ASOCIACIÓN PARA UNA SOCIEDAD MÁS JUSTA

CAPÍTULO EN HONDURAS DE TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

EXTENDED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Behind The badge

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE PERFORMANCE IN HONDURAS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF VICTIMS, DETAINEES, AND POLICE OFFICERS

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Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa
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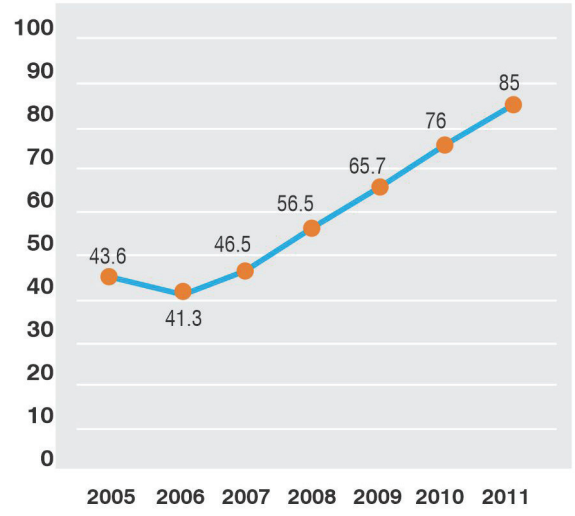
INTRODUCTION

The Honduran police force is in the midst of a historic reform, the results of which are still unfolding. Although public perception of the police has been historically negative—marked by suspicion and lack of confidence—the state has made concerted efforts to bolster the image of the police through systemic reforms, driven and supported by civil society and the international community. After more than four years of reforms, this study analyzes the current status of police perception in Honduras, and recommends changes going forward.

The Honduran police force has long been associated with inefficiency, corruption, and systemic human rights violations. Public perception of the police reached an all-time low in 2013, when 78.5% of the Honduran population said that they did not trust the police (Latinobarómetro). The lack of confidence was due in part to a wave of violence that swept through Honduras around the same time. In 2011 and 2012, Honduras had the highest homicide rate in the world, with over 85 homicides a year per 100,000 people (World Bank). A study by Association for a More Just Society (AJS) found that between 2010 and 2013, of these homicides, only around 4% resulted in a person being convicted — thousands were murdered with complete impunity (Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa, 2016).

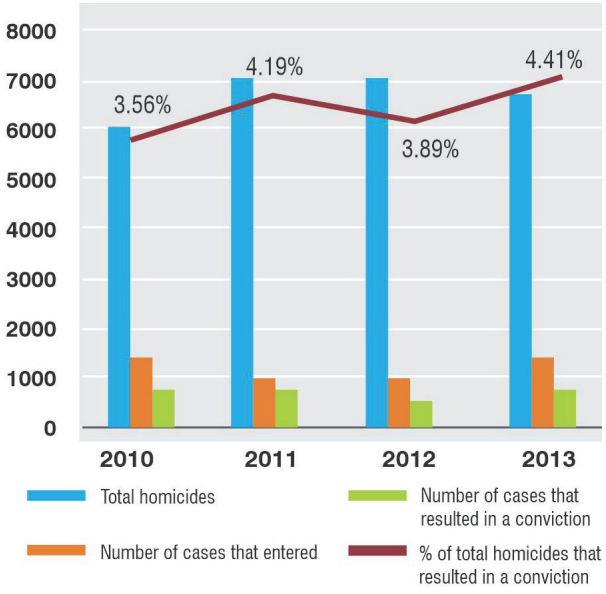
In the midst of this unprecedented violence, the Honduran police themselves were implicated in a series of high-profile assassinations. These included the killing of Julián Arístides Gonzáles, Honduran antidrug czar, in 2009 (Malkin y Arke); Alfredo Landaverde, an academic studying drug-trafficking, in 2011 (Ferri); and Carlos Castellanos, the son of the dean of the National University of Honduras, also in 2011 (Hernández).

Graphic 1 | Homicide rate in Honduras (2005-2011)



Source: Banco Mundial

Graphic 2 | Impunity in Honduras



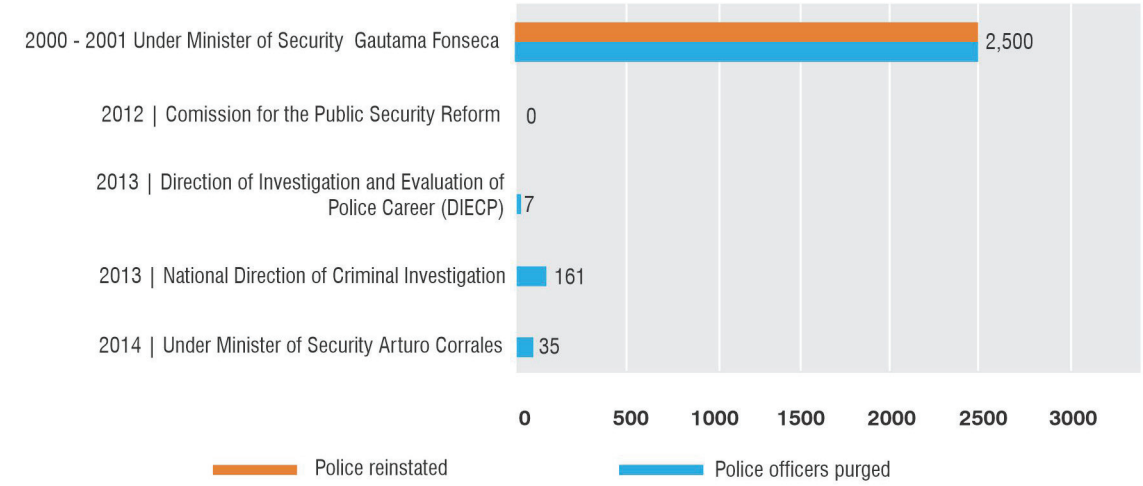
Source: Alianza por la Paz y la Justicia, 2019

The murders were headline news for weeks, and further deteriorated the already-battered image of the police.

Years of violence, impunity, and police corruption have led to a widespread belief in Honduras that the police are unable (or unwilling) to protect those they are meant to serve. Because of this lack of trust, victims are unlikely to report crimes, give statements or otherwise cooperate with the police, leading to a vicious cycle of unresolved crimes and escalating violence.

Between 2000 and 2014 the Honduran government made five separate attempts to reform the police and purge corrupt officers from the force, but the efforts failed and nearly all of the purged officers were ultimately re-instated or honorably discharged (Wilson Center, 2019).

Graphic 3| Previous attempts of police reform



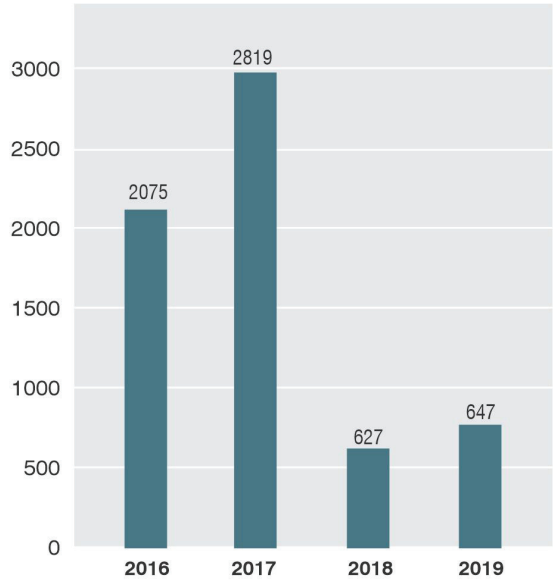
Source: Wilson Center, 2019

The reforms and attempts for change have continued and the results keep unfolding. Since 2013, several of the criteria that might indicate a positive change in the Honduran National Police and the overall degree of security seem to show that improvements are taking place. The budget of the Ministry of Security has almost doubled from 3.5 billion lempiras (USD 176 million) in 2012 to 6.6 billion lempiras (USD 274 million) in 2018. As a percentage of the national budget, it has increased from 2.4% to 3.2% (FOSDEH, 2018).

In 2016 the Special Purge and Transformation Commission was formed to tackle police corruption and create long-term change, and the resulting reform efforts are promising. Since 2016, the Commission has purged 6,168 of the 13,000 members of the Honduran police force, including every member of the top three ranks of the force (Wilson Center, 2019).

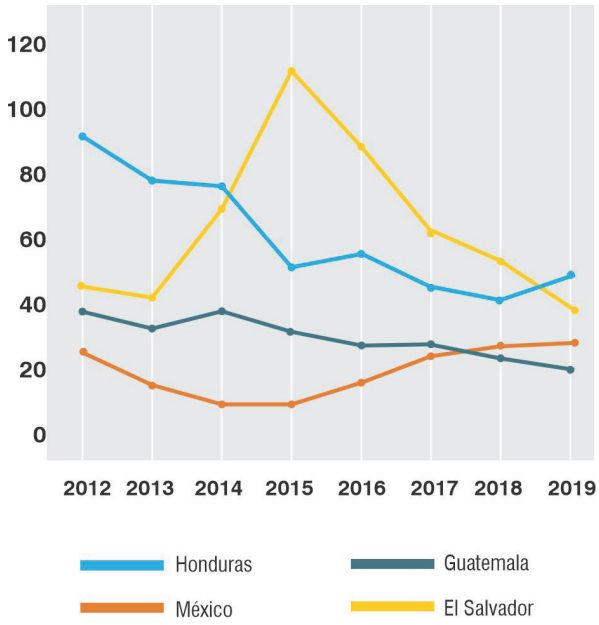
The Honduran government has worked in tandem, hiring 11,906 new officers, opening a new police academy and lengthening police training programs from 3 to 12 months (Alianza por la

Graphic 4| Number of police officers purged by the special purge and Transformation Commission since 2016



Source: Data provided to us by the Commission

Graphic 5| Homicide rate Northern Triangle and Mexico



Source: World Bank and Insight Crime

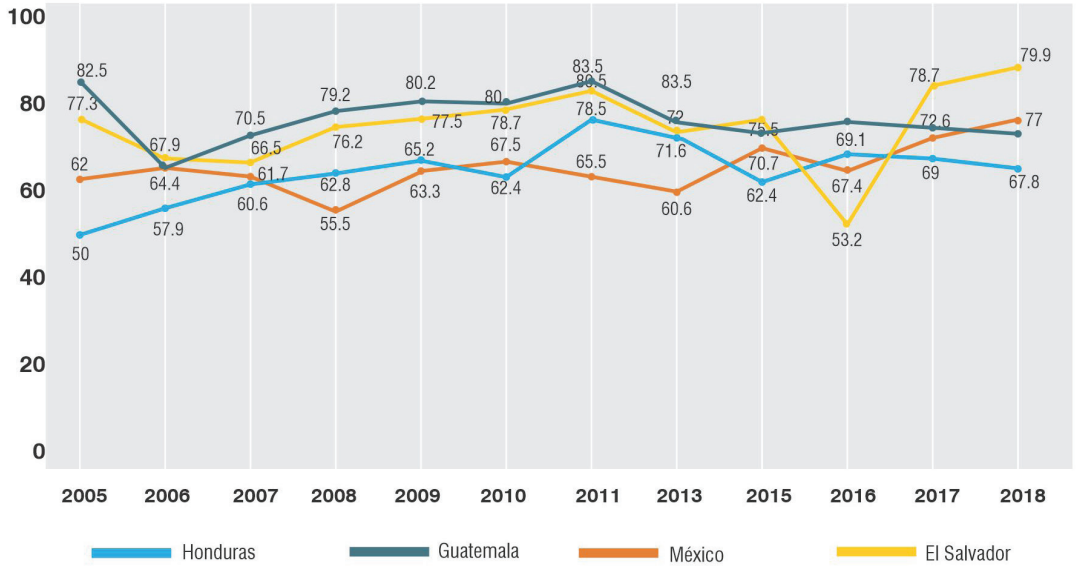
Paz Justicia, 2019). The police reform has been accompanied by promising signs of improvement in violence and impunity levels in Honduras. Homicide rates have declined steadily from their peak in 2012: in 2019 there were 41.2 homicides per 100,000 people in Honduras, less than half the number of people killed in 2012.

In addition to the decrease in homicides, there has been an improvement in conviction rates for homicide cases. In 2019, a report by AJS found that the impunity rate for homicides nationwide had decreased from 96% in 2012 to 87% in 2017 (Alianza por la Paz y la Justicia, 2019). This means that in 2012 only 4% of homicides were solved, while in 2017 this number increased to 13% (Alianza por la Paz y la Justicia, 2019).

But despite these positive changes, distrust in the police has remained stubbornly high. In 2018, two out of three Hondurans reported that they distrust the police (Latinobarómetro). Distrust in the police dropped from 78.5% in 2011 to 62.4% in 2015, but increased again and has remained stagnant at around 69% in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

In 2018, two out of three Hondurans reported that they distrust the police (Latinobarómetro).

Graphic 6 | Distrust in the Police in the Northern Triangle and Mexico



METHODOLOGY

Rather than conduct yet another general population poll, this study focuses on three subsets of individuals who have had sustained interactions with the police: crime victims, detainees, and police officers themselves. The study further narrows by focusing on the first 24 hours after a crime is reported or an arrest is made. The goal is to listen to, categorize, and contextualize the opinions, complaints and suggestions of these groups.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodology. First, interviewers conducted 51 in-depth interviews: 20 with suspects detained in 3 police stations in Tegucigalpa, 15 with crime victims, and 16 with police officers. The interviewers asked open-ended questions in order to identify common complaints. For the victims and detainees, the interviews focused on what the police did well, what they did poorly, and what changes the interviewees would like seen. In contrast, the police officers who were interviewed were presented with a list of common complaints and asked to corroborate or otherwise respond to the complaints.

Based on the in-depth interviews, three surveys were designed to measure perception of police conduct within the three groups. Each survey included a section of questions unique to that group, along with a shared list of common questions about general police conduct. 611 surveys were then conducted in four cities, each in a different area of the country. The cities were chosen because of their diversity in geography, size and crime levels.

	Tegucigalpa	San Pedro Sula	La Ceiba	Santa Rosa Copán	Total
Police	209	103	40	21	373
Detainees	106	24	19	10	159
Victims	105	18	11	10	144
Total	**414**	**138**	**68**	**41**	**661**

The surveys were administered by volunteers, coordinated by ASJ, at pre-selected locations with the approval of the Honduran Ministry of Security. However, the Ministry did not have access to the surveys before-hand, and precautions were taken to ensure that the Ministry did not influence the results of the survey.

Detainees who agreed to participate were interviewed in holding cells at police stations, out of earshot of police officers. Crime victims were interviewed at each city's regional headquarters of the investigative police—*Dirección Policial de Investigación* (DPI). Interviewers waited in the area of the station were crimes are reported and then asked each individual exiting the area if they would like to participate in the survey. Those who chose to participate were taken to a private room and informed that their answers would be anonymous and confidential before being interviewed. Finally, police officers were interviewed at the stations where they worked. Interviewers arrived at a pre-selected time and interviewed all officers present at the station, in a private room or at least out of earshot of other police officers.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The study identifies significant shortcomings in basic police interactions with the public. These shortcomings negatively impact the relationship between the police and the community, lead to poor policing outcomes, and foster distrust. The study also reveals a chronic lack of compliance by police with legal arrest and detention requirements. Deplorable holding cell conditions and a lack of resources aggravate this problem and result in substantial human rights violations of detainees.

Interviews with officers themselves suggest that police struggle with a substantial shortage of resources and poor working conditions. Police regularly lack access to basic tools such as telephones, vehicles, and even notebooks. Staffing shortages, long shifts, and assignments far from home leave officers feeling overextended. Police also regularly fear for their life while on duty, and often avoid some areas of the city late at night. Police feel misunderstood by the community, and distrust both the public and human rights organizations.

The good news is that substantial improvements are possible, with enough political will and a budget reorganization to cover small expenses for basic resources that will significantly improve the conditions for effective policing. Simple and clear protocols—communicated openly to police and the public—could substantially improve the quality of community/police interactions. Small improvements to police stations, mostly to clean and repair holding cells, would create humane holding conditions for detainees. Assigning a cell phone or landline to each station would permit the police to give detainees the opportunity to inform their family that they have been detained.

Police also desperately need access to basic resources. This includes simple items like cell phones and notebooks, as well as more expensive items like patrol vehicles and internet-enabled computers. A system for sharing information on an inter-departmental level is also an urgent need. And in addition to adding more resources, working conditions must be improved. Reducing shift length to 12 hours maximum, creating a food stipend program, and giving legal support to officers accused of human rights violations would increase police satisfaction and improve policing outcomes.

Finally, the current initiatives that create the opportunity for better communication between the police and the community must be continued and expanded. All these steps should take place alongside a constant process of evaluating all members of the police force.

I. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE VICTIMS

This section relies on information gleaned from fifteen in-depth interviews and 144 surveys of crime victims in four Honduran cities. The questionnaires explore the interactions between the victims and the police at the time that the crime is reported, during the crime scene investigation, and throughout the ongoing criminal investigation.

REPORTING A CRIME

Victims generally described having a positive interaction with the police when they reported the crime. Overall, 72% reported receiving "good service" or "very good service" while only 7% reported receiving "very bad service."

Men generally reported a higher rate of satisfaction: 43% of men reported receiving "very good service" compared to only 33% of women.

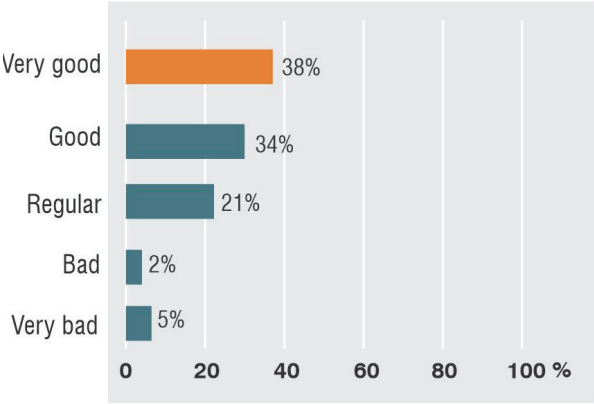
When asked about specifics of their interaction with the police when they reported the crime, 93% of those surveyed reported that officers asked them questions about the facts of the case. 68% reported being given instructions about "what to expect or what would happen next."

INTERACTING WITH POLICE AT THE CRIME SCENE

The crime scene is the location where many of the victims had their first interaction with the police. It is often the best opportunity for police to collect evidence and interview witnesses. It also provides an opportunity for the police to interact with victims and the community at large. Done well, it can build confidence in the police.

During in-depth interviews, victims reported a variety of inconsistent behavior by the police officers at the crime scene. For example, several

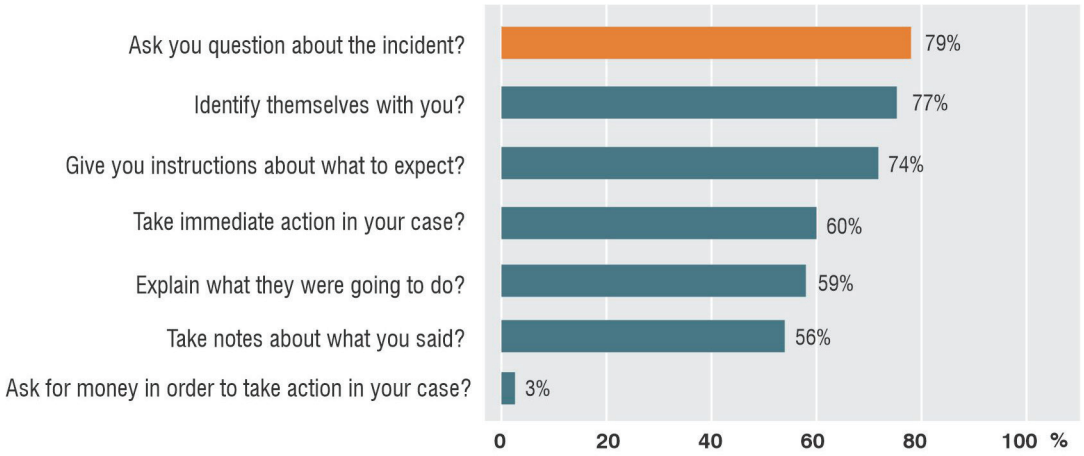
Graphic 7 | In general, how would you describe the service provided to you when you reported the crime?



victims reported that that the police did not identify themselves, did not ask questions, did not take notes, and did not take any preliminary actions (such as making calls or searching for a suspect). Survey data back up these findings: although between 70% to 80% of victims reported that the police identified themselves, asked the victim questions and gave instructions about what would happen next, in 40% of cases officers took no noticeable first steps before leaving the crime scene, and in 44% of the cases the officers did not take any notes while at the crime scene. On a positive note, only 3% of victims reported being asked for money before the officer would take action in their cases—suggesting that bribe-seeking behavior is not a common practice among the police.

Response times are another way for officers to demonstrate dependability and inspire confidence. Of the 21% of victims who reported that officers arrived at the crime scene, 70% reported that the police arrived in less than one hour. By city, Tegucigalpa had the fastest response rate, with

Graphic 8 | At the scene of the crime, did police officers...



79% of victims reporting that officers arrived in less than one hour, while San Pedro Sula had by far the slowest response rate, with only 58% of victims reporting that officers arrived within an hour.

ONGOING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Although most victims were satisfied with the process for reporting a crime, the investigative process largely disappointed them. During in-depth interviews, victims reported that officers would routinely refuse to inform them about progress in the case, saying only that "the investigation was underway." Victims who were interviewed also complained that officers would ask them about the same traumatic events over and over again in a process that seemed slow and inefficient, and of those surveyed 43% reported being asked to recount the facts of their case more than once. This frustration was compounded by the fact that officers frequently did not take notes while interviewing victims, which victims perceived as a lack of interest.

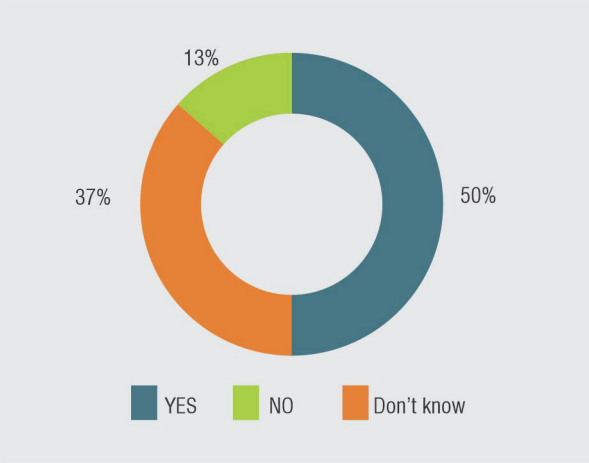
Survey data also suggests that the police investigative process is in some regards slow, inefficient, and fosters distrust. Only 7% of victims reported that that the police contacted them again after the initial encounter with an update about the case. Only 14% of victims were given a direct phone number of a police officer that they could call to follow up on their case. When asked if they believed that the police were working to resolve their case, half of respondents said they did not think so or they did not know.

For victims with few resources who cannot hire a private attorney or travel repeatedly to the DPI headquarters to check on the status of their case, their first encounter with the police may be the only one they have. The lack of communication with police and opportunity to follow-up on their case leads many to assume that their case has been shelved and forgotten.

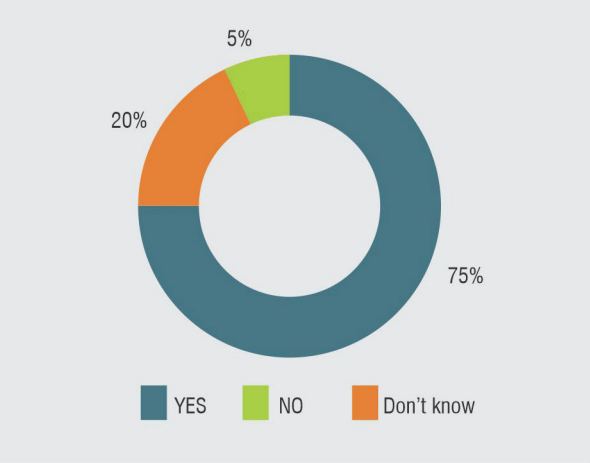
However, despite the many shortfalls in the investigative process, three-quarters of victims surveyed still believed that it was worthwhile to report a crime. 86% of victims who were interview said that if they were re-victimized, they would be "likely" or "very likely" to report the crime. Men were significantly more likely to believe it was worthwhile to report a crime, with 80% of men agreeing that it was worthwhile, compared to only 69% of women.

Graphic 9 | Since you reported the incident...

Graphic 10 | Do you believe that the police are working to resolve your case?



Graphic 11 | In general, do you believe that it's worth reporting a crime?



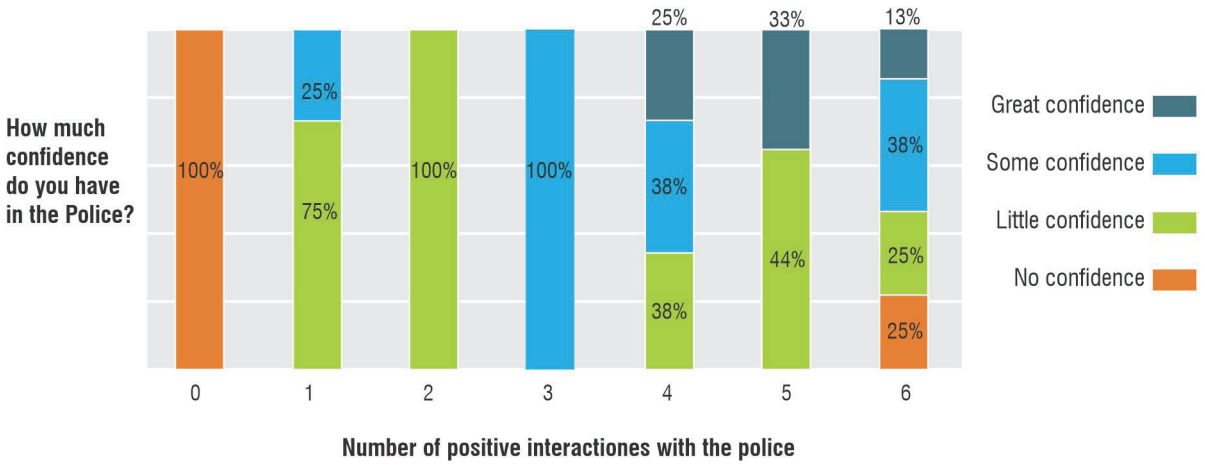
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey data suggests that there is a high degree of correlation between positive interactions with the police and confidence in the police. 100% of victims who reported having no positive interactions with the police also stated that they had no confidence in the police. But as the number of positive interactions increases, the likelihood that the victim has confidence in the police increases as well. Victims who reported having three positive interactions with the police all reported having some confidence in the police.

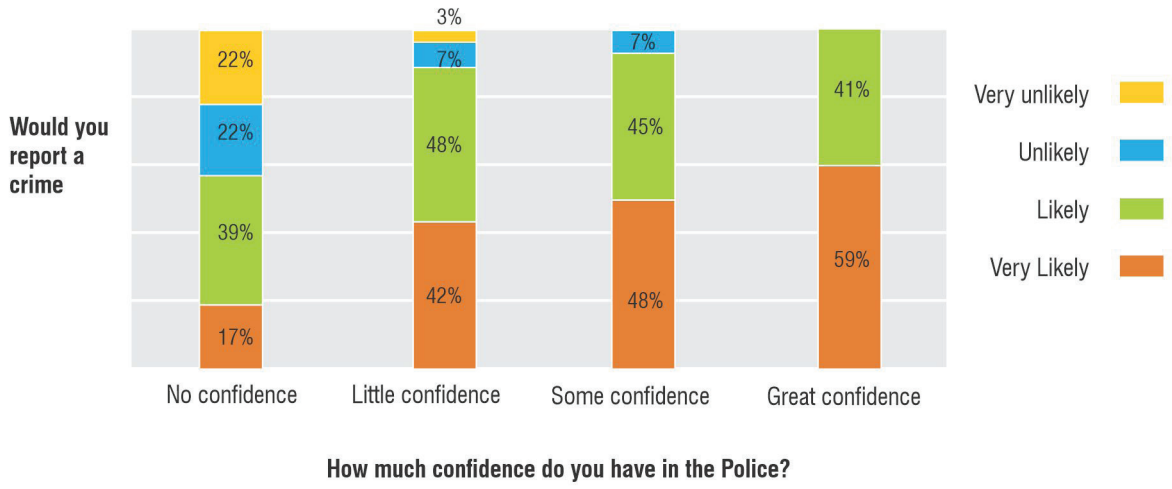
Surveys results also suggest that that as confidence increases, so does the probability that the victim will report a crime. The relationship between these three factors—positive interactions, confidence, and reporting—suggest that police conduct can have a direct and positive effect on the actions of the general population, increasing the availability of witness and the rates at which crimes are reported.

If police respond quickly, investigate thoroughly, and communicate effectively, public perception and confidence will almost certainly improve. However, surveys and interviews with police officers—covered in more detail below in Part III—revealed that some of the inconsistencies in police actions are a result of systemic lack of resources. For example, many officers complained that they could not respond to emergencies because they did not have vehicles.

Graphic 12 | Relationship between positive interactions and confidence in the police



Graphic 13 | Relationship between confidence and reporting



Most also noted that they were not provided with cell phones or notebooks. Although training will help improve police interactions with victims, without much-needed resources police will continue to fall short of the public's expectation.

Recommendations

1. **Adopt a Protocol for Police Crime Scene Investigations.** The protocol should include specific instructions for how to interact with the public, what questions to ask, what to explain, as well as special instructions for dealing with vulnerable groups. A media campaign informing the public of the protocol would create pressure on police to follow the protocol.

2. **Revise Police Protocols for Taking Reports.** The protocol should include instructions similar to those highlighted in recommendation #1 to make sure the officers receive the necessary information and that those who report perceive the interaction as effective and appropriate. Additionally, the protocol should require the officer to contact the victim at least one time to follow up.

3. **Create a Working Case Tracking System.** A digital system like NACMIS would assign cases to officers automatically and allow for better tracking of evidence, witness statements and leads. The system would also permit victims to track the progress of their case.

4. **Create a Disappeared Persons Protocol.** The protocol would set out clear guidelines for how to respond when a disappeared person report is made, including how to interact with the media, coordinate search efforts, and review security camera footage.

II. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DETAINEES

The information in this section in based on 20 in-depth interviews and 159 surveys of detainees. It explores the interactions between detained persons and police, with an emphasis on the actions taken by police during the arrest and detention, as well as the conditions of the holding cells.

POLICE INTERACTIONS AT ARREST

In Honduras, police conduct during an arrest is subject to detailed legal requirements. Article 282 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Honduras governs police conduct during an arrest. It requires arresting officers to:

1. Identify themselves with an ID or badge when making an arrest.
2. Only use necessary and proportional levels of force in order to make the arrest.
3. Never commit, or induce/permit another person to commit, torture of an arrestee or subject the arrestee to cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment.
4. Never make the arrestee available to the media.
5. Inform the arrestee of the reason for his/her arrest, and read the arrestee his/her rights.
6. Immediately communicate to the family or another person who has a relationship with the arrestee where the arrestee will be transported to.
7. Register the place, date and time of the arrest.

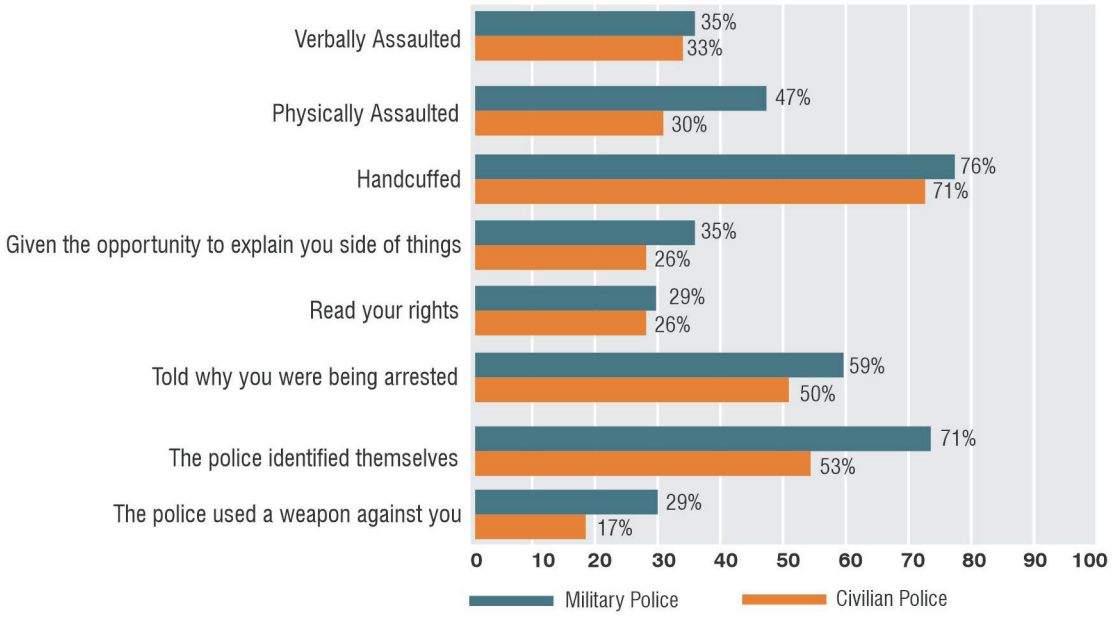
Despite these comprehensive legal requirements, data suggest that police are extremely inconsistent, and rarely meet all legal requirements when making an arrest. Of those surveyed, only 50% reported that the police identified themselves during the arrest, and only 28% of the detainees reported that they were read their rights. Even more troubling, one third of those surveyed reported that they were insulted or verbally mistreated, and one third were beaten or hit. The most consistent practice, overall, was the use of handcuffs: 71% of detainees reported being put in handcuffs during their arrest. This high number suggest that handcuffs may be overused by the police force.

Because some of the detainees surveyed for this study were arrested by the Honduran military police while others were arrested by the civilian police, the study further breaks down the data into two categories in order to measure compliance levels of each of these organizations.

The military police tended to have slightly higher compliance rates with the positive legal requirements, as compared to the civilian police. For example, they read the arrestee his/her right in 29% of cases (the civilian police only did so 26% of the time), they identified themselves in 71% of cases (while the civilian police only did so in 53% of cases), and they gave a reason for the arrest in 59% of cases (compared to 50%). However, the military police hit or beat arrestees at a shockingly high rate (in 47% of arrests), while the civilian police force was less likely to use physical violence (30% of cases). Military and civilian police were equally likely to verbally mistreat an arrestee (33%–35% of cases), but the military police were more likely to use a gun or other type of weapon during the arrest (in 19% of cases, compared to 17% of civilian police arrests).

As with the surveyed victims, detainees who were surveyed reported relatively low rates of requests for bribes. 6% reported that the police requested a benefit like money, goods, gifts or favors. While any amount of bribe-seeking behavior is intolerable, this result is lower than comparable studies conducted in Mexico (which found that the police requested bribes in 15.8% of cases), suggesting that petty corruption is not as prevalent as could have been expected.

Graphic 14 | When you were arrested, were you...



During in-depth interviews, several detainees mentioned that they were not taken directly to a police station upon their arrest. Instead, the interviewees stated that they were taken to a third, undisclosed location and were physically mistreated by police officers (in some cases with tear gas or tasers) until they confessed. Survey data suggests that this is a fairly common practice. 18% of detainees who were surveyed indicated that they were taken to a third location prior to being delivered to the police station. And being taken to a third location is highly correlated with physical mistreatment: 52% of arrestees who were taken to a third location reported being beaten or otherwise physically mistreated, while only 29% of those who were taken directly to the police station stated that they were physically mistreated.

Another common and problematic police practice is the "public disturbance" arrest. During in-depth interviews, many detainees reported that they were arrested for public disturbance—for example drinking in public, yelling, possession of marijuana—and then were released after "doing their 24 hours of time." These individuals were never brought before a judge. Police in Honduras are permitted to arrest and hold an individual for 24 hours without an arraignment when the person is caught "in the act" (Constitución de Honduras). It appears that Honduran police are using this 24-hour period as a way to impose a sanction for minor infractions. Police arrest individuals for "public disturbance" but without any intention of charging them, hold the individuals for 24 hours, and then release them. Victims, detainees, and police officers themselves attested to this practice.

This practice amounts to an extra-judicial punishment imposed by police and is clearly prohibited by the Constitution, which establishes that no one may be convicted or punished without a competent judge or jury (Art. 90). By using the 24-hour holding period along with the extremely vague "public disturbance" charge, police have essentially given themselves license to arrest and punish at will.

DETENTION CONDITIONS

Honduras has ratified a host of human rights treaties which require the State to guarantee the safety and security of detained persons and provide them with food and medical attention. These obligations also require the State to refrain from torturing detainees or submitting detainees to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment. In addition, the Code of Criminal Procedure guarantees additional rights, such as the right of the detained person to communicate with his or her family or legal representative upon being detained (Código Penal de Honduras). Unfortunately, the police currently fall far short of meeting these obligations.

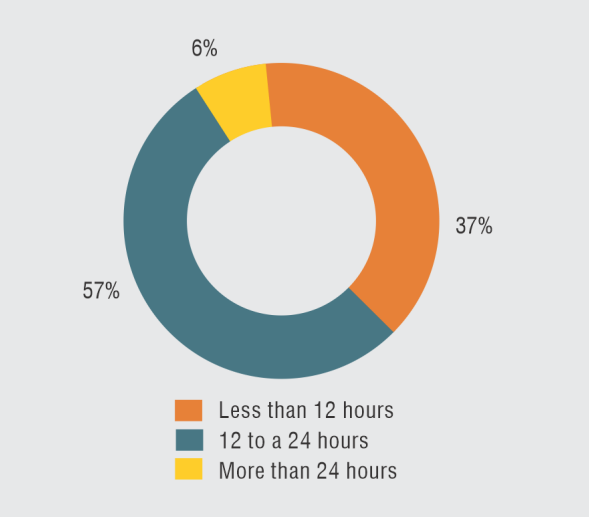
One clear shortfall is the police's failure to permit detained persons to communicate with family.

In-depth interviews revealed that many of those detained were not able to communicate with their family while they were detained and could not inform their employers that they would not be at work. Of those surveyed, only 23% were offered the opportunity to make a phone call, even though the majority of those surveyed (63%) had already been detained for more than 12 hours. When asked if a family member knew that they were detained, 35% of respondents said their family did not know they were detained. By city, responses varied significantly: while in La Ceiba 83% of those surveyed said their family knew that they were detained, in Santa Rosa de Copan only 20% answered the question in the affirmative.

Interviews with police officers revealed that this particular issue is mostly due to lack of appropriate resources. Few police stations in Honduras are equipped with a telephone, and most officers are not given a cell phone to use while on duty. In order to permit detainees to make calls, officers would have to allow detainees to use their own personal cell phones. This would create a personal expense for officers and potentially create safety concerns. This issue is discussed at greater length below, in Part III.

Surveys indicate the police also fail to provide detainees with food and water during their detention. 72% of those surveyed reported that they had not been offered water during their detention, and 57% reported that they were not offered food. This despite the fact that 63% of respondents had already been detained for more than 12 hours. And because a high percentage of detainees were unable to inform their families of their location, detainees could not expect family members to provide them with food or water either. Long detentions without food and water

Graphic 15 | How many hours have you been detained?

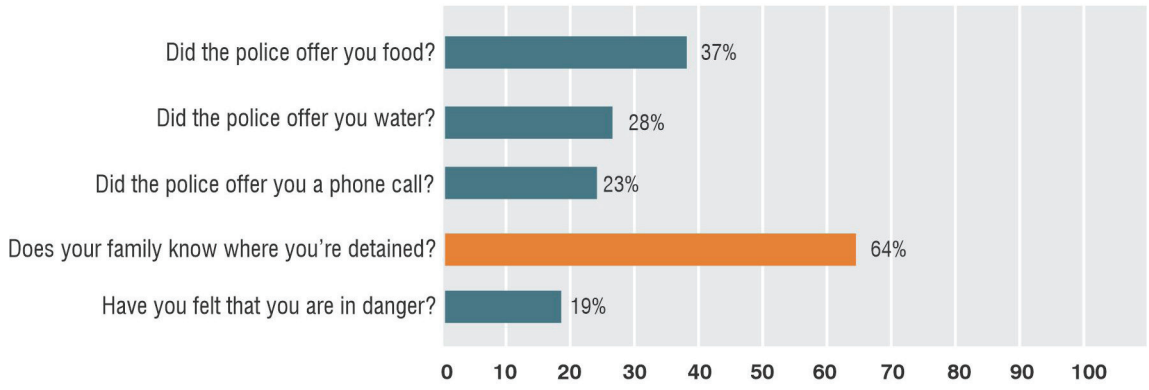


are a clear violation of the State's requirement to guarantee the safety of the detained.

Finally, respondents were asked about conditions in the holding cells where they were detained. 63% of respondents reported that the conditions of the cells were "bad" of "very bad." By city, Detainees in Santa Rosa de Copan were most likely to describe conditions as "very bad" (80%) while only 5% of detainees in San Pedro Sula described conditions as "very bad."

In addition to conducting surveys and interviews, interviewers were able to inspect and photograph several of the cells in which detainees were held. These photos show extremely unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Cells were generally very dirty, with a strong smell of urine. Bathrooms were often non-functioning. Many of the cells had no

Graphic 16 | While in custody...



light-bulbs, and were pitch-black at night, which increased the likelihood of violent fights breaking out without police intervention.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they were confident that their belongings would be returned to them upon their release. 66% of those surveyed responded affirmatively, 12% were unsure, and 22% believed that their belongings would not be returned to them.

Holding cell – Belén, Comayagüela

Holding cell with bathroom - Los Dolores, Tegucigalpa

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although Honduras has strong laws to protect the rights of detainees, police regularly flout these laws. Systemic lack of resources exacerbated the problem. Additional training and resources are essential in order to protect the human rights of detainees in Honduras.

Recommendations

5 **Simplify the Arrest Protocol.** The current complex and lengthy guidelines are being ignored. A revised protocol should be established, emphasizing that police should: identify themselves, state a reason for the arrest, state essential rights.

6 **Create a Protocol for the Use of Handcuffs.** The protocol should emphasis that the use of handcuffs is subject to necessity and proportionality requirements and should not be used by default.

7 **Create Accountability Mechanisms so Officers Take Detainees Directly to the Station.** The mechanism should require the head of the station to confirm whether detainees were taken to a third location, and report automatically to DIDADPOL.

8 **Create a "Public Disturbance" Protocol.** The protocol should outline how officers must respond to different types of disturbances: taking seriously intoxicated individuals to the hospital, offering to take impaired individuals' home, only detaining individuals who have committed a crime, and providing them with an arraignment within 24 hours.

9 **Improve Holding Cell Conditions and Ensure Access to Water, Food, and a Phone Call.** A coordinated national effort is required to clean, repair, and maintain holding cells at police stations, and outfit stations with telephones, food, and water.

III. THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLICE OFFICERS

This portion of the study is based on 16 interviews and 373 surveys of active-duty police officers in Honduras. The interviews and surveys explore police training, resources, and working conditions of the police. The surveys also covered police perception of human rights protection as well as the relationship between the police and society at large.

TRAINING

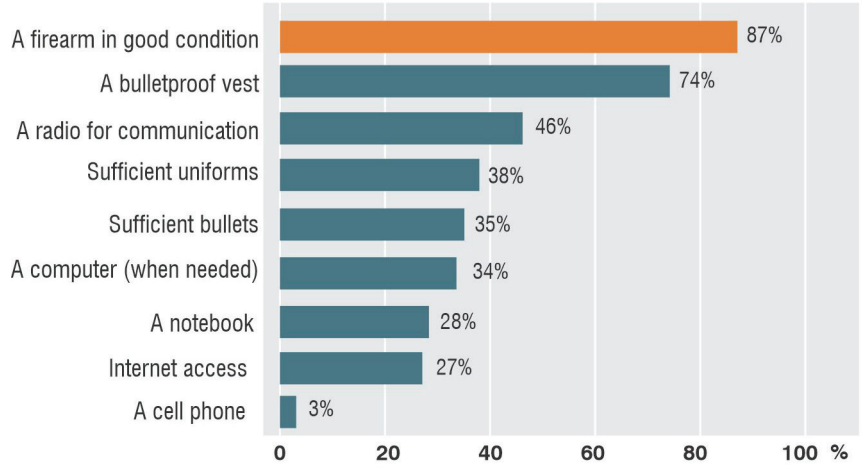
Police training has undergone a substantial overhaul in the past several years. The new training program is longer and better-funded, and the curriculum has been revised. These results were evident in police surveys, with nearly all of police reporting that they received "good" training or better (59% reported receiving "very good" training, 36% reported receiving "good training"). What's more, 77% of officers indicated that their initial training lasted seven months or more. This number represents a substantial improvement, since until recently police training programs in Honduras averaged only three months.

Most police reported that they received continuing education: 66% answered affirmatively when asked if they had attended a class or seminar in the past year to update their training. When asked what additional training officers should receive in order to improve their policing, the majority of respondents indicated that knowledge of the law, human rights protocols, and appropriate use of force were three areas where additional training was most needed.

RESOURCES

When presented with comments and complaints from victims and detainees during in-depth interviews, nearly all officers indicated that lack of resources and personnel substantially impacted their ability to adequately police. The survey data coincided with testimony: Only 19% of those surveyed believed that the police had the materials and equipment necessary to do their jobs well, while only 11% of respondents believed that the police had enough officers to accomplish their goals.

Graphic 17 | Has your work provided you with...



This graph offers a breakdown of the reported availability of common police resources. Although nearly all officers have access to a gun, a shockingly small percentage have access to essentials like a work cell phone or a notebook. Given the importance of these items for adequate policing—as noted in Part I&II—shortages directly affect the public's perception of the police.

Lack of access to the internet especially impacts investigative police, whose work frequently requires access to public databases, social networks, news stories, etc. Only 34% of officers reported having access to a computer and even fewer had internet access.

Access to reliable transportation also has a huge impact on the quality of police work. When officers cannot respond quickly to emergencies, visit crime scenes and follow up on leads this results in poor policing outcomes and fosters distrust. Unfortunately, only 35% of officers said they always had access to transportation when they needed it. Half of officers said they sometimes had access to transportation, while 14% said they never had access to transportation.

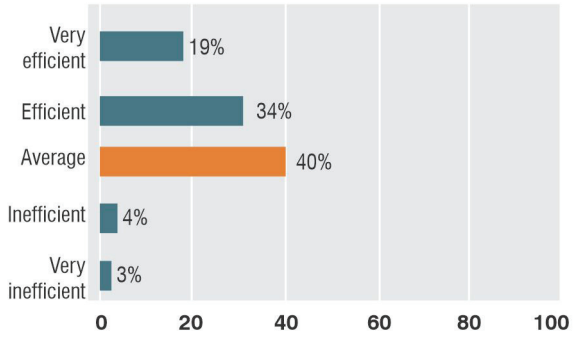
Lack of resources also impacts police safety. Respondents reported that they do not regularly have access to ammunition for their guns, with 68% stating that they have had to purchase their own ammunition, and 11% reporting that they have been on duty without having bullets for their gun. The city where police were most likely to have to purchase their own ammunition was La Ceiba, where 80% of respondents reported having done so.

Another system that the police relies on to improve response time is the 911 emergency calling system. However, during in-depth interviews several police mentioned inefficiencies in the system, which resulted in reports being lost. Survey data indicates that police have differing levels of confidence in the system.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Working conditions have a direct effect on the quality of policing. Officers working long hours in poor conditions without enough food or rest will have impaired judgment and will be less likely to treat citizens with due respect. Unfortunately, officers reported generally negative working conditions.

Graphic 18 | How efficient is the 911 system?



In in-depth interviews, many officers reported that their police stations were in disrepair. One officer reported that the police assigned to the station had taken it upon themselves to paint and repair the building because no one else would do it. Surveys indicated that 56% of respondents thought that the police station they were assigned to was inadequate.

Food was also an area of concern for officers, who reported in interviews that food was often expired and/or poorly made. 62% of officers were dissatisfied with the food provided to them while on the job. Because food rations for police are not coordinated on a national level, satisfaction rates varied dramatically from city to city. In La Ceiba, 50% of officers reported being "very dissatisfied" with food, while in Santa Rosa de Copan, only 10% reported being very dissatisfied.

When asked about communication, officers spoke positively about their ability to communicate with coworkers, but spoke less positively about communication with superiors and other institutions. 73% of officers reported having very good communication with their coworkers, while only 44% reported having very good communication with their superiors, and only 11% said that it was "easy" to request information from other State institutions.

Officers also complained of long shifts and assignments far from home. Police have different hours depending on their role. For example, investigative police work from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday – Friday, and are on-duty every other weekend as well, with weekend shifts of 72 hours. Preventative police work 36-hour shifts, which should include 6 hours of rest. They also are off

every other weekend. This amounts to an average work-week of 126 hours for preventative police officers, almost 3 times the length of an average work-week in Honduras of 44 hours. 56% of police stated that the hours they worked were too "long" or "very long." During interviews, officers also expressed frustration at not having a say in the dates and locations of their assignments, and noted that they frequently have to spend many days away from home and their families because of remote assignments.

Officers brought up personal safety as a major concern during in-depth interviews. Several stated that they will not patrol certain parts of city late at night because they don't have enough officers to feel safe. Officers also admitted that they frequently turn on the police siren to scare

off criminals and avoid a confrontation. Survey respondent indicated that 56% of police "always" or "sometimes" avoided dangerous areas late at night. Using a siren to announce their presence was even more common, at 62%. The majority of officers frequently have serious concerns for their safety while on the job.

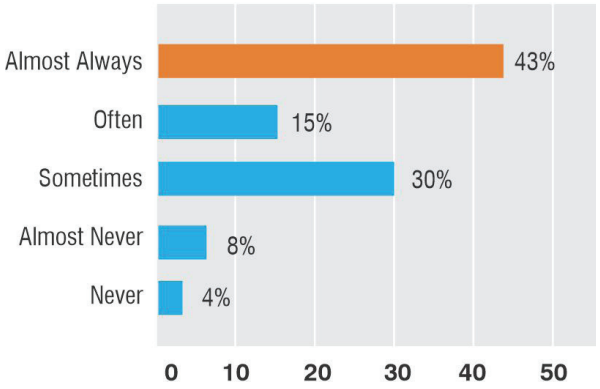
Lack of resources and fear for personal safety can have an impact on motivation. In the survey, 64% of officers said they felt motivated to continue their career as a police officer. 26% reported that they sometimes feel such motivation, while only 10% said they never feel motivated to continue their career. But although these numbers are relatively high, a comparison to a similar study conducted in 2004 suggest that motivation rates have dropped, despite the fact that the police force has more resources and better training as compared to 15 years ago. This may be due, in part, to the spike in violence in the intervening years, as well as the loss of irregular privileges and increased scrutiny resulting from the police purge.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Honduran police force has a history of human rights abuse. However, recent overhauls to the police training curriculum has focused on the importance of respecting human rights. These trainings appear to have had an impact: when asked how important it is for police to respect human rights, 89% of respondents answered that it was very important. During in-depth interviews, officers indicated that there has been a change in police conduct due to the increased focus on human rights.

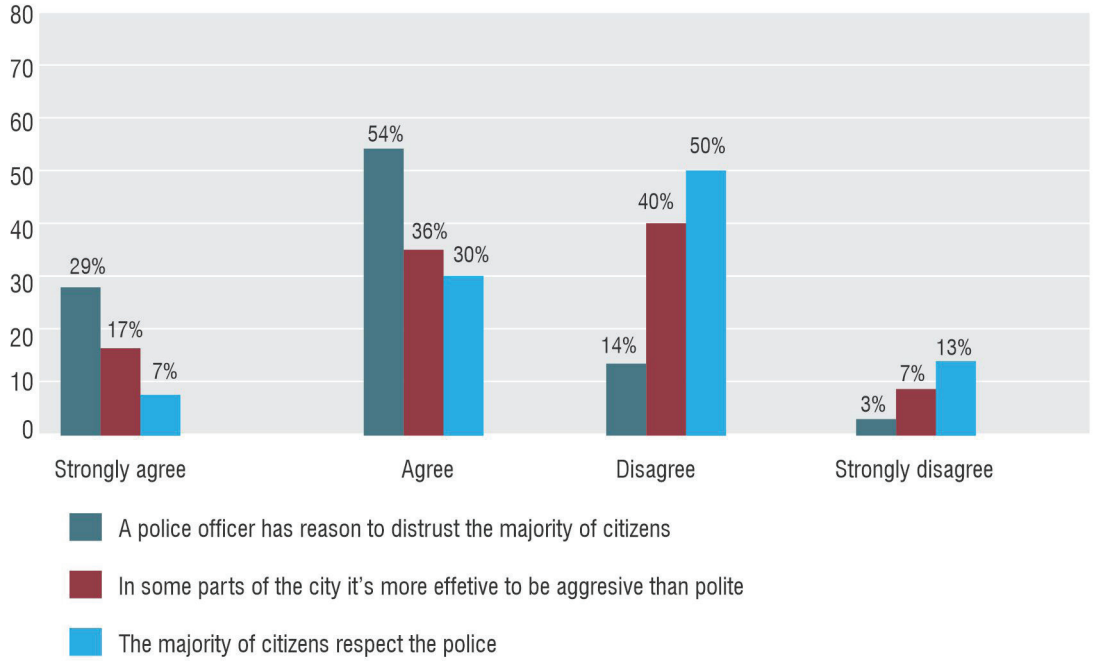
But police also expressed frustration about their own rights as citizens. One officer indicated in his

Graphic 19| How often do you have serious concerns for your safety while on the job?



interview that police "have a long list of duties, but rights—we just don't have those." 75% of those surveyed said they did not feel that the human rights of police officers were generally respected. Much of the police frustration surrounding human rights is focused on civil society organizations, who they see as biased. 71% of officers surveyed believe that these organizations negatively impact their work. During interviews, officer expressed concern that they were frequently falsely accused of human rights violations. And a majority of survey respondents (64%) believed that if they were unjustly accused of a human rights violation, the police would not provide them with legal support.

Graphic 20 | Relationship between police and citizens



POLICE IN SOCIETY

A healthy relationship between the police and those they serve is essential to a healthy police force. During in-depth interviews, officers expressed a variety of positions when asked about their relationship to the public, demonstrating that some officers have been able to foster strong bonds with the community. However, survey data suggest that the police/community relationship on a whole is extremely unhealthy. Officers were asked if the public understands the risks and challenges that police officers face at work. 68% of officers responded that the public did not understand them. 83% of police surveyed believe that the police have a reason to distrust most of the public, while 53% believe that in some parts of the city it's more effective to be aggressive than polite. Only 37% of respondents believe that most people respect the police. When asked about police/community collaboration, 64% of officers said that the majority of the public does not collaborate with the police.

When paired with surveys of victims and detainees, police surveys make it clear that distrust runs both ways: the majority of Hondurans have little to no trust in the police, and most police distrust the public and believe that the police are not respected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although initial training of officers had improved dramatically over the past several years, severe personnel and resource shortages persist. These shortages are unsafe and demoralizing for officers, and contribute to poor policing outcomes. Additional reforms should focus on the following:

Recommendations

10	**Improve Intra-Institutional Information Sharing.** Police should have access to all government databases relevant to their work. Access could be digital, or officers could call in to request information. Officers must be provided with phones capable of accessing the data.
11	**Improve Resource Allocation Within the Police.** Simply increasing the police budget is insufficient by itself and should be accompanied by efforts to closely monitor that money is well spent. Further budget increases should focus on providing officers with the equipment they need to do their jobs, like cell phones, transportation, etc.
12	**Create a Monthly Food Stipend.** 63% of officers are dissatisfied with the quality of on-duty meals and many already purchase food elsewhere while on the job. The police food budget is better spent by giving each officer a small food stipend to spend as they like.
13	**Re-structure Shift-length and Include Officers in Decisions About the Location to Which They Will be Assigned.** Reduce shift length to 12 hours and increase the number of officers available on the weekend. Design an assignment system that allows officers to express their preferred assignment location.
14	**Increase Overall Number of Police and Patrols.** Optimally, increase the number of police to reach 300 officers per 100,000 inhabitants.
15	**Create Space for a Dialogue Between Human Rights Organizations and the Police.** This should include a dialogue between every level of the police, and should include the National Commission on Human Rights and local nonprofits. Nonprofits should consider defending police officers in worker's rights claims and other situations where police rights are violated.
16	**Increase Institutional Resources for Representing Police Officers Accused of Human Rights Violations.** Officers should be informed about the resources available to provide legal support.

IV. THE COMMON PERSPECTIVE

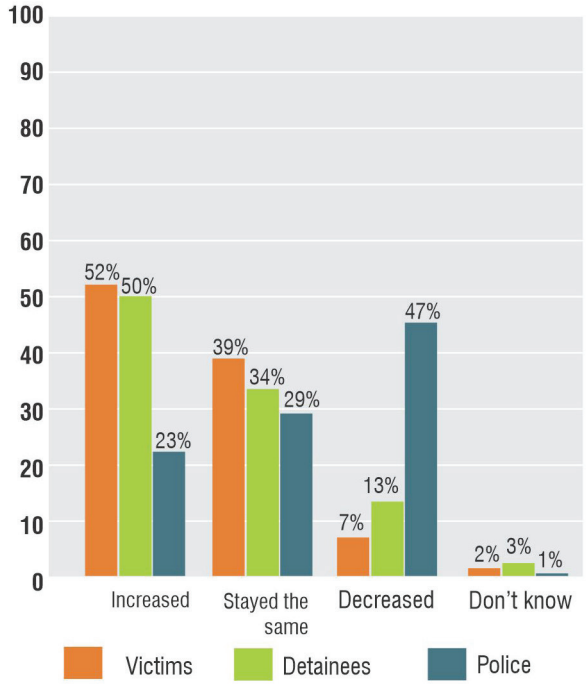
In conclusion, this study focuses on three issues that heavily impact all three surveyed groups: general security, use of force, and police corruption. This section highlights where the perspective of each group appears to be in sync, and where perspectives diverge.

GENERAL SECURITY

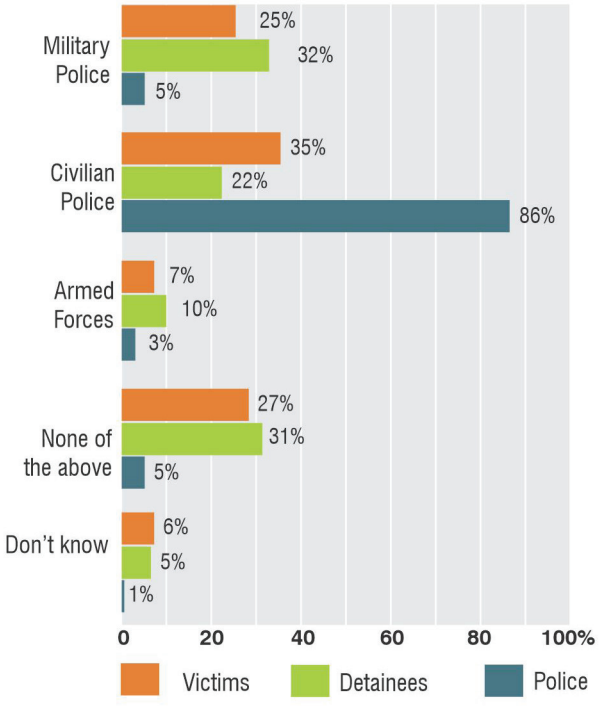
When it comes to crime rates in Honduras, the perspectives of detainees and victims are in line, while the police perspective diverges. Half of all detainees and victims surveyed believe that crime in Honduras has increased over the past year, while only a quarter of police believe that crime has increased. And while nearly half of all police believe crime has actually decreased over the past year, only 7% of victims and 13% of detainees share that view.

When asked which organization is most able to deal with insecurity in the country, detainee and victims answers were again mostly in line, with answers equally split between the civilian police, the military police, and "none of the above". Police officers, on the other hand, overwhelmingly believed that their organization was the most able to deal with insecurity.

Graphic 21 | In your personal opinion, has crime in Honduras this year…



Graphic 22 | Which organization is most effective at combatting insecurity?



When asked about their confidence in the civilian police and the military police, detainees and victims answers were split, with the most common answer being "little confidence." The civilian police, on the other hand, reported having mostly "much" or "some" confidence in themselves, while they expressed "some" or "little" confidence in the military police.

When asked how often the civilian police and military police fulfil their function of guaranteeing security to the public, the most common answer for detainees and victims was "sometimes," with between 11%-20% answering that the police never fulfil this function. On the other hand, 85% of civilian police who were interviewed believed that the they fulfil this function "always," but only 41% believe that the military police fulfil the function "always."

USE OF FORCE

When asked about the civilian police use of force the answers of the three groups diverged markedly. Victims were more likely than the other two groups to say that the police use of force was "insufficient," while detainees were much more likely to say that the use of force was "excessive." In keeping with prior answers, the civilian police who were surveyed overwhelmingly agreed that their use of force was "adequate." When asked about military police use of force, the majority of civilian police respondents reported that that the military police used excessive force.

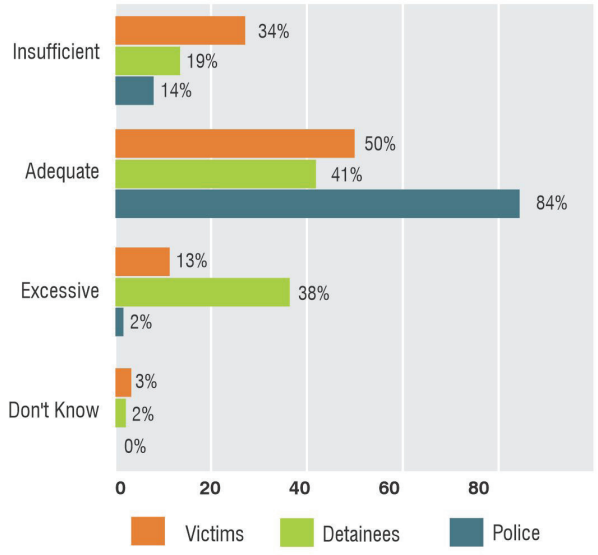
POLICE CORRUPTION

Bribes and corruption are both issues marked by divergent perceptions. More than half of victims and detainees believe that "many" or "some" police officers ask for bribes, while the vast majority of police believe that "few" to "no" police ask for bribes. The perception of corruption of appears to be out of line with actual bribe-requesting practice, since only 3% and 6% of victims and detainees respectively reported being asked for a bribe.

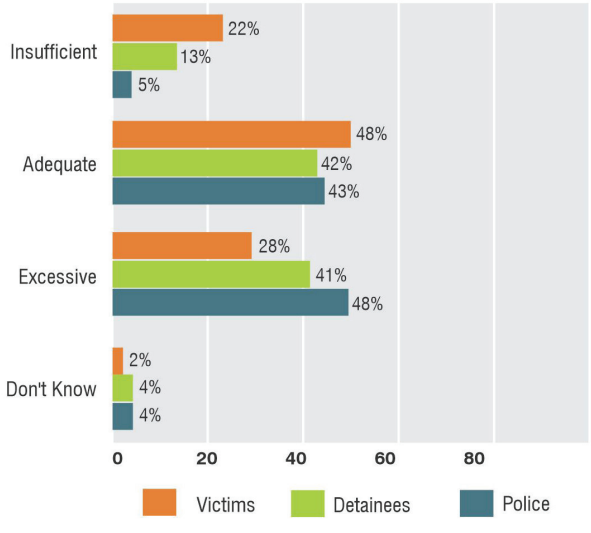
When asked how members of the police are selected, 80% of police officers reported that it was based on graduation from the police academy, while only 52% of victims and 43% of detainees held that belief. Nearly a quarter of victims and detainees believed that police were selected based on their political connection, and 17% of detainees believed that the majority of police were given their position in exchange for a bribe.

In perhaps the most concerning measure of perceived police corruption: 77% of detainees and victims, as well as 66% of police officers themselves believe that members of organized crime have infiltrated the police. In addition to that, the survey asked if members of the police force were involved in criminal acts. This question catches police officers who maybe engage in opportunistic crime such as stealing, taking bribes or other crimes without necessarily being part of an organized criminal group. Around 98% of victims and detainees, as well as 77% of police believe that at the very least some members of

Graphic 23| The civilian police's use of force to combat crime is...



Graphic 24| The military police's use of force to combat crime is...



the national police are involved in criminal acts. It is especially worrisome that, even after an extensive purge, police officers themselves still overwhelmingly believe that their organization is compromised by organized crime and that some officers commit criminal acts.

Interviews and surveys explored the respondents' perception of the evolution of policing in Honduras. When respondents were asked if they thought the police force was less corrupt as compared to five years ago, 86% of police responded that they believed that the police force was less corrupt, along with 53% of victims, and 41% of detainees. When asked whether the police purge and reforms had increased their confidence in the police, 62% of officers, 17% of victims, and 18% of detainees responded affirmatively. The vast majority of victims and detainees (70% and 59%, respectively) responded that the police purge had not changed their confidence in the police.

Respondents were also asked what they believed was the best way to prevent corruption in the police. The most common answer among victims and detainees was "continue with the police purge," while more than half of police officers suggested "increasing police salaries" as the most effective measure to prevent corruption.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Surveys and interviews revealed a stark divergence of the perspective of victims and detainees as compared to the perspective of police. While police believe that their institution is generally trustworthy and capable of dealing with insecurity in the country, victims and detainees generally view the police as corrupt and ineffective. While the police believe that police corruption is less severe than it was five years ago, the public generally disagrees. Increased communication and positive interactions between police and the public are necessary to begin to bridge this gap in perception.

Recommendations

17 **Continue the Community Policing Program and Create Opportunities for Police/Community Dialogue.** The police and the public share a deep distrust for each other. Increased interactions and dialogue would help to foster trust and a better understanding between the two groups.

18 **Adopt a New "Use of Force" Law and Focus on Implementation.** The new law should include more detailed regulations on the use of force and police compliance should be monitored.

19 **Continue Police Purge with In-Depth and Transparent Investigations and more Effective Reporting Mechanism.** This would alleviate police concerns about the transparency of the purging process, while allowing greater community engagement through a community reporting system.

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Article 410 of the Penal Code of Honduras prohibits “public intoxication or provoking a scandal…” and makes such acts punishable by 60–90 days in prison or a fine.
Constitution of Honduras, Article 84.

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