overwhelming share of direct negotiation in the general distribution of sources of help, it is also the most common source for all problem types, excluding crimes. However, talking directly with the other party can be a difficult and risky process, marked by fear, suspicion and mistrust of people the person may not know. These risks may be greater for problems where
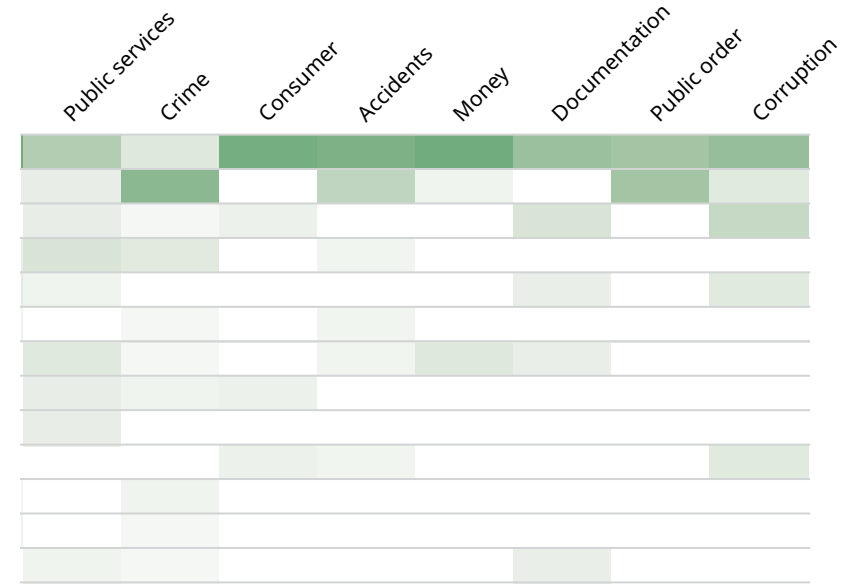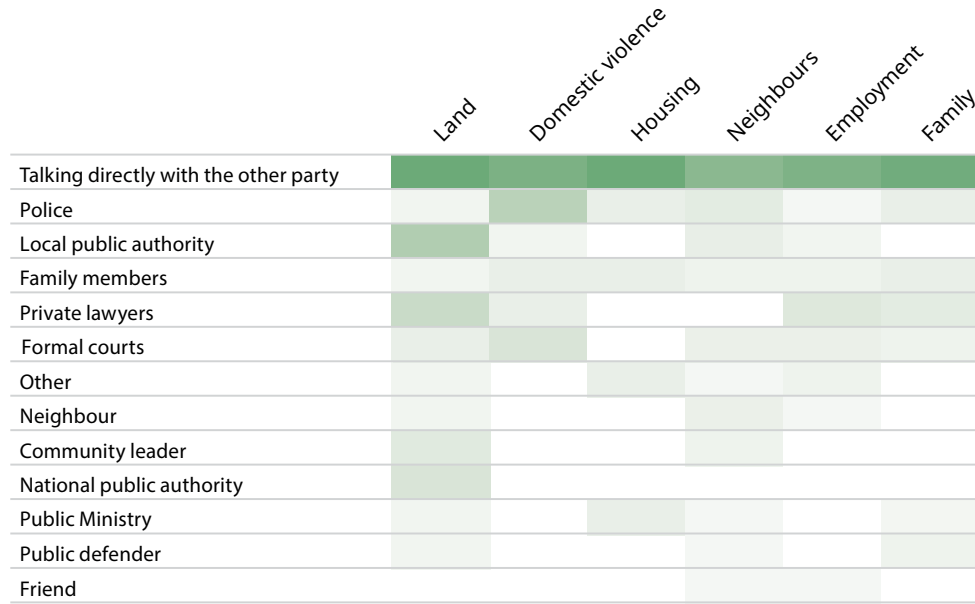
it is unclear whether the other party is a member of or associated with a criminal group, such as problems with neighbours and certain traffic and money problems.
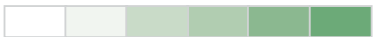
Victims of crime overwhelmingly engage the police to solve their problems. The police are also commonly engaged in domestic violence, traffic accidents and public order problems, bearing in mind this last category has a small sample size. Local public authorities are more prevalent for land disputes, corruption, neighbour disputes and public services problems, while family members are mostly sought out for public services problems, domestic violence and family disputes.

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39 Although they are an actor that is generally part of the problem, in the context they have also been identified as an actor that "imparts a solution", which is why, after the adaptation sessions with the stakeholder group, they were included in the list of sources of help. In the triangulation session, this was reaffirmed by the stakeholder group: "When the police are not there, people complain to 'the boys' [an expression to refer to gang members]; they are the ones who resolve things because they are the ones in charge".

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40 The relationship is not significant at a 95% confidence level, probably due to sample size. We still present it as a descriptive analysis of justice journeys.

HEAT MAP OF SOURCES OF HELP BY LEGAL PROBLEM CATEGORY

	Land	Domestic violence	Housing	Neighbours	Employment	Family		Public services	Crime	Consumer	Accidents	Money	Documentation	Public order	Corruption
Talking directly with the other party															
Police															
Local public authority															
Family members															
Private lawyers															
Formal courts															
Other															
Neighbour															
Community leader															
National public authority															
Public Ministry															
Public defender															
Friend															

Less common ▢▢▢▢▢▢ More common

The distribution of sources of help by problem type also aids in understanding the prevalence of the police. The most common crimes reported are theft, assault and burglary, which despite having tangible consequences for people, aren't as severe as crimes that interviewees reported. However, these last ones, which include threats, extortion and murder, weren't as common in the JNS. This signals that the police are commonly involved for less serious issues, like petty crime or traffic accidents, but when people face the most egregious acts of violence, they stop referring to this institution.

The most serious problems tend to be unresolved

Around 60% of the most serious problems aren't resolved: 35% are ongoing and awaiting resolution, while 26% have been abandoned and people aren't doing anything else to solve them. 39% of problems are resolved, with the majority of them (27%) being completely resolved.

There are demographic factors that affect resolution, among them:

- Age: the youth have the highest proportion of completely resolved problems (40%) among all age groups. Young adults have the highest share of abandoned problems (30%). The elder cohorts have more ongoing problems – 42% of problems of middle adults and 49% of the elderly are ongoing.

RESOLUTION STATUS OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM

| 27%	12%	35%	26%

■ Yes, completely   ■ No, it's ongoing

■ Yes, partially   ■ No, it's abandoned

n=621

- Displacement: displaced people have more abandoned problems (32%) than non-IDPs (25%). On the other hand, non-displaced people have more ongoing problems (37%) than their counterparts.

RESOLUTION STATUS OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM BY IDP STATUS

IDPs	23%	21%	23%	32%
Non-IDPs	28%	10%	37%	25%

■ Yes, completely   ■ No, it's ongoing
■ Yes, partially   ■ No, it's abandoned
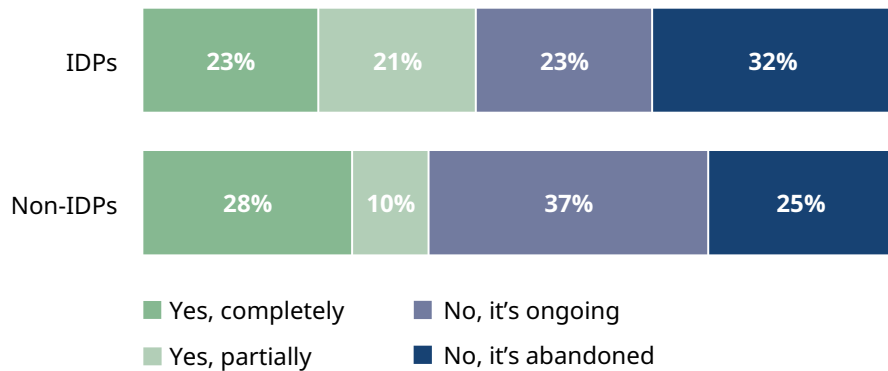
n=621

Taking action pays off: it is positively related to achieving a resolution

Hondurans who take action are more likely to have completely resolved problems than people who did nothing (33% vs 21%), they also have more partially resolved problems. Conversely, those who do not take action have more abandoned problems (33%) than those who did take action. This means that taking action is worth it. Not only does it improve the chances of resolution, no matter the type of problem, but it also reduces the likelihood of abandoning a problem that might keep causing negative consequences.

Ongoing problem rates are very similar between the groups, although for different reasons: people who take action may be awaiting a decision or the result of their action, while those who did nothing might still be experiencing the problem with no prospect of resolution.

A young woman from Tegucigalpa summed it up like this:
99 *It was a bit complicated, because I did it alone. I feel that maybe if I had sought help, everything would have been easier and faster.*

Unresolved problems are more impactful than resolved problems

Not only are ongoing problems more common in the distribution of resolution status, but they are also more impactful. Ongoing problems have a mean impact of 0.55 on a scale from 0 to 1, making them considerably more impactful than completely resolved problems. This is in line with a trend from other HiiL JNS surveys, where ongoing problems also tend to be the most impactful. The relationship implies that people are more interested in resolving problems that have a considerable impact on their lives and are more willing to go to extreme lengths to achieve a resolution.

However, abandoned problems have a high impact as well, with a score of 0.5. This suggests that these aren't simple problems that people can weather through and "live with", but rather serious issues with consequences that remain even when abandoned. Thus, solutions seem to be relegated to "easy" problems that aren't as impactful: problems that need resolution but aren't the most pressing ones.

AVERAGE IMPACT SCORE BY RESOLUTION STATUS

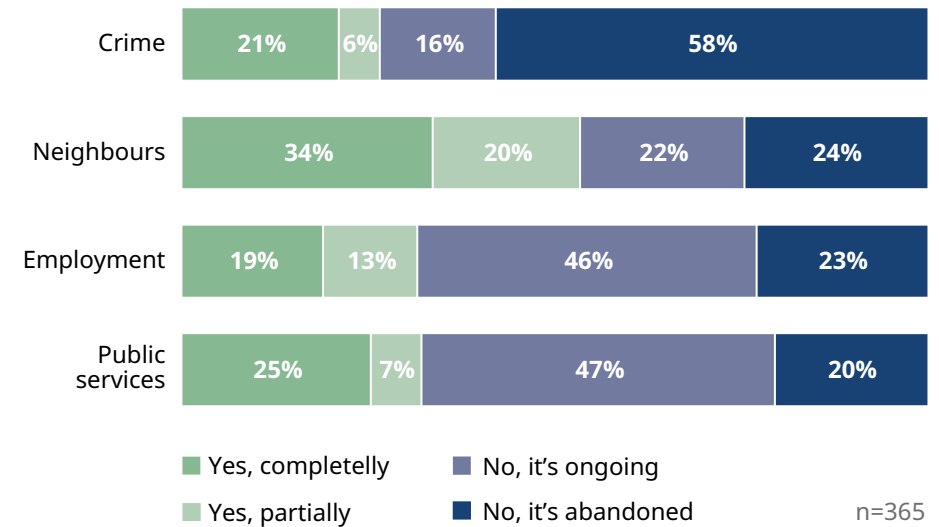| Yes, completely | Yes, partially | No, it's ongoing | No, it's abandoned |
| 0.34 | 0.41 | 0.55 | 0.50 |
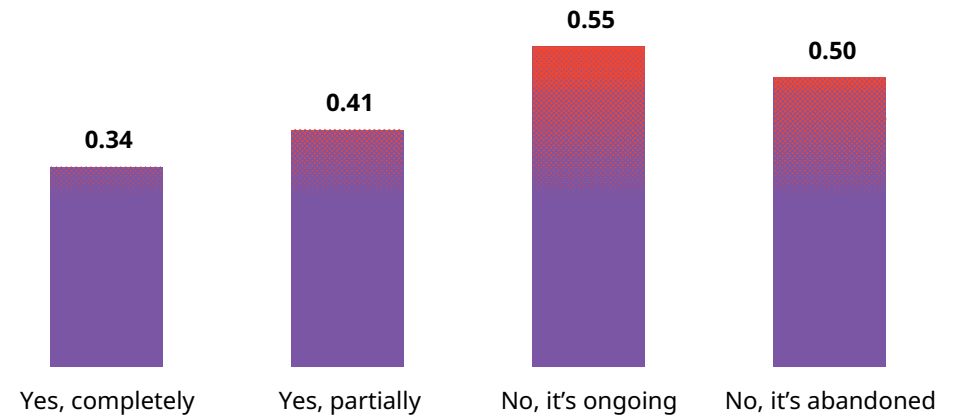
Crimes are most likely to be abandoned; public services and employment problems are the most likely to remain ongoing

Almost 60% of victims of crime abandon the problem; a further 16% consider the problem to be ongoing. This results in 3 out of 4 crime problems being unresolved, which is not surprising, as they are also one of the categories with the lowest action taken. Employment and public services problems also have high proportions of problems without resolution (69% and 67%, respectively). These problems are the most likely to be ongoing and awaiting resolution, which could be owed to the bureaucratic nature of the State and labour procedures.

Neighbour problems are the top category most likely to be resolved, having a higher resolution rate than the average for all problems. 54% of such problems are resolved, combining both complete and partial resolutions, and they also have one of the lowest proportions of ongoing problems at 22%. As taking action for neighbour disputes is relatively common and such problems are not as impactful as others, a higher-than-average resolution is to be expected.

RESOLUTION STATUS OF MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM BY CATEGORY (TOP 4)

Category	Yes, completely	Yes, partially	No, it's ongoing	No, it's abandoned
Crime	21%	6%	16%	58%
Neighbours	34%	20%	22%	24%
Employment	19%	13%	46%	23%
Public services	25%	7%	47%	20%

■ Yes, completelly   ■ No, it's ongoing
■ Yes, partially   ■ No, it's abandoned   n=365

Problems are mainly resolved through direct agreements between the parties

34% of those who achieved resolutions for their problems did so by agreeing to a solution with the other party, which is in line with the high prevalence of direct negotiation as a source of help.

17% of people with resolved problems said the problem solved itself, implying it was solved without taking action or that it was not the result of anything done by the sources of help engaged. The interviews lend credit to this finding, a man in Tegucigalpa with a neighbour problem said: "We were able to resolve [the problem] and the people, it is not that we kicked them out, rather, they left on their own"; and

a woman victim of crime in the same city expressed: "Well, I think that at least as long as they [the perpetrators] do not follow the issue, I do not think I'll have any more problems where I live".

1 in 5 problems are resolved by the intervention of a third party. This percentage might be deemed as low but given that third parties aren't as prevalent as direct negotiation, the distribution is not surprising. The police, private lawyers and judges are the third parties that resolve most of the problems, for those who said the problem was resolved through actions of third parties.

HOW WAS THE PROBLEM RESOLVED?
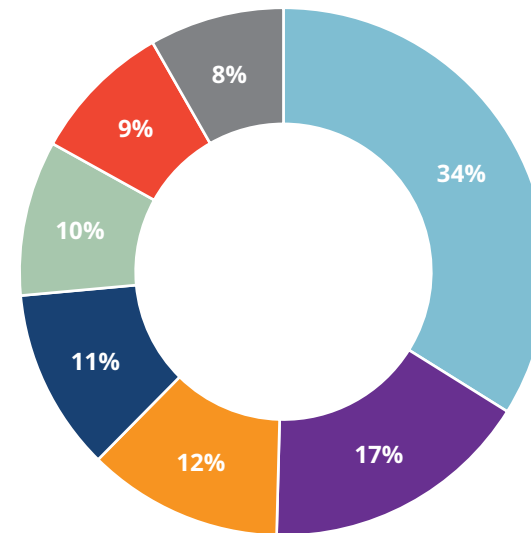
n=242

- ■ Agreed directly with other party
- ■ The issue sorted itself out
- ■ Other
- ■ Agreed with other party after a third party mediated
- ■ Solved issue with own actions
- ■ A third party decided the issue
- ■ Do not know

Quality and costs of justice journeys in Honduras

It is not enough to know where people are going to resolve their problems. It is also important to determine the quality of the processes that people engage in and the usefulness of the resolutions achieved. As explained in the methodology, the JNS survey has a series of questions on dimensions relating to the quality and costs of the process and on the quality of the outcome. The answers to these questions are aggregated and produce a comparable score[41] that allows us to evaluate the satisfaction of justice users with their journeys.

To ensure a consistent graphing of the dimensions, where higher values mean higher satisfaction, the costs of justice (psychological and monetary) are presented in an inverted scale. Therefore, a higher value in these dimensions represents positive evaluations, not elevated costs. We focus on the top 4 most common problem categories to guarantee enough sample size for a meaningful analysis.

Interestingly, crimes have relatively positive evaluations for dimensions associated with the resolution process. Voice and neutrality, respect and procedural clarity are all above the 3 score mark and there's a highly positive perception of stress and negative emotions, meaning that the process doesn't imply such psychological costs. An explanation can be associated with people taking action for petty crimes, like theft, rather than more serious crimes, like extortion or murder.

Neighbour disputes have the lowest scores for the voice and neutrality and procedural clarity dimensions;

JUSTICE JOURNEYS' EVALUATION BY PROBLEM CATEGORY (TOP 4)

- Public services
- Employment
- Neighbour disputes
- Crime

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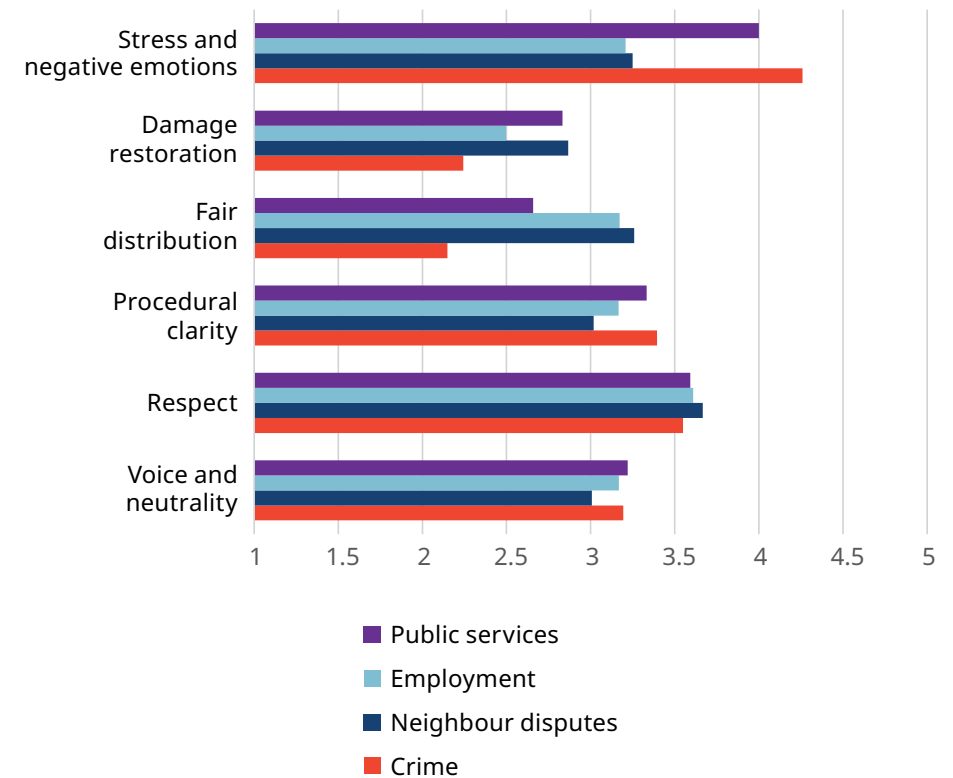
41 The score ranges from 1 (lowest satisfaction) to 5 (highest satisfaction).

this goes in line with the appreciation of participants in the triangulation workshop, who said that resolution mechanisms for neighbour problems in Honduras aren't conductive of dialogue. People can also feel they cannot express their arguments freely and that processes are not neutral due to the fear that a neighbour may be a gang member; an elderly woman from Tegucigalpa summed it up this way: "Every day the situation gets worse, to the point where I no longer trust my neighbour. I have the other neighbour next door, I no longer trust him". This can also explain the lower satisfaction with the stress and negative emotions dimension associated with the process, as suspicion and fear are constantly present.

Employment and public services problems have relatively high procedural satisfaction, especially in regard to receiving respectful treatment during the process. These might be more bureaucratic procedures, but they seem somewhat clear, and people feel they are being treated well. Regarding stress and negative emotions, employment issues have the lowest score for this dimension (low satisfaction), probably

due to people feeling worried that without a job, they won't be able to provide for themselves and their families – this was a common source of preoccupation for people during the interviews.

Regarding the quality of the outcome, crime problems rank the lowest in terms of fair distribution and damage restoration. Crimes are not only resolved less, but when they achieve a solution, it seems to be unsatisfactory. An interviewee from Tegucigalpa summed up the crime resolution process as: "[The authorities] beat around the bush, and it takes years of process, and in the end (...) nothing is ever fulfilled".

In general, the dimensions associated with the obtained outcome are the ones people are less satisfied with. This suggests that even after relatively good procedures in which people are heard and understand what to do, the outcomes do not completely meet their expectations.

Justice can be expensive

We asked people how much money they spent in the process of resolving their most serious problem. To reduce the distortion of the distribution by outliers, we removed from the analysis the values that make up the top 10% of the distribution, that is, the 10% of people who paid the most to solve a legal problem.
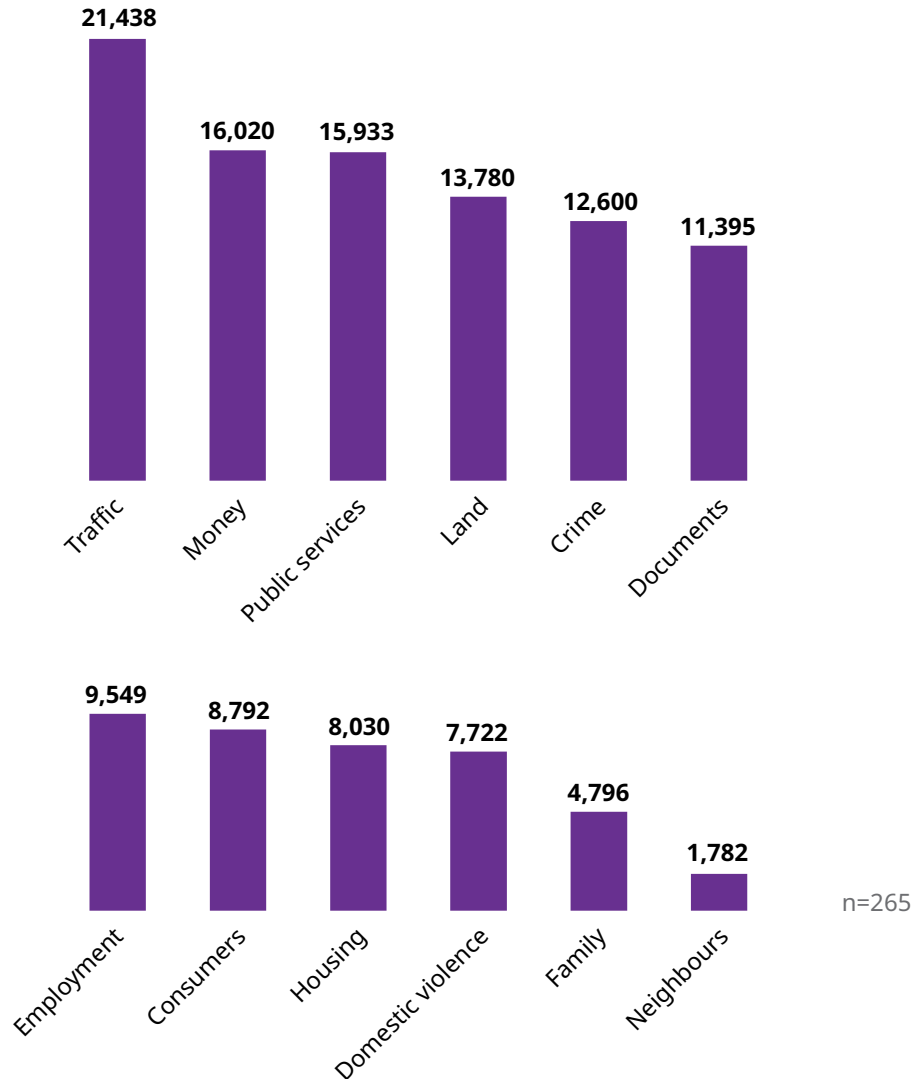
The average amount spent to solve problems is 10,092 HNL (around 400 USD). Although this amount seems

high, it is inflated by a small proportion of people with big expenditures. 50% of people spent 550 HNL (~22 USD) or less in their resolution process, with at least 25% of people not spending anything.

On the one hand, the category for which people spend more money is traffic accidents, with 21,438 HNL (~845 USD). On the other hand, people spend less money, 1,782 HNL (~70 USD) on average, to resolve neighbour disputes.

MONEY SPENT IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM (LEMPIRAS)

21,438
16,020   15,933
13,780
12,600
11,395

Traffic   Money   Public services   Land   Crime   Documents

9,549
8,792
8,030
7,722
4,796
1,782

Employment   Consumers   Housing   Domestic violence   Family   Neighbours

n=265

Outcomes: how do resolutions change people's lives?

The final question for people who achieved a resolution for their problems was related to what the outcome brought to them. Certain problem categories had specific answers, while other categories were grouped and received general answer options. The distribution for what the outcome brought is as follows[42]:

- Land disputes: 50% of people report the solution achieved granted them fair ownership of land, while a further 29% reached an agreement on the use of land.

- Domestic violence: 29% of victims of this type of violence that achieved a resolution received an apology, while 19% were protected against future violence. Also at 19%, the third most common answer was "the outcome did not help".

- These outcomes are in line with the interests expressed by victims of abuse interviewed: they aren't preoccupied with punishing the

abuser, but rather about feeling safe and protected. A woman in Cortés said she didn't want to denounce her abuser because "I thought, not to harm him, because he works and all that", and a woman from Tegucigalpa explained that punishing her partner would only aggravate the situation: "I didn't want to leave the man in jail, because I thought that leaving [him] there, he would always come after me. Because for him to say this woman got me arrested for no reason". Such reasons for not denouncing can still be rooted in fear. Attention should be placed in domestic violence cases to ensure victims obtain positive outcomes without compromising their own safety in the process.

- Neighbour disputes: there are several positive outcomes reported for this category, the top 3 are: fewer problems in the area (39%), repairing relationships (28%) and respectful communication (22%).

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42 Many specific problems have small sample sizes

- Employment: the most common outcome was a change of job or position (32%), but the second most common answer was that the outcome did not help, with 20% of the answers.

- Family: 34% of people achieved protection and safety for their children, while a further 31% felt that respectful communication was improved. Family problems have the lowest rate of the outcome not helping (8%) out of all the problems with resolutions.

- Crime: "the outcome didn't help" was the top answer for crime problems (38%), almost doubling the second answer. The second and third answers were tied at 21% each and they were "the perpetrator was punished" and "protection".

- Other problems: for other problems that had no specific question, "the outcome did not help" was the most common option at 22% of answers. Avoiding the situation

from happening again was a close second (21%) and understanding what happened was the third most common option (17%).

- Looking only at public services problems, which were one of the most common problem types, 32% said the outcome did not help and 21% said "other", signalling many solutions for these problems aren't producing positive changes.

The high share of "the outcome did not help" answer for crime, employment and public services problems coincides with the lower level of satisfaction reported for the outcome dimensions (fair distribution and damage restoration) of these categories. Further research is needed on why resolutions aren't leading to useful outcomes for these problems.

It is clear that victims of abuse seek protection from justice, even more than punishment of the perpetrator. Sometimes, people need peace and security, rather than punishment for

the other party. In this sense, if we look at it from the perspective of people and of people-centred justice, we can suggest that justice in its protective purpose (in regards to the victim) outweighs or is more relevant than in its punitive dimension (in regards to the perpetrator).

What's the use of asking if they say, promise, so many things and when it comes down to it, the people are abandoned. We are abandoned.

— 60 year old woman interviewed in Tegucigalpa

7

Third Party Interventions

Third parties primarily represent people, provide advice and prepare documents

Interventions are what third parties do to resolve a legal problem when people engage them in the resolution process. Knowing the most common interventions provides more details on the justice journeys of people, allowing us to understand what works to achieve a resolution.

Just like in Chapter 4 (Justice Gap), in this chapter, we shift the unit of analysis from people to interventions. A single source of help can perform multiple interventions; for this reason, the number of interventions is greater than the number of people who take action and the number of third parties involved.
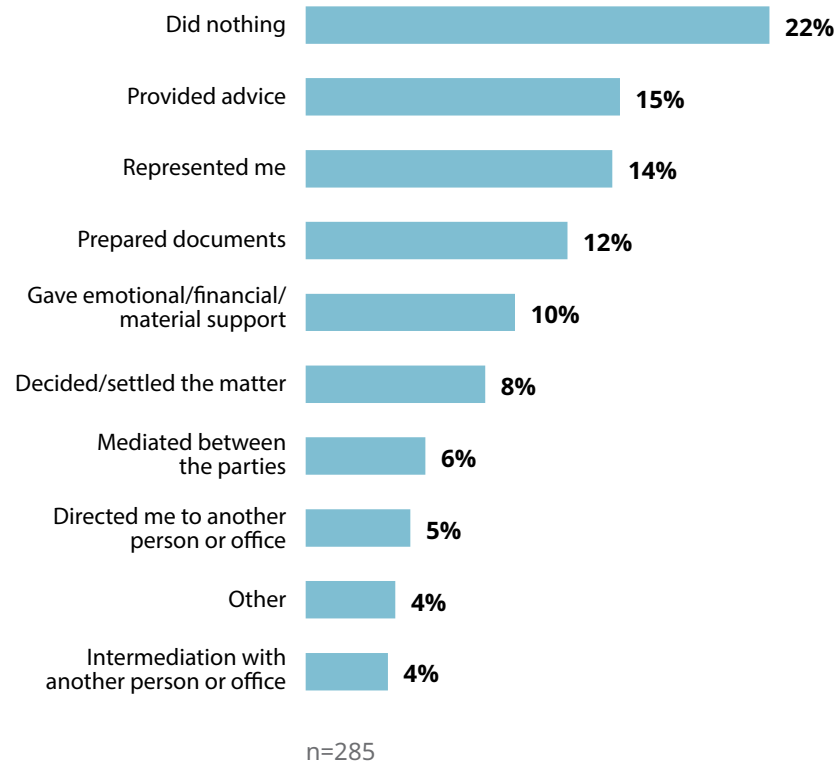
Hondurans reported a total of 285 interventions by all the third parties engaged. 15% of the interventions are related to (legal) advice, 14% are linked to legal representation, and a further 12% involve preparing documents. These interventions are in line with the types of third parties most people engage with, as formal actors are more frequent than informal ones, and consequently, their actions are associated with more formal procedures.

However, the most common intervention is one that doesn't lead to resolution. The option "did nothing" accounts for 22% of responses. This explains the relatively low resolution rate of problems by third parties (20%): if nearly a quarter of third parties are not doing anything, they will seldom be able to resolve a problem.

Several interviewees reflected this trend[43]. A victim of threats and violence who went to a local public authority in Tegucigalpa expressed: "I think I wasted my time [going to the authorities]". Another victim of threats in Tegucigalpa that engaged with the police said: "I have complaints, and they haven't even asked me how [the] case is going, no one has approached me to ask how I am, how my family is, how you're doing, absolutely nothing". A victim of gang violence in Tegucigalpa said they engaged an NGO, "but they never gave me an answer, [...] they said they would call me, and they never called".

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43 By design, the interviews were conducted principally with people that had been affected by violence and had been displaced. These quotes are not representative of all the problems and sources of help that people said "did nothing" in the JNS survey, nor of all the experiences of IDPs.
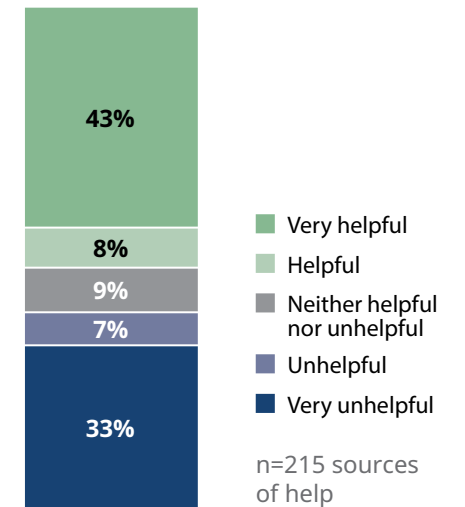
SOURCES OF HELP INTERVENTIONS

Did nothing	**22%**
Provided advice	**15%**
Represented me	**14%**
Prepared documents	**12%**
Gave emotional/financial/ material support	**10%**
Decided/settled the matter	**8%**
Mediated between the parties	**6%**
Directed me to another person or office	**5%**
Other	**4%**
Intermediation with another person or office	**4%**

n=285

1 in every 3 third parties is considered very useless

When looking at the usefulness of the sources of help, the top two answers are very useful (43%) or very useless (33%). The high percentage of "very useless" answers is not surprising considering how many third parties did nothing to help resolve the problem.
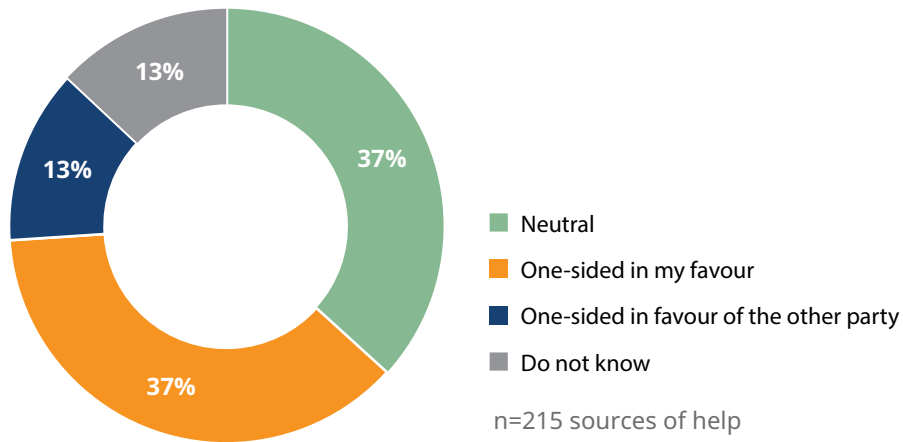
Still, when the "very useful" and "useful" answers are combined, half of all the third parties engaged are considered useful. This also coincides with the relatively good scores that people give to the quality of the process, showing that regardless of the type of intervention, third parties do play an important and valuable role in the justice journeys of Hondurans, offering a basis on which further improvements can be built.

SOURCE OF HELP USEFULNESS

|	
43%	Very helpful
8%	Helpful
9%	Neither helpful nor unhelpful
7%	Unhelpful
33%	Very unhelpful

n=215 sources of help

37% of the sources of help were deemed neutral. Another 37% were thought to be biassed in favour of the respondent, while 13% were considered to be biassed in favour of the other party.

SOURCE OF HELP NEUTRALITY

13%

13%

37%

37%

■ Neutral

■ One-sided in my favour

■ One-sided in favour of the other party

■ Do not know

n=215 sources of help

If justice had worked as it should have, I believe maybe the issue could have been resolved while I was still at home, right? But... But well, it happened.

— 25 year old woman interviewed in Cortés

8
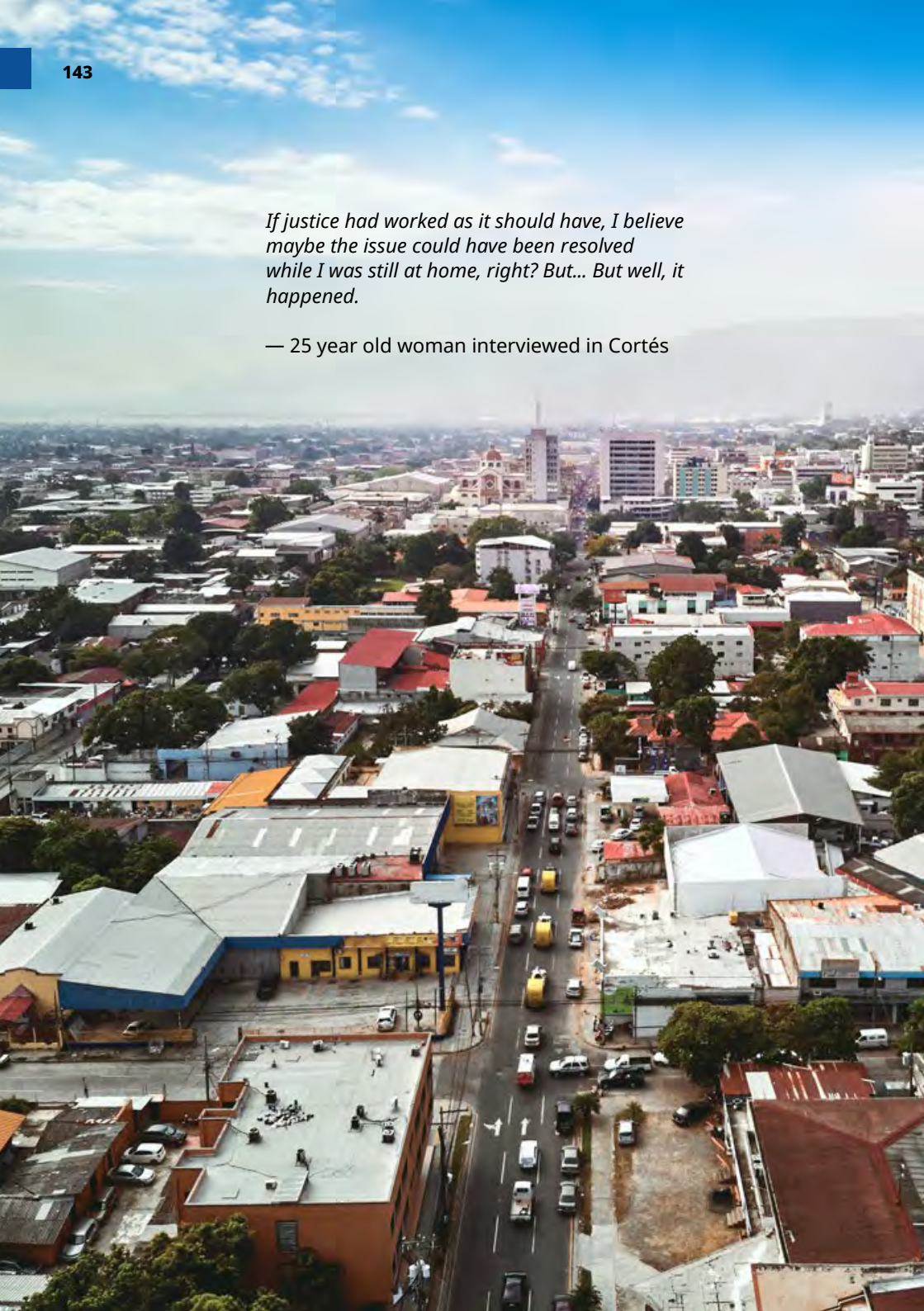
The Role of (in)Justice in the Cycle of Displacement

Lack of justice is a crucial factor fueling displacement in Honduras. Other causes for displacement include a lack of security, violence, human rights violations and climate change. These causes can be exacerbated by limited economic opportunities and shortages of basic public services, such as education and healthcare. In this chapter, we examine in greater depth how justice contributes to displacement and how the justice needs of displaced people become more challenging and difficult to resolve. We call this vicious sequence the "Cycle of Displacement."

To better understand these relationships, we conducted 59 qualitative one-to-one interviews with individuals who sought support from UNHCR or organisations supported by UNHCR. Obviously, there is a considerable bias in this sample. Nearly everyone has been a victim of violence, directly or by victimisation of a close relative. These individuals were not randomly selected. Nevertheless, their experiences provide valuable insights into Honduras's vicious cycle of justice and displacement. The stories we heard are tragic and heartbreaking, yet not uncommon in Honduras. During

the in-depth interviews, we discussed respondents' life circumstances and worries, the reasons and consequences of displacement, and their perceptions of the role of justice in their lives.

This chapter presents the main insights from the interviews, shifting the focus from general trends to individual experiences. As qualitative study designs are not meant to be representative, we don't extrapolate these insights for any population. We note again that the interviewed population is systematically different from the general population of Honduras due to selection bias. By definition, individuals who seek protection from UNHCR and related organisations have been victimised. In that way, the qualitative data captures more extreme cases of violence. However, our discussion with the stakeholders group and with UNHCR makes us confident that the stories presented here are not outliers.

Violence permeates everyday life and displaces people

Both the JNS survey and the interviews captured crimes and violence as common occurrences in Honduras. Through the JNS, we found a high prevalence of property crimes such as theft, robbery and burglary. The qualitative interviews revealed extreme encounters with life-changing violent crimes. Threats, assault, extortion and murder are omnipresent in the life stories of the Hondurans interviewed. Almost every interview includes a story about someone from the respondent's close family or social circle being intentionally killed.

When my husband, two months ago now, on May 10th it had been two months since they killed him (38 year-old woman from Cortés).

Because they killed two of my daughters. Well, over time, people would tell me, "leave, leave", but, you know, I had nowhere to go. I loved the little house too. They [the daughters] were coming home from school, when they took a few girls off the bus and took them away and killed them, and they saw all that (52 year-old woman from Tegucigalpa).

And they killed my brother because they said he was coming to investigate my son's death (44 year-old woman from Cortés).

I'm a father of six children, well, five now because one of them, who was 19, was killed. His name was […], the gangs got him, killed him. After that, I was left with my other five children (48 year-old man from Tegucigalpa).

The less dramatic narratives are about threats of serious violence. It is not difficult to understand how terrorising intimidation is, given the short distance between the danger and the actual act of violence. No one is immune to violence. In the stories that interviewees shared with us, young men are most often the victims, but people usually also talk about the victimisation of women, children, and elderly people.

Violence in Honduras displaces entire families. Other factors, such as limited economic opportunities, access to public services, or livelihood loss due to climate change, are not particularly visible in the interviews. However, they are important for understanding the cycle of displacement. While insecurity stands out as the primary driver of displacement in Honduras, these additional factors also contribute significantly. Moving forward, we will explore the details of the role of violence in the cycle of displacement.
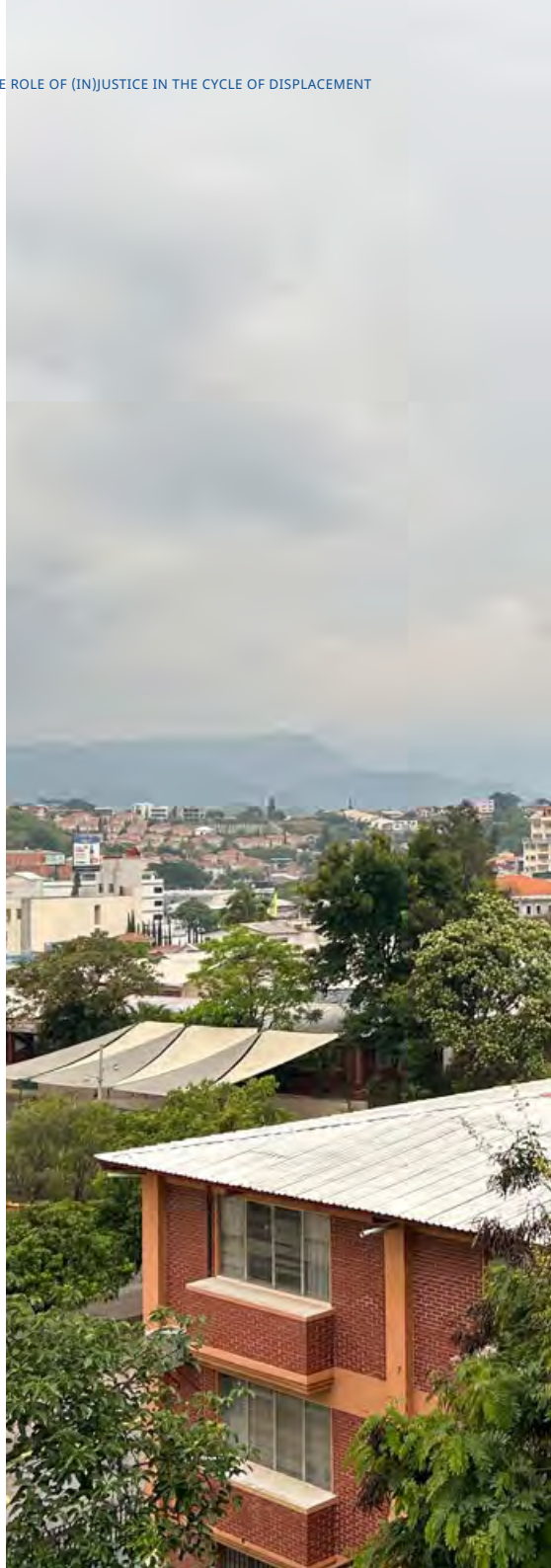
Extreme violence has multiple sources

By and large, gang violence is the most pervasive threat to individual and communal security in Honduras. Some of the interviews, however, contain stories about domestic violence or politically motivated threats and assaults. Violence is truly omnipresent in the lives of whole communities. Lack of security pervades the present and future lives of people in Honduras.

Question:
Why do you want to relocate to another country?

❝ *Mostly because of the lack of security, [for] my children's safety. [...] My girl told me, "Mom, I don't want to live in this country because I feel that I'm going to die young here". Because she saw her father die being 21 years old, and her uncle too. So she sees it normal that here, young people die* (29 year-old woman from Cortés).

Without a doubt, gangs are the main source of violence in Honduras. People are fearful when talking about gangs and their operations. A middle-aged man from Cortés told us: "It's [the gangs'] law and no one can't speak out". Despite this, interviewees were open to sharing their experiences and interactions with gangs and gang members.

❝ *Because of the situation that was happening, because of the gangs, we were at risk, and they threatened us often with guns. Sometimes, they followed me home, practically watching everything I did* (29 year-old woman from Cortés).

> *Due to threats from gangs that started entering the neighbourhoods, we had to move somewhere else suddenly, without warning, having to leave behind everything we had once built as a family*
(33 year-old man from Cortés).

Question:
Why is it dangerous there in the village?

> *Because they are fighting for territory, the gangs*
(37 year-old woman from Tegucigalpa).

Gangs terrorise communities for many different reasons. Turf wars between rival gang groups are common, making daily life extremely dangerous. A middle-aged woman from Cortés recalled how disputes over territory impacted her community: "The two gangs are always fighting. You can't live there anymore. Most people have left the neighbourhoods there. They're abandoning their homes".

Forced recruitment of new gang members is a serious threat to people who do not want themselves or their children to be involved in criminal activities[44]. "The gangs always want to recruit young people" (21 year-old woman from Cortés). Gangs lure young people into their ranks using different strategies. They offer young boys (false) promises of prosperity, a feeling of belonging, opportunities to grow and protection. When this "offering" does not work, the threat of physical violence and death is not far away. People told stories of fleeing their community and the country because they did not want

to be recruited. Often, parents decide to flee to save their children from being recruited into gangs.

> *There are people who are drug distributors. So, they come and approach them... When they see healthy kids, they start approaching them, and getting closer, and getting closer, and that's when they threaten them and tell them, look, I'll give you this much, look, you'll be fine there, look, this is good, don't be afraid. So, they start involving them more and more. I don't go out, I don't travel because I have to watch over my younger children, because they don't go out, they don't leave the house unless it's with me or with an older sibling*
(60 year-old woman from Tegucigalpa).

Extortion and threats by gangs is another cause of displacement. Micro and small businesses in areas controlled by gangs have to pay a "war tax".

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44 In Honduras, "Forced labour or service" and "Recruitment of persons under eighteen (18) years of age for criminal activities" are criminalised as forms of human trafficking under the Law Against Trafficking in Persons (Decree No. 59 of 2012).

> *When they extorted me, I had the business, I had to leave my children's school, move house, and lose everything I had done in my life with my mother. [I was left] in a difficult situation*
(46 year-old woman from Cortés).

"War tax" is collected brutally: "If you don't pay extortion, they kill you" (57 year-old woman from Tegucigalpa). The same female respondent continued, "mainly they asked you for money. I paid them 50,000 lempiras they asked for, because if we didn't pay those 50,000 lempiras, they told my children they would kill me. [...] We paid, but we left everything behind". While a young man from Cortés was outright threatened into leaving the community: "They started calling us saying we had to leave the house because if we didn't, they would kill my mom, my younger siblings and me."

Some people reported having relatives or acquaintances who were threatened or killed by gang members due to suspicion that they were members of or informants for rival gangs. Witnessing a crime committed by gang members is also tantamount to a death sentence. "[I was displaced] because I witnessed an incident, and they told me I had to "Pepsi" myself because they were afraid I might expose what I had seen. But as you say, now you see and keep quiet, act blind, act deaf, so I had

to stay away from here for quite some time" (49 year-old woman from Cortés). This is a form of social control by gangs and criminal groups, who use violence to preserve the integrity of the group and protect the territory they control.

Gang violence is also combined with other types of violence and discrimination, such as those on the basis of gender and sexual identity. There is a story of an openly gay man who was harassed, abused, threatened and displaced by the gangs because he was different and unacceptable on "their territory". A family might be displaced because a girl "caught the eye" of gang members. Interviewees and participants of the triangulation workshops explained that gang members often "select" young women in their neighbourhoods to be their partners. A father from Tegucigalpa described it as: "The gang members are after my daughters, they want them, and they think they can take whoever they want. They think we raise daughters for them".

Gang-related violence is pervasive but is not the only source of the cycle of displacement. Women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, as a manifestation of gender-based violence. Female respondents shared they were kicked out of their homes by their partners or family members. Others expressed

they left their houses looking to escape systemic abuse and mistreatment. Yet others told us they had considered abandoning their homes but hadn't out of fear or because they did not have anywhere to go. A middle-aged woman from Tegucigalpa explained her situation saying: "Many times I wanted to leave, mostly because of him, he is a very violent person (...) [but] it's something complicated because he, even if he is not in the house where I live, it is not safe".

Several interviews pointed to politically motivated violence or threats of violence. People who organise their communities and fight for human, collective or environmental rights are likely to become targets of threats and violence. This happened to a young woman in Tegucigalpa, who recalled: "I was attacked because we [the neighbours] were demanding from the government that they send us someone to clean up [a landslide] that was on top of our homes".

This type of violence seemed more common for people in Choluteca. A middle-aged man from Choluteca told us: "We know perfectly well that social movements, human rights organisations, disappeared. Why? Because freedom of expression is forbidden. No one can speak badly against the government". While a journalist from the same region

recalled he had been displaced "at least three times, suddenly and abruptly, when we've had to lower our profile when we've had to be displaced urgently due to strong threats that have come, some from big business, investors, some politically due to the persecution of doing independent journalism".

Also in Choluteca, gang members threatened a human rights defender after organising community opposition to a mining project that threatened the livelihood and ecology of a small community. Powerful landowners and corrupt local politicians employed gangs to intimidate the human rights defender and his family.

"*Since we were in the front, we received that threat, not only from here but also from those in Choluteca. [...] My colleague [...], who lives there, he had to flee because he was a more visible person there in Choluteca, he was more visible, but we did some big protests, and I remember that the [...] was very angry with us*
(45 year-old man from Choluteca).

There is no one who protects people. Displacement is the only viable response to violence and insecurity.

In the JNS, 43% of the respondents expressed they would move if that meant better access to justice. The percentage is higher for IDPs (58%) and for at-risk populations (65%), highlighting the heightened justice needs of vulnerable populations.

The participants in the in-depth interviews faced profound and life-altering challenges related to justice.

Often, their lives hung in the balance. The only viable option in every interview was to relocate as fast as possible. There is a shared feeling that there is no protection from state or community institutions. Displacement is the only way to respond to your justice problem. **There is a direct link between lack of access to justice and displacement.**

WOULD YOU MOVE FOR A BETTER ACCESS TO JUSTICE?

43%

57%

■ Yes
☐ No

n=2010
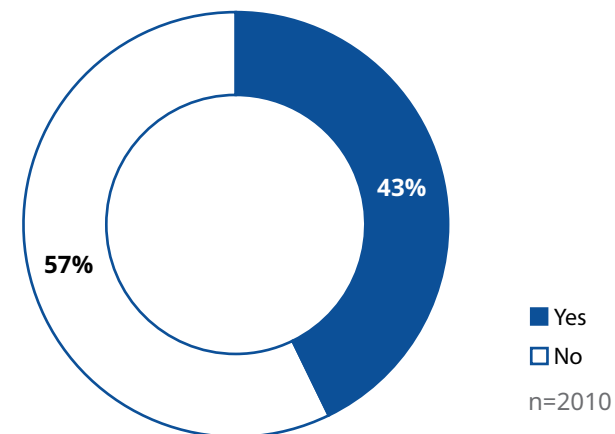
Without exception, the respondents in the interviews distrust the police and other law enforcement services. "There's no justice in the sense that maybe if you want to complain about something that happened to you, I don't think there's anyone suitable or who can help us with that" (40 year-old woman from Tegucigalpa). Few filed complaints only to be disappointed or further victimised. A 57 year old woman from Cortés expressed: "You go to the station to report someone who hits you, and they give you a paper to go to Choloma, by the time you get to Choloma, they've already killed you, that's the problem".

In the interviews, people described the police as a "lack of security." Many respondents refer to the missing protection from police as a "lack of justice". People need protection when they face serious and violent crimes. Protection means justice, and the lack of protection is a lack of access to justice.

No, the justice of Honduras [meaning police] here does nothing because they haven't said anything, because they didn't follow up on the complaints we filed, so for me, they didn't do anything and don't do anything, and they don't do anything because in this case we haven't had support from the government, but rather from organisations (48 year-old woman from Choluteca).

Many respondents firmly believe that police and gangs are interrelated.

You know, I was going to file a report, but it's the first thing they told me when they attacked me in […]. The second time they attacked me, they said they knew because they had connections everywhere, and if I reported it, they would make me disappear. So, out of fear, sometimes you don't do things. […] Well, they told me they have someone everywhere who gives them information, and I imagine those people are also in the police (26 year-old woman from Cortés).

Yes, I don't trust them, but not all police are the same, right? I can't say that they're all the same because they're not, but yes, within the police, I know that some belong to the gangs because it's been seen, when the gang members arrive at the police station and they take out bags with uniforms, and someone takes them away, so I saw all that, but we couldn't tell anyone because it's dangerous for us (46 year-old woman from Cortés).

Yes, but I think they should rotate them, because sometimes I've seen some police officers here for so many months and it seems like some of the gang members become friends with them. I've even seen when I used to live in the […] neighbourhood, they were smoking together with some of them (28 year-old man from Cortés).

People offered different reasons for the police not providing security. Officers could themselves be afraid, as a young woman from Cortés suggested, "the police do nothing. I couldn't tell you [why], maybe out of fear". Indifference is also at play. A man from Tegucigalpa said that after a murder, "the police [patrol] was there. They didn't do anything. As if nothing [had happened]". While

others cited apparent collusion; a man in Tegucigalpa denounced: "That's a tip-off, [sounding the siren], so what do they do? The police, they say, no, everything is quiet in the neighbourhood, there's nothing. Please, excuse me, that's not security".

When there is no justice, people are left to fend for themselves. In most cases, as expressed by a displaced woman in Tegucigalpa: "We fixed it ourselves because we didn't have help from anyone". Displacement is the "solution" for Hondurans who experience high levels of violence and don't find justice, or even support, from the institutions they believe should help them.

People face life-threatening problems with no protection from formal or informal mechanisms. The only option is to disappear and hope the problem doesn't follow them. In the context of the Cycle of Displacement, this indicates that if there is a severe justice need where the justice system fails to assist people, it will lead to displacement. In a better world where justice is real and accessible, the police, the army, the public prosecution, local authorities and community justice mechanisms will offer protection, resolve the justice problem, and guarantee security.

Consequences of displacement

Running away from violence and lack of security provides a temporary solution. Displacement does not resolve the underlying problems but comes with additional challenges. Relocating to a new place involves many risks, and crossing the border with another country to flee from problems is particularly perilous and costly. "Crossing the border [...] is ugly. You run a risk because it's a boat, well, it's a tire. So, yes, it's scary, and in Mexico I didn't go out because I was also afraid of immigration" (21 year old woman from Cortés).

Some respondents report difficulties with access to basic necessities and services during displacement, especially in the initial days, weeks, and months.

> *It's tough because, for starters, there's no water. Water barely reaches you. The health services. It's very complicated, but... You have to... Honduras is going through a very difficult transition right now* (48 year-old man from Cortés).

> *When there was no work, because at that time all the companies had already closed, sometimes my children ate, sometimes they didn't eat, because of the situation, because it was very tough, very critical at that time. So, that's why I went through those tough times* (35 year-old woman from Cortés).

Vulnerable people sink deeper into poverty. As a result of displacement caused by an unresolved justice problem, people lose formal and informal jobs. Businesses that sustain families are disrupted. Displaced people must rebuild their lives from scratch without the support of the social networks and physical capital they have invested in for decades, as are their houses, furniture and goods.

> *Well, the truth is that [displacement] has affected us economically because it was very difficult for us, honestly, don't think otherwise, because we came from there to here without anything* (21 year-old woman from Choluteca).

> *Well, the consequence is that... It was a fight, and I left my business, and I never set it up again, that was the consequence* (57 year-old woman from Cortés).

The fact that the justice problem has not been solved impacts the displaced people's property and valuables at their places of origin. Many stories point to hasty displacement. Running for their lives, people abandon their tangible and intangible capital.

> *The consequences I had were losing my job, leaving all my years of work without fighting for benefits or anything, leaving the house abandoned, losing my things, and emotionally totally destroyed, so yes, it affected me psychologically a lot because... I would leave my house and... I mean, even being in [...], I felt like I was being followed, that they were there, that something would happen to me, and obviously it brought many consequences, but everything gradually stabilised* (25 year-old woman from Cortés).

> *Because, at the time we left, our house was damaged because of the situation, like I said, they fought for the territory and all that, so they even made holes in the house, tried to steal things from the house, so it affected us a lot because we lost many things we had in the house when we left* (23 year old man from Cortés).

> *I was well received, but the issue was how I felt psychologically; at that moment, I was shattered, I mean, losing all my things, things that cost so much, they say that material things can be recovered, but it's difficult* (25 year-old woman from Cortés).

It is not rare for the displaced to face discrimination and mistreatment, further exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

> *And the first few days were really tough because of the humiliations and mistreatment*
> (20 year-old woman from Choluteca).

> *We had to bow our heads many times because they said we were parasites. They hid the food from us, they threw something at us*
> (24 year-old woman from Choluteca).

Lastly, displacement triggered by lack of access to justice takes a considerable toll on people's mental health. Many respondents spoke about emotions such as fear, despair, hopelessness and anger. It is not rare for displaced respondents to talk directly about serious mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Some even shared suicidal thoughts and behaviour. Such consequences affect not only the direct participant in the justice issue but also whole families and communities.

> *There is hopelessness, sadness because you don't know how, how to get out, you say*
> (50 year-old woman from Cortés).

> *It has changed dramatically because before, I had my job, I had more time for myself, I would go out with family or friends. After all this happened to me, I hardly go out anymore. There isn't a day I don't cry because of anxiety, and I ask myself, "Why do so many things happen to me? Why can't I see the light? Why does no one help me when I need it?" It's not easy to be alone, to live alone, and not be able to share your problems with family*
> (26 year-old woman from Cortés).

> *It's horrible. It's practically like being in jail. It causes me more insomnia, more problems*
> (56 year-old man from Choluteca).

> *The consequences. They suddenly become anxious, nervous. Sometimes I tell them to calm down, nothing is happening. I mean, they are alert. Because when that happened, I was working and they were at home and it started to fill up. And they called me, then I couldn't get in because of them*
> (49 year-old woman from Cortés).

The trauma of recent experiences exacerbates the mental struggles of displaced people. Murder, threats, and abuse are traumatic events with long-lasting consequences that interplay with the struggles of displacement.

> *I arrived with depression. [...] I feel traumatised, really. And there are moments when I get up and want to do everything, and I've been excited, I want to do this, I want to look to do this. And when that memory and stuff comes, I fall from one. And I live with that fear that I feel like it's going to happen at some point, or I'm living it at that moment. In other words, there is no peace*
> (27 year-old man from Cortés).

Support is available mainly from UNHCR, iNGOs, NGOs and the personal network of the displaced

Many interviewees said they had some sort of support during their displacement. People did not talk about legal actions or legal aid in the context of solving the problem that triggered the displacement. The narratives are rather about support to mitigate displacement's negative impact and consequences.

Most frequently, interviewees shared that a family member was a source of support, especially in the immediate moments after displacement. Relatives help in various ways - from giving the displaced persons a place to stay or money for rent to referring them to specialised organisations that could offer them further assistance. Friends and neighbours were also said to be helpful during the process. A woman in Tegucigalpa emphasised the importance of previous community ties: "Some neighbours sometimes helped because they gave you encouragement". A young man from Cortés shared: "Well, I stayed with some friends, for whom I'm very grateful because they hosted me at

that time [of displacement] and gave me a job so I could survive there".

National and international NGOs, like MOMUCLAA (Women Movement from the Lopez Arellano Neighbourhood and vicinity) and the Norwegian Refugee Council, and international organisations like UNHCR, were frequently mentioned as sources of support. Many respondents were grateful, in particular, for the psychological support these organisations provided. A displaced young woman from Cortés said: "[MOMUCLAA] have trained me, provided emotional and psychological support, and made me a part of them. Now I can say I've empowered myself a bit more".

The IDPs interviewed reported receiving little support from state institutions. Despite this, they emphasised the desire for the government and its institutions to attend to their cases and help them. A middle-aged man in Tegucigalpa summed it up: "Well, I think that apart

from police justice, there should be more involvement in some offices on the part of the government. In the matter of being able to improve, not only with the support of organisations, but also with the help of the governmental entity". In this sense, the Law for the Prevention, Attention and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, the prevention policy that should be derived from it and the fund for the attention and protection of displaced persons envisioned by the same law represent great opportunities for the Honduran State to offer the necessary support to the displaced population.

It is important to note again that UNHCR Honduras selected the interviewees and that the interviews in the Cortés department were conducted at the offices of MOMUCLAA. Thus, almost everyone interviewed had previous contact with UNHCR and other support organisations, resulting in a biassed sample.

Forced displacement increases vulnerabilities and causes more justice needs

Displacement is not a real solution to the justice problems causing it. Timely, effective and accessible justice would be such a solution, but for many people in Honduras, access to justice remains out of reach.

Some displaced individuals felt optimistic about the situation and considered the problem mitigated because they were safe in their new communities. "Even though I'm not in my house, I have had a little peace. Because there, where we are, there is no violence" (42 year-old woman from Cortés). Safety is the primary concern of the displaced individuals who have fled extreme cases of violence or threats of violence.

Finding temporary relief from the cause of displacement does not shield displaced individuals from facing additional legal problems. We observed that displacement further increases their vulnerability in numerous ways.

> *There is no justice anywhere now. For me, just because I move houses doesn't mean I'll feel protected there* (43 year-old woman from Tegucigalpa).

Displacement causes the rupture of family and community relationships. People are separated from their families and from neighbours they know and trust. As an elderly man from Choluteca put it:

> *For us, it has been painful to leave with a child, to leave without the community even knowing, like, what to do when I simply disappeared, technically disappeared. What happened? Then it leaves a climate of uncertainty, having to cancel phones because people are calling, people are harassing, the family asking what happened, and knowing that one cannot openly disclose*

Some interviewees were victims of scams and burglaries when they became displaced. Burglars steal from suddenly abandoned homes, and, more worryingly, scammers take advantage of desperate people, asking them for money in exchange for help and then disappearing.

Finally, the pervasiveness of gang violence in Honduras makes it difficult to entirely flee from it, as a man in Cortés illustrated: "These little problems always come to you, like extortion, like that". This means that IDPs can escape from the particular situation or the particular group that threatened or harmed them but can seldom completely escape from violence. Similarly, even if the directly affected can escape and be safe, their family members or acquaintances can end up as surrogates, as happened to a woman interviewed in Choluteca:

> *We left on April 29th, from where I'm telling you, and on April 30th, the same gang grabbed, as we say, my nephew. They took him. They took off his shirt to see if he had tattoos. And on a Monday morning, on Sunday, that was on a Sunday, April 30th, the next day my sister looked for him, they didn't find him. They found him like on a Wednesday, they took him to the National Police. And what the National Police told them, there's blood here, because there was a house, like a crazy house they call it, and they said there's blood here, if you're looking for that boy, don't look for him anymore, because they probably already killed him. Until today, my nephew has not been found. And that's where we're afraid that if they killed my nephew, why wouldn't they kill us?* (displaced woman from Choluteca).

A summary of the Cycle of Displacement

The interviews depict a clear and comprehensible picture of the Cycle of Displacement in Honduras. People already dealing with numerous challenges face extreme violence or threats of violence. Most often, violence is caused by organised crime groups, like *maras*, gangs and drug-trafficking networks, but it can also be rooted in domestic violence or political conflicts. Formal or informal justice and law enforcement actors do not provide reliable protection.

On the contrary, police are widely regarded as part of the problem. The only viable solution is to run away from the community, hoping you will find safety and security in a new place. Displacement provides temporary relief, but deepens vulnerabilities, both new and existing, for displaced people. These vulnerabilities and the lack of social and community ties expose IDPs to more justice needs, which they find difficult to solve.
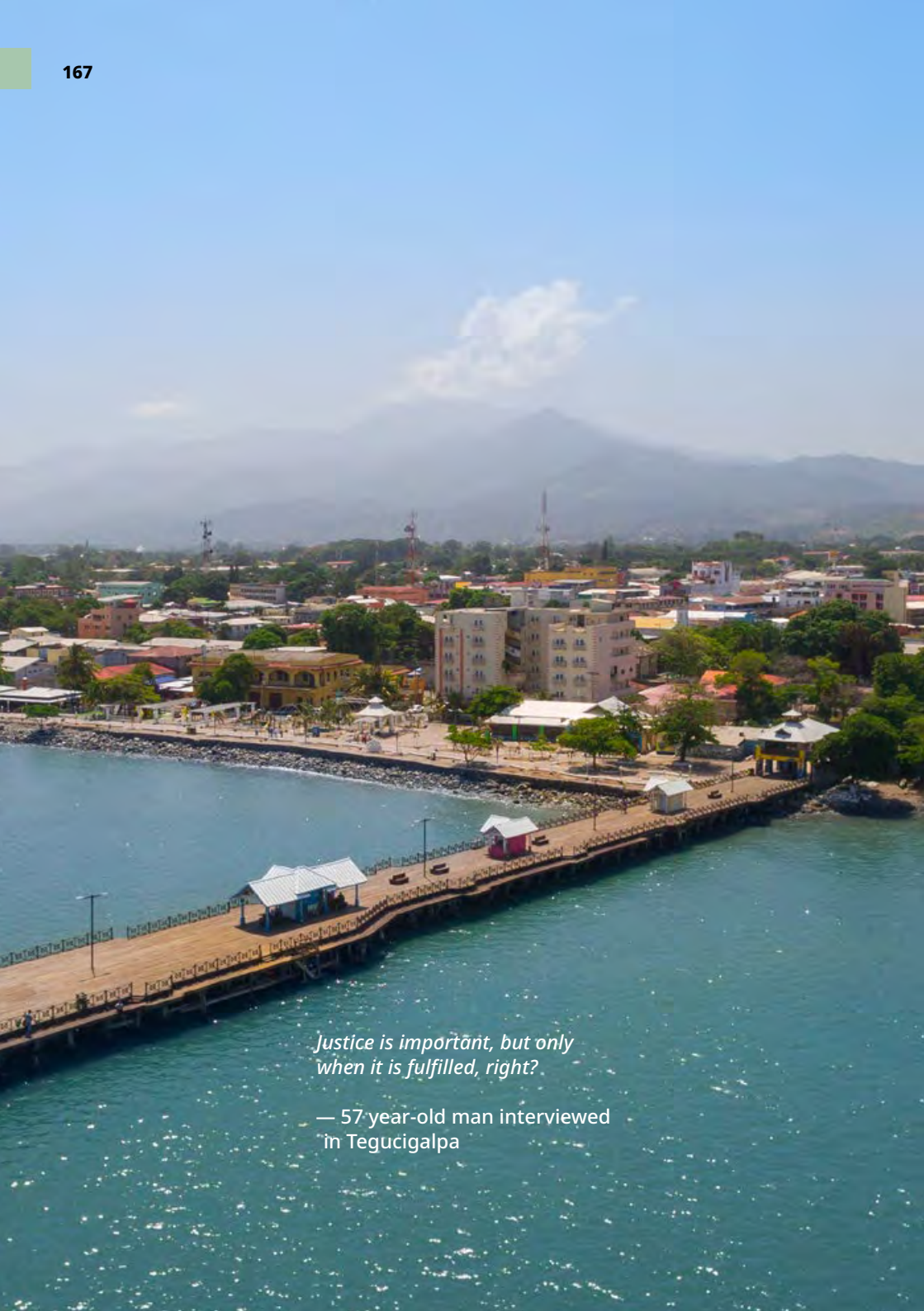
*Justice is important, but only
when it is fulfilled, right?*

— 57 year-old man interviewed
 in Tegucigalpa

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Findings and Implications

We've presented the experiences, needs, desires and satisfaction of Honduran people, with a special emphasis on IDPs and at-risk populations. Through this study, we have produced unique people-centred data that can be used by justice experts, practitioners and innovators to improve access to justice and break the cycle of displacement in Honduras.

Honduras is experiencing a delicate security situation caused by a multitude of converging elements, going from gang violence and drug trafficking to Human Rights violations. The JNS survey and the accompanying qualitative interviews have reflected this situation.

We talked to 2010 Hondurans, of which 8% (157 people) were identified as IDPs. Identifying displaced people in Honduras is a challenge. It is possible that they themselves may not know what an IDP is, that they have normalised their displacement, or may be afraid to recognise themselves as such, be it out of fear or for other reasons. We experimented with an indirect identification approach that, in combination with prioritising high-risk

zones, yielded positive results. This way, we obtained an IDP sample share higher than other recent studies on displacement in the country.

The JNS exposed several challenges to access to justice in Honduras. 31% of people had a legal problem in the last 4 years. Insecurity and violence permeate daily life and affect all Hondurans, making fear and suspicion the norm in many communities. This leads us to believe legal problems in Honduras are being underreported. People are afraid to talk and are distrustful of each other, not knowing if the police officer, their neighbours, or even family members are associated with gangs.

Reporting problems is not common, and the action-taking rate is relatively low. Half of the Hondurans with problems take action, most opting to talk directly to the other party. Third-party engagement is rare. When one is engaged, it tends to be the police. Interventions by third parties revolve around representation, advice and preparing documents, but most people said the third party did nothing, leading to low rates of legal problems resolution.

The qualitative interviews provide further context to the survey data, especially regarding IDPs as the most vulnerable population. The JNS found that IDPs have a higher problem prevalence (52% of them reported one or more legal problems), abandon legal problems at higher rates and experience more egregious consequences, like the death of family members. The interviews show that displacement is seen as a last resource for solving a serious problem and finding safety when formal and informal justice actors don't offer solutions. IDPs often encounter new problems, both legal and non-legal, in their host communities; problems like disputes with their new neighbours, crimes or economic hardships.

In the context of high violence and insecurity in Honduras, people do not find adequate protection from law enforcement or justice actors, formal or informal. In this situation, the only viable solution is to flee the community and hope that violence does not pursue the person. However, this is a temporary relief. Displacement is not a lasting solution; there is no justice in it. In fact, displacement deepens

other vulnerabilities that expose IDPs to greater and more severe justice needs. This is how a cyclical relationship between access to justice and displacement comes to exist: injustice stemming from a serious legal problem that has not been solved leads to displacement as a last resort to be safe, and displacement, in turn, makes it difficult to solve new and old legal problems.

This points to a significant justice gap in Honduras, both for IDPs and the general population. Taking into account the potential underreporting and the difficulty with reliably capturing IDPs through population surveys in Honduras, the justice gap could be even larger. However, Hondurans haven't completely turned their backs to the justice system: they seek transparent and effective institutions that can deliver fair results. 42% of the people surveyed would move to another place if it meant a better access to justice; and for IDPs the percentage is even greater, sitting at 58%.

Based on the findings from the qualitative and quantitative data, we have developed the following set of recommendations:

Keep measuring justice from people's perspective

This study has shown the disproportionate toll that legal problems exert on displaced and at-risk populations in Honduras. Violence appears as a common consequence (and cause) of legal problems. The justice gap is wide.

This study is the first of its kind to measure the justice needs and satisfaction of Hondurans and uncovered the relationship between lack of access to justice and displacement. Through surveys and qualitative interviews, we've contributed to the general understanding of the justice system in Honduras and the experiences of IDPs in the country. Our efforts complement other data-driven projects, like the National Survey on Migration and Remittances by the Honduran National Statistics Institute, which has questions on displacement and security, and the Survey on Violence Against Women and Girls, from the same Institute.

This knowledge is already a step in the right direction. You cannot improve what you do not measure. PCJ-based programming starts with data. Addressing the most common problems, working with the most common justice providers, protecting what works and improving services close to where problems happen.

Honduras has a solid foundation of institutional justice data[45], with the cases that make it to the formal sector. It shows that the Cortés department has seven judges per 100,000 inhabitants, while Francisco Morazán doubles it at 14. It shows how much time cases take in different courts. Now, suppose the justice gap is measured from the perspective of the people. There will be more insights about those who do not go to formal courts and it will enable decision-makers to prioritise limited budgets based on evidence to allow the development of policies that address the justice gap, to improve satisfaction with the processes and to provide the outcomes that people need.

We recommend conducting national justice needs studies to cover more departments. The existence of data and benchmarks may have a transformative effect. It would be beneficial to foster a research infrastructure that draws on both population-based research and official administrative data, so that they can complement each other and be used under a people-centred approach. These data should be transparent and easily accessible by the different State institutions so that they can provide evidence for policy development, measurement, accountability and evaluation.

A particular research topic for which there is a knowledge gap currently is the role that gang members play in their communities beyond violence. The qualitative interviews showed that, in certain cases, gangs exert State-like functions related to social organisation, such as establishing rules to follow and providing protection against other gangs. A better understanding of how these para-state structures work and how people engage with them can aid in formulating policies aimed at repairing the social fabric of Honduras.

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45 See *Boletin Estadístico* 2023 https://www.poderjudicial.gob.hn/Cedij/Boletines%20Estadsticos/Bolet%C3%ADn%20Estadistico%202023%20VF.pdf

Focus on people in situations of vulnerability

IDPs, people at risk of displacement, the poor, the uneducated, women and children: people in these categories tend to suffer more than others from the consequences and impact of legal problems. Other circumstances not measured in this study add to the disproportionate impact: disability, belonging to an ethnic minority, or gender diversity and sexual identity. The 100 Brasilia Rules place a great emphasis on increasing access to justice for people in situations of vulnerability[46], and the Honduras Judiciary, through its Judicial Commission on Access to Justice, has the role of following up the implementation of these Rules in the country.

The information collected in this study makes it plain that it is urgent to focus on improving the experience of women trying to resolve their legal problems. This is especially true for women victims of domestic violence. The interviews showed they are less confident in the ability of State institutions to handle their problems and rely more on NGOs and international organisations. Furthermore, interviewees who were victims of abuse seemed less interested in punitive measures against the abuser and mainly desired to be safe and protected. Punitive measures should not be the only priority for all types of problems; there are conflicts and populations that prioritise protective justice over punitive justice, although the latter should not be left aside.

Justice pathways for women, and other vulnerable populations, should have their needs in mind when designed for these populations' most common common problems.

## Prioritise local policies that answer to specific contexts, which can later be scaled up

Legal problems and displacement patterns differ across the regions of Honduras. The JNS found that Cortés has the highest proportion of IDPs (9%) compared to other departments, but it also has the lowest problem prevalence rate (25%). Another finding is that crime is especially prevalent in Cortés, while neighbour problems are more common in Tegucigalpa, and land issues are salient in Choluteca and Atlantida. Furthermore, the interviews showed that gang violence is a driver of displacement in all of Honduras, but Choluteca had more cases of displacements caused by political violence and human rights violations than other regions.

This implies that even when violence is ever present in people's lives, the form that violence takes and the ways people perceive it vary from place to place. Likewise, violence is not the only problem that Hondurans face or their sole concern. For these reasons, designing and implementing a one-size solution might not be the best approach. Instead, localised policies built with communities could better answer the particularities of each context.

For example, interviewees from Tegucigalpa mentioned that a pathway towards improvement is having better social services, like sports and cultural opportunities for the youth and spaces to build a sense of community. This, coupled with the prevalence of neighbour problems in the capital, signals an opportunity for social policies focused on improving coexistence. Similarly, the frequency of land problems in Choluteca and the experiences captured by the interviews in this department, point to the need

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46 The 100 Brasilia Rules, or Rules on Access to Justice for Persons in Conditions of Vulnerability, were approved by the XIV Ibero-American Judicial Summit in 2008 and encompass a set of policies, measures, tools and support that allow this group of people full access to the services of the judicial system. Available at https://brasilia100r.com/documentacion/
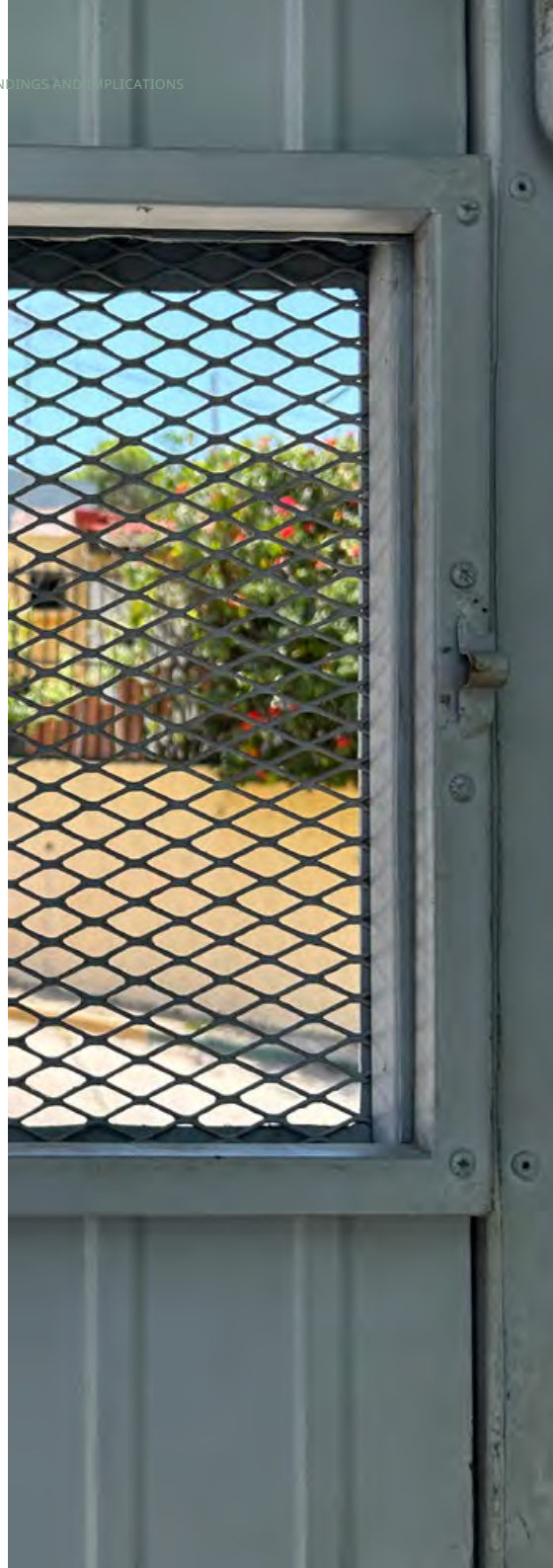
of increasing protections to protest and demonstration rights and for the defenders of Human Rights.

Well-crafted policies that work in localised contexts can later be scaled up and applied to other places in the country or at the national level. For example, the Displacement Law seeks to create a favourable environment for local policies and initiatives focused on displacement through the creation of Municipal Units for the Attention and Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons (UMAPPDEF, by its acronym in Spanish) in the most affected municipalities (Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Choloma, La Ceiba, Choluteca, El Progreso, Juticalpa and Catacamas)[47]. Monitoring and evaluation are key to this process, and so is people-centred data, to understand what works and replicate it.

Simplify and rationalise criminal justice procedures and reduce impunity

Data on crime problems show low resolution rates, low action rates and low satisfaction rates. People have problems accessing useful, competent and trustworthy third parties that can deal with crime. All of this in one way or another ends up widening the justice gap.

According to the information obtained in this study, lack of trust in the Police is the cause of low action rates when being a victim of a serious crime. The judicial system has low legitimacy, too. People seem to have an understanding of justice that is strongly related to security. This is why they told us the Armed Forces should tackle legal problems instead of civil local and national authorities.

People in the JNS and the interviews routinely said that the police did not do anything when they engaged them. A common complaint was that they could not report a crime or a threat due to red tape and procedural requirements. The reporting process should be simplified and streamlined to aid with this. People should not be required to attend a specific office of the police to report a crime or be asked to deliver all the evidence to continue with a report, as some interviewees complained. If victims found it easier to make a report, this would build trust and, ultimately, reduce impunity,

UNODC suggests that a PCJ-driven crime prevention and criminal justice reform aiming to reduce crime, violence and victimisation has to move from "punitive measures to evidence-based prevention that addresses the root causes and risk factors of crime and violence, strengthens community and youth resilience and offers alternatives to detention to those in conflict with the law where possible in order to lower rates of recidivism."[48]

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47 Decree 154-2022, March 20, 2023, Number 36,184. Available at https://www.tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/

48 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2023). Global programme: People-centred crime prevention and criminal justice reform. Available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/LegalAid/A2J/Global_Programme_on_People-Centred_Crime_Prevention_and_Criminal_Justice.pdf

Foster justice innovation

The distribution of the justice providers people most commonly go to shows a massive space for innovation. People try to avoid the formal sector but rarely get help resolving their problems beyond the Police.

Neighbour-related problems need dispute resolution mechanisms to defuse disputes before they escalate. Civil matters can be brought to Juzgados de Paz or Juzgados de Letras in Honduras, but none of these formal tribunals have courts focused on issues of living together and coexistence. This leads to processes that are more preoccupied with checking a list of requirements than with resolving the underlying issues. Building more

courts and training more judges will not increase access to justice as long as there is no social cohesion and trust between Hondurans.

Civil society organisations, informal mediators, and prominent local figures are some of the non-legal actors who can also provide justice; an informal justice that is affordable, accessible and a complement to the formal justice system. Strengthening strategies for instructing and training community actors in mediation and conflict resolution, such as the Judicial Facilitators programme promoted by the Judiciary, can bring justice closer to the people.

Enabling environment to tackle the root causes of displacement and holistic support for victims

Out of the 92 countries with IDP-related protection laws, regulations or strategies, Honduras contributes with three of these: between 2013 and 2023, Honduras passed the Executive Decree PCM-053-2013, which created the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence; the new penal code of 2020 contains Article 248 on forced displacement as a crime against freedom of determination, together with extortion, blackmailing or threats; and the Protection Law of 2023, which we have mentioned throughout this report and highlights the importance of access to justice as a measure of protection against displacement[49].

This is a good environment for taking the next step in protecting displaced people, but work still needs to be done. A national policy for the prevention of displacement, envisioned in the Protection Law of 2023, has to be well-designed and adopted. This

implies bringing the relevant actors to the table, including those who are not part of the State: origin and host communities, and especially IDPs must be included in the design of the policy, listening to their needs and ideas for solutions. Preventing forced displacement needs decisive public action to tackle its root causes: insecurity, violence and human rights violations.

When displacements occur, IDPs need supporting services, compensation, and protection of their rights. Data shows that interventions in mental health are a dire necessity in the surveyed areas. Violence causes psychological impacts that state institutions are not currently addressing. In this sense, it is important to avoid the re-victimization of IDPs when providing them with support and protection, as well as to guarantee the protection of their mental health through psychological support that recognizes the intangible effects of displacement.

Likewise, displacement affects many other rights, like those related to education, labour and housing, which

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49 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024). IDP law and policy dashboard. Available at https://rimap.unhcr.org/idp-law-policy-dashboard

may cause new displacements as people relocate once again in search of a job or because they cannot afford rent in their host communities.

Recognising and understanding these post-displacement impacts is key to ensuring the protection of IDPs. Overcoming the violence that generates displacement is fundamental, but rights protection services for displaced persons cannot depend on it. Attention, support and protection for displaced persons must be guaranteed in the contexts of violence specific to the places from which IDPs often originate or in which they tend to settle. Only in this way will it be possible to promote the achievement of durable solutions in which rights are restored and access to justice is guaranteed. Justice can also act as a mechanism to satisfy these and other rights violated by displacement.

Strengthen Honduras' social fabric and guard it against violence

People are afraid to discuss their problems. Silence is the norm in Honduras, especially when dealing with violence. The JNS, but in particular the interviews, aid to fill this silence: violence, of all sorts, is ever-present in the lives of Hondurans and both it and its consequences have been normalised. It's common for people to be distrustful of authorities and of other people, and it's frequent to not take action and to never obtain justice. Violence breeds injustice, and when justice isn't viable, displacement becomes the only option to face violence.

As a result, the social fabric in Honduras is worn out. The lack of trust that the Honduran society experiences makes it possible for any misunderstanding to escalate into a neighbour-related legal problem, and those, in turn, can escalate into crimes with violent consequences. Likewise, there aren't clear communal actors that can serve as sources of informal justice, even for the simplest of legal problems.

Violence has fueled a crisis of displacement and injustice in Honduras. Addressing the crisis requires that public, private and community institutions work together, even in the face of adverse conditions. Ensuring that there are spaces in which citizens, organisations and the state can meet, express opinions and outline solutions is crucial to recovering the social fabric.

Creating non-politicised neighbourhood boards and security committees in which authorities and community members both participate, can help to rebuild trust inside communities, promoting dialogue and transparency between people. Cultural, sports and health-promotion activities inside neighbourhoods can strengthen resilience, contributing to the reconciliation between the State and the communities, as well as helping to build a sense of community and a support network beyond family.

We know that high-trust societies prevent and resolve many legal problems. Policies need to focus on repairing the social fabric and at the core, which is currently mainly torn by violence. We are aware of the size of the challenge. Security, trust building

and community sense are all parts of the puzzle. Security, trust-building and a sense of community are some of the pieces of the puzzle, but a comprehensive and strategic approach to address violence is needed. The only way forward to improve justice, and many other aspects of Honduran life, is to provide sustainable solutions to the violence that the people of Honduras face.

Annex 1:
List of problems

Land

- Disputes over territorial limits/ boundaries
- Disputes over the use and access of land and its resources (natural easements, grazing areas, etc.)
- Disputes over titles, formalisation, ownership, leasing, possession and occupation of land
- Separation of jointly owned land
- Disputes related to the selling of your land
- You were unjustly removed from your land
- Lack of protection of destroyed or abandoned houses
- Other land problem

Domestic violence

- Physical abuse (hitting, kicking, slapping, throwing objects, etc.)
- Emotional abuse (name calling, belittling, constant humiliation, threatening to hurt, threatening to take children away, limiting behaviour, etc.)
- Abuse and sexual violence
- Economic deprivation
- Other domestic violence problem

Housing

- Problems related to rental housing
- Disputes pertaining to horizontal property
- Eviction from home/shelter
- Other housing problem

Neighbour-related

- Regular and excessive noise
- Threats, harassment or violence between neighbours
- Disputes caused by pets
- Disorder or damage in the neighbourhood caused by neighbours
- Disputes related to managing assets, resources and shared elements (money, ducts, pipes, walls, roofs, etc.)
- Mismanagement of waste, garbage and odours
- Other problem with neighbours

Employment

- Unfair termination of contract
- Non-payment of salaries, benefits (premiums, layoffs), overtime and settlements
- Non-payment of social security, health affiliation and benefits by the employer
- Disputes about work hours, leaves or vacations
- Work accident
- Harassment and employment discrimination
- Invalid work contract
- Obstacles to unionisation and associated agreements
- Other employment issue

Family-related

- Divorce, separation or liquidation of the conjugal partnership
- Parental Rights/Child Custody
- Child support disputes between ex-partners
- Difficulties due to household expenses between couples
- Food disputes for children and the elderly
- Inheritances, wills and successions
- Other family problem

Health, education and other public services

- Disputes over receipt of benefits from social programs
- Health care related disputes
- Dispute over access to education
- Dispute over access to medicines
- Dispute over pensions and layoffs
- Disputes over access to services for people with disabilities and the elderly
- Disputes for the recognition of victim status, rights and associated reparations
- Other health, education or public services problem

Crime

- Theft
- Burglary
- Damage to property
- Assault or robbery
- Manslaughter/murder, or attempted, voluntary or involuntary
- Physical injuries or assaults
- Sexual crime (harassment, abuse, rape, sexual exploitation, among others)
- Crimes related to drugs (cultivation and trafficking)
- Cattle rustling
- Labour exploitation
- Extortion, blackmail, threat
- Insult and slander
- Other crimes or offences

Consumer

- Purchase of defective or counterfeit products
- Poor quality services
- Refusal to respect the guarantee
- Incorrect or disputed billing
- Disputes over access and charging for public services
- Other consumer problem

Traffic-related

- Involuntary manslaughter due to traffic accident
- Unintentional physical injuries from a traffic accident
- My cattle, or another animal, died in a traffic accident
- Disputes about damage to the vehicle (motorcycle, car, bicycle, other)
- Problems due to fines or tickets
- Other traffic problem

Money-related

- Disputes related to (informal) borrowing or lending
- Disputes related to a bank loan
- Disputes over insurance claims
- Difficulties with the fulfilment of a service contract
- Disputes over the declaration and payment of taxes
- Fraud, impersonation or swindling
- Report to credit centres
- Other money problem

Official documents

- Difficulties over obtaining an identity document (citizenship card, digital card, passport, immigration status)
- Difficulties over obtaining a birth certificate (civil registration)
- Difficulties over obtaining the marriage certificate
- Difficulties in registering a company
- Difficulties in obtaining the military ID
- Other problem related to official documents

Authorities and public order (security)

- Physical violence
- Psychological abuse
- Torture
- Arrest without justification
- Forced recruitment (including minors)
- Forced disappearance (disappeared relatives)
- Harassment or abuse at checkpoints
- Kidnapping or illegal retention
- Other security related problem

Corruption

- Abuse of power by public official, traditional/indigenous/community authority, armed forces
- Solicitation of bribe by a public official, traditional/indigenous/community authority or armed forces
- Solicitation of bribe by a private company
- Other corruption problem

Annex 2:
IDPs Identification Questions

1. Question: *Is this community your place of origin?*

Response options:

a. Yes

b. No

2. *When was the last time you changed residences?*

Response options:

a. Less than 6 months

b. Between 6 months and 1 year

c. Between 1 year and 3 years

d. More than 3 years

e. I do not wish to reply

3. *Have you ever left your place of residence in an unplanned way?*

Response options:

a. Yes

b. No

4. *Why did you decide/had to move?*

Response options:

a. Work motives (seeking better opportunities, better working conditions, change of work place)

b. Quality of life (lower cost of living, more space, own housing, access to public services)

c. Family reasons (marriage, divorce, becoming a caregiver, family reunion)

d. Education reasons (access to education, better quality of education)

e. Human Rights violations (abuses and violations from the State)

f. Land rights violations (mining or tourism projects)

g. Health reasons (seeking treatment, access to better health services)

h. Insecurity (you or your family feel insecure)

i. Violent acts (threats, dispossession)

j. Gender based violence (domestic violence, LGBTI+ community discrimination)

k. Political violence (persecution based on ideologies, differences in political interests, prohibition or pressure to vote, etc.)

l. Natural disasters and climate change (floods, draughts, landslides)

m. Other

n. I do not wish to reply

5. *What would you like to do in the future? (one year from now)*

Response options:

a. Remain in your place of residence

b. Move inside the country

c. Move outside the country

d. Other

e. I do not wish to reply

6. *Why are you considering moving out from your current place of residence?*

Response options:

a. Work motives (seeking better opportunities, better working conditions, change of work place)

b. Quality of life (lower cost of living, more space, own housing, access to public services)

c. Family reasons (marriage, divorce, becoming a caregiver, family reunion)

d. Education reasons (access to education, better quality of education)

e. Human Rights violations (abuses and violations from the State)

f. Land rights violations (mining or tourism projects)

g. Health reasons (seeking treatment, access to better health services)

h. Insecurity (you or your family feel insecure)

i. Violent acts (threats, dispossession)

j. Gender based violence (domestic violence, LGBTI+ community discrimination)

k. Political violence (persecution based on ideologies, differences in political interests, prohibition or pressure to vote, etc.)

l. Natural disasters and climate change (floods, draughts, landslides)

m. Other

n. I do not wish to reply

About the stakeholders group

We are grateful for the invaluable contributions of the members of the stakeholders group, composed by experts of state institutions, academia and civil society organisations in Honduras. This group participated in the design of the survey, the questionnaire adaptation and the interpretation of results.

Below, we recognize the contributions of the institutions that participated.

Members:

- *Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa*

- Centre of Studies for Democracy (CESPAD)

- National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH)

- *Equipo para la Reflexión, Comunicación e Investigación* (ERIC-SJ)

- School of Public Prosecutors, Public Prosecutor's Office

- School of Attorneys, Attorney General's Office of the Republic

- Judicial School, Supreme Court of Justice

- Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Honduras

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

- United Nations Development Programme

- Secretariat for Human Rights, Directorate for the Control of Conventionality

- Ministry of the Interior, Justice and Decentralization, Directorate of Access to Justice
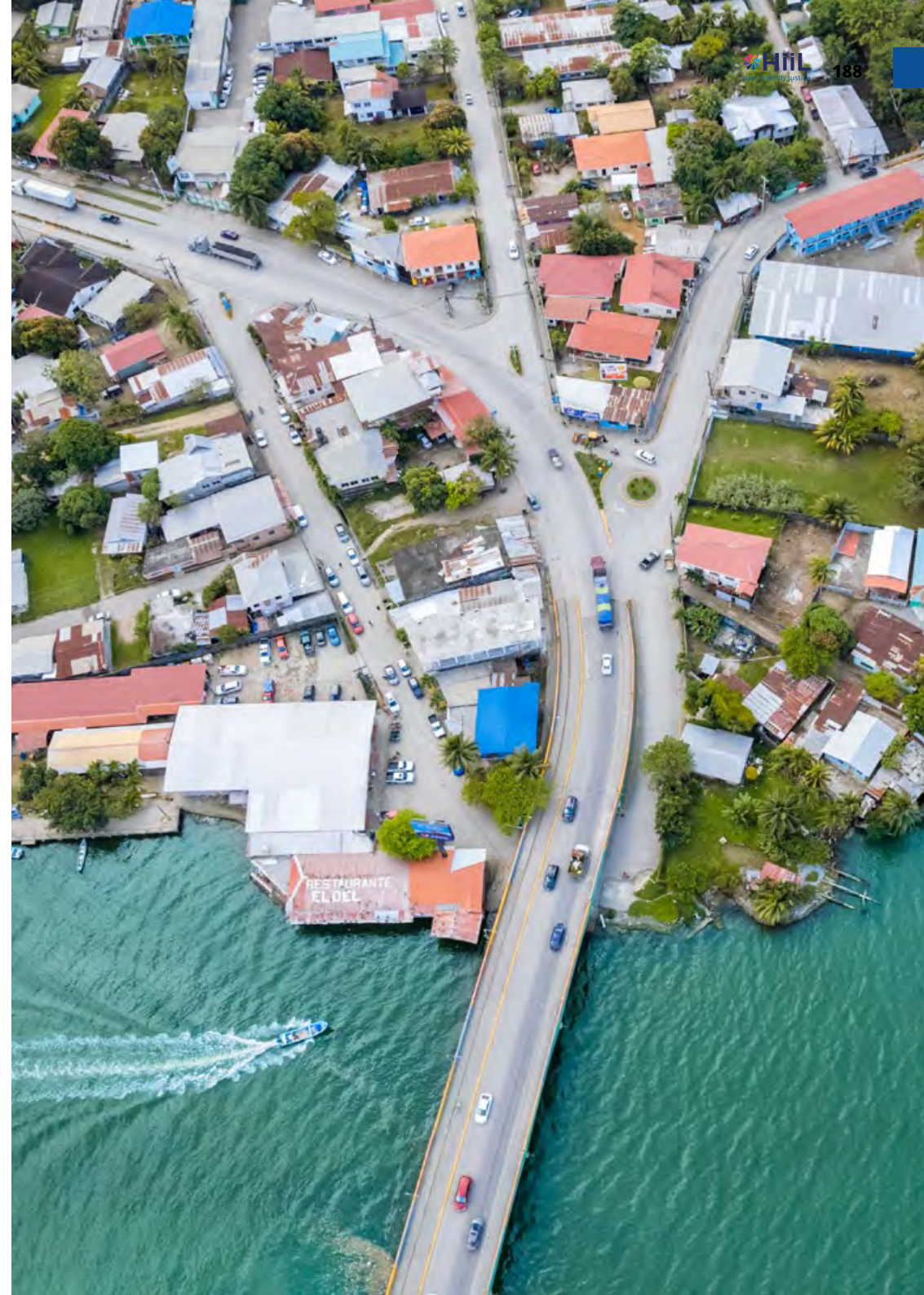
About the JNS

Justice is not just about the number of reported crimes. Nor is it about courts and laws. It is about common people. Their daily lives, their pain and frustration – and the justice outcomes they get or do not get.

That is why we listen to people in each country to measure their satisfaction. We collect the voices of thousands with our Justice Needs & Satisfaction Survey (JNS) tool. It is the state of play that reveals people's actual legal problems, experiences and access to justice. Adjusted to the specific context of the country it provides in-depth understanding for people working in the justice sector.

We also make the data available to policy-makers through clever interfaces so that they can work with the findings.

The responsible use of this data leads to knowledge, creates empowerment, and builds accountability.

The countries we have worked in since 2014 include Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Iraq, Mali, Morocco, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United States. In partnership with UNHCR, we have conducted studies on the justice needs of forcibly displaced and stateless populations in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Iraq. In 2024, we plan to publish reports on Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Nigeria and Uganda.

For more information, data, and insights, visit:
www.hiil.org
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