



# CAWN

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## 1. CAWN news

### **CAWN briefed by prominent feminist leader on Honduras political crisis**

Mirta Kennedy, Director of the Centre for the Study of Women in Honduras (CEM-H), gave a thorough overview of the political situation in Honduras to CAWN's Board of Directors so as to inform their campaigning work to support the women's movement in Honduras. Mirta spoke of their efforts to re-establish the rule of law in the country after a coup d'etat in July 2009 by a

military junta removed elected president Manuel Zelaya one day before Hondurans were to be consulted on the possibility of a constitutional reform.

The National Front of Resistance (NFR), of which CEM-H and the feminist movement is part, has condemned what they see a successful attempt to prevent the constitutional reform envisioned by Zelaya, that would have allowed for further improvements to the social security system in Honduras as well as for an enhanced control over foreign and corporations' interests.

The NFR, Mirta explained, is alerting Honduran society and the international community of the melt-down of rule of law and of the security and justice systems in Honduras as a result of endemic corruption and organized crime entrenched at the core of State institutions, particularly of police and the military.



Mirta pointed out the role of arms and drugs dealing in their transit through Honduras in giving EEUU license to meddle with the country's affairs in the name of tackling crime . In reality, the FNR warns, foreign interests lie in preventing integration projects, such as the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean (ALBA project), that challenge the economic predominance of EEUU in the region, and in ensuring easy access to natural resources, including oil, and to open markets for EEUU corporations.

When Zelaya aligned himself with interests contrary to those of the EEUU and of conservative political circles and threatened to start a constituent process that would have secured his advances, a military elite forcibly removed him from power.

Mirta shared that the joint struggle that emerged after the coup d'etat has been a window of opportunity for feminists in Honduras whose demands have now been taken on board by

other progressive groups and sectors of the political spectrum that were not responsive to gender-based concerns in the past.

She expressed hope in international solidarity as protests shake the globe and called for young activists in the UK and Europe to join their voices to those of feminists in Honduras demanding justice.

### **CAWN launches new project: *Women's Rights, Social Inclusion and the Media***

CAWN has embarked on a new development education project, funded by the European Commission, in partnership with Frauensolidaritaet, based in Austria.

During the next three years we will strive to increase public awareness about women's rights and development especially in relation to sexual and labour exploitation and the trafficking of women in Europe . Our aim is to make the connections between these issues and poverty, gender discrimination and the portrayal of women in mainstream media.



The project is all about linking women's lives across the world. It is also about understanding the importance of critical thinking to challenge gender, racial and other stereotypes and to support women activists to gain the skills and confidence to bring change about. CAWN and Frauensolidaritaet (FS) want to be part of a process of empowerment and so we will be harnessing the power of social, community and alternative media to help students and young activists trigger change.

Expect in-depth policy briefings and factsheets, trainings on the use of alternative media and on

advocacy skills, public meetings with activists from Central America and Southern Africa and exciting radio programmes. Everybody is welcome to join so please give us a shout if you would like to learn more about how you can be part of it.

## 2. CAWN events

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### Registration for training on advocacy and campaigning for women's rights now open

*Saturday 11th February - Development House, London*

CAWN is now accepting applications to participate in a training session for students and young activists keen on expanding their skills and knowledge to influence policies and practice that impact women's lives in the UK and abroad. Participants can expect to deepen their understanding of the links between trafficking and labour exploitation and issues of security, poverty and gender discrimination, and to practice their strategy and planning skills to campaign effectively. Lunch and an advocacy toolkit will be provided. Please, email us to [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org) by Friday 3rd February to request a place.

## 3. Central America updates

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**Central American women march for end to violence** (from Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign bulletin).

On 25th November 2011, thousands of Central American women marched in the capitals of their countries demanding an end to violence against women and children and also for an end to the

reining impunity for the perpetrators of that violence.

Organizers said that up to that date 1,400 women have been murdered in Central America in 2011. In Guatemala, where 651 women died and 99% of the crimes are never resolved: over 2,000 women marched in Guatemala City. In San Salvador women marched to the Supreme Court to “make the problem of violence visible.” 300 women were killed in El Salvador in 2011. In Costa Rica, where 500 women marched, organizers said 63 women had died.



In Nicaragua women rallied to the National Assembly demanding the passage of a bill introduced last year that would mandate the maximum 30 year sentence to those convicted of murdering a woman. 81 women had been killed in Nicaragua in the first 11 months of 2011.

### Guatemala: Young Mayan Women Shape the Future

At 24 years old, Laura has already endured a lifetime of suffering. Growing up in an indigenous community in Quetzaltenango, in western Guatemala, Laura lost her mother at the tender age of 13. She dropped out of school to become the substitute mother for her eight siblings. Her father turned to alcohol, which fuelled violence. Laura was his regular victim.



But Laura was never defeated. Today, she is an advocate for women and adolescents, thanks to a project implemented by Population Council Guatemala, a grantee of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The project aims to empower indigenous young women as agents of change in their communities. [Continue reading.](#)

### **San Salvador Declaration on Access to Health and Justice for Women Victims of Sexual Violence**



Government officials and leader in the fields of health and justice from several Central American countries, as well as representatives from several international organizations, met in San Salvador on September 21, 2011, to sign a declaration reaffirming their commitment to advancing the development and implementation of comprehensive care for victims of sexual violence, as well as the inter-agency monitoring of these efforts.

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The Declaration of San Salvador was adopted during the High-Level Regional Meeting on Health and Justice for Women Victims of Sexual Violence, held in the city of San Salvador. [This document](#) addresses an issue that is central to women's lives and health.

### **Statement in the face of assassinations in Honduras**

Tegucigalpa, 8th November, 2011

The Centre for the Study of Women in Honduras expresses its deepest rejection and condemnation of the assassinations of engineer Alfredo Landaverde, journalist Paz Luz Marina Villalobos and camera man Delmer Canales.

We extend our sincere sympathy to the families of the victims and we join the firm demand for justice so that these crimes do not go unpunished like the thousands of crimes against young people, women, students, journalists, social activists and grassroots political organizations, farmers, and other victims, that sadden and outrage Honduran society.

We are concerned that a war waged by sinister forces within the country and strengthened by the breakdown of rule of law as a result of the coup, can not be stopped by legal measures or by turning to institutions, as they are corrupted and criminal. We warn the Honduran society and the international community of the melt-down of rule of law, and the security and justice systems.

We join our voice to those calling for an urgent, profound and comprehensive re-foundation of state institutions, with a broad participation of Honduran society and under the scrutiny of international justice and human rights organisms.

## Mexico: 10th Anniversary of Cottonfield case

On 7th November 2001 the tortured and mutilated bodies of 8 young women and girls were found in an abandoned cotton field in the outskirts of Juarez City, north of Mexico.

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cottonfield case was recently celebrated, a decade that has seen the Inter-American justice system taking the case and reaching a decision in 2009. To date, Mexican authorities have largely failed to abide with the terms of the decision and the recently unveiled Cottonfield memorial has been much criticised by victims and activists.



The Court determined that it is not possible to dispute that the killings amounted to femicide. This is an important decision and so becomes the monitoring of Mexico's compliance with it, given that femicides rates stand high across Central America. This monitoring though has so far been fulfilled by local women's organisations and activists in the face of a denial campaign led by a large section of the Juarez's business community. [Read more \(in Spanish\).](#)

## 4. upcoming events and conferences

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### International meeting on Human rights in solidarity with Honduras

*17th - 20th February 2012 - Bajo de Aguan, Colon, Honduras*

The meeting will take place in Bajo de Aguan (Colon) in Honduras farming region, suffering a humanitarian crisis and systematic violations of human rights. One of the meeting's objectives is to explore the ongoing consequences of the coup on Honduras, including pervasive impunity and militarisation, as well as the corporate investments that fuel an unequal struggle for land. Email [mioaguan2012@gmail.com](mailto:mioaguan2012@gmail.com) for registration. [More information here.](#)

### "Gender and Justice" Competition

*Deadline: 16 Jan 2012*

This competition, organized by UNIFEM and the Mexican Supreme Court of the Nation, aims to promote research and divulgation of gender, justice and human rights issues. Participants can submit a documentary, a report or an essay. Successful entries should provide tools for training, awareness and sensibilisation of the authorities, as well as general public and international bodies. [More information \(in Spanish\).](#)

