**Timeline: Extradition Treaty Revocation, Drug Video Scandal, and Murder of Juan López**

**August 28:** US Ambassador to Honduras Laura Dogu [tells](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxJKys_KcNs) Honduran TV reporters that she was surprised to see Honduran officials sit down with the joint chief of staff and the minister of defense in Venezuela, who have been sanctioned by the US for drug trafficking. She reiterated that she knew the president of Honduras was fighting continually against drug trafficking so it was surprising to see officials of the Honduran government sit down with a cartel.

**August 28:** Honduran President Xiomara Castro, interpreting Ambassador Dogu’s remarks as an accusation and as a threat, [withdraws](https://x.com/XiomaraCastroZ/status/1828885452507500783) from the US-Honduras extradition treaty. (The treaty will be in effect for six more months.) The minister of defense of Honduras who met with his counterparts in Venezuela was Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales, Castro’s nephew by marriage.

**August 31:** Carlos Zelaya, Castro’s brother-in-law and Secretary of Congress, resigns. His son, Jose Manuel Zelaya, who was serving as Minister of Defense and who had met with counterparts in Venezuela, also resigns.
 Carlos Zelaya presents himself before the Public Prosecutor’s office. He maintains publicly that no money was ever received from the drug traffickers, at least not by him. He [tells](https://twitter.com/daviddelapaz/status/1830061754212049153) reporters that he attended a meeting in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, in 2013 with businessmen and drug traffickers. He saws the meeting was a completely unilateral action on his part and that President Castro was unaware of the meeting. He says that if the United States has sufficient evidence against him, he will present himself before the US government to be charged.
 By way of context, Honduras’ former president, Juan Orlando Hernandez, was extradited to the US in 2021 and convicted of transnational drug trafficking. In his trial, a witness who was working for the DEA, Devis Rivera Madariaga, of the Cachiros cartel, stated that he had bribed Carlos Zelaya, paying him between $100,000 and $200,000.

**September 3:** An [article](https://insightcrime.org/news/narco-video-shows-traffickers-discussing-bribes-with-honduras-presidents-brother-in-law/) published in *Insight Crime* reveals the existence of a video recording of Carlos Zelaya meeting with drug traffickers in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. They discuss the contribution the drug traffickers will make to Castro’s 2013 campaign, settle on an amount (13 million Lempiras, or about $523,607) and discuss the means of delivery, along with offering the use of ten vehicles as the campaign reaches its end. A few days before publishing the video, *Insight Crime* reporters met with one of those present at the meeting. According to the Spanish news agency EFE, the video was recorded with a camera hidden in the watch of Devis Leonel Rivera Maradiaga and handed over to the DEA in December 2013.

**September 3-4:** President Castro in press conferences condemns “all type of business between narcotraffickers and politicians.” She says a plan is afoot to destroy her government while the 2025 election process is underway: “The plan to destroy my socialist, democratic government and the next electoral process is underway, the same dark internal and external forces of 2009, with the complicity of the national and international corporate media, are reorganizing in our country to stage a new coup d'état, which the people must repel.” President Castro in a speech says, “I ask the Attorney General's Office to exercise drastic actions in all the cases presented here, without any selectivity in the fight against drug trafficking.”

 Social and political sectors, among them the National Anti-Corruption Council (CNA), [demand](https://x.com/cnahonduras/status/1831295004813185139) the resignation of the Honduran president due to her brother-in-law's links to drug trafficking. The CNA, created by congressional degree, incorporates various civil society organizations. The majority of its funding, some [52 percent](https://www.cna.hn/informes-de-gestion/) of its total budget, is from USAID.

**September 9:** When confronted by reporters, the mayor of Colón, Adán Fúnes, [admits](https://x.com/RCVHonduras/status/1833251470998966779) he participated in the meeting, too. He says he thought the men were businessmen, not drug traffickers. Other evidence exists against Fúnes, however. At the trial of former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández in New York in 2021, Devis Leonel Rivera Maradiaga had [testified](https://www.aquiabajo.com/blog/2021/3/15/day-six-trial-against-honduran-drug-trafficker-geovanny-fuentes-ramirez) that he worked with Adán Fúnes.
 A collection of women’s rights groups [condemns](https://twitter.com/CDMHonduras/status/1833210126377128444) calls for President Castro to resign, which have been made by political personages and “supposed social organizations.”

**September 12:** Juan López, a Libre party alderman in Tocoa, [calls on](https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/juan-lopez-habia-pedido-renuncia-adan-funez-antes-asesinado-CG21501245) Adan Fúnes, also of the Libre party, to resign, in light of his participation in negotiating with drug traffickers, as evidenced by the video.

**September 14:** Juan López is gunned down by men on a motorcycle wearing ski masks as he leaves a church service.

**September 16:** During the live-streamed funeral for Juan López, Pastor Carlos Orellana states that Mayor Adán Fúnes is responsible for López’ murder.

**September 16:** The Public Ministry [announces](https://twitter.com/criteriohn/status/1835760829070737636) it will require a declaration from Jesuit priest Carlos Orellana, considering him a person of interest in helping to shed light on the murder.
 **September 18:** Among the urgent [demands](https://pbicanada.org/2024/09/19/pbi-honduras-accompanies-cmdbcp-as-it-demands-independent-investigation-into-the-murder-of-guapinol-river-defender-juan-lopez/) they articulate during their press conference, members of the Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Public Goods call on the government of Honduras to ensure the pastor is not subjected to stigmatization or persecution.

**September 19:** Lawyers for the Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Public Goods are informed that the case against a number of Guapinol water defenders affiliated with the Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Public Goods is being [reactivated](https://twitter.com/reporterosdeinv/status/1836845026657325133/photo/1). The [Court of Appeals of La Ceiba](https://twitter.com/guapinolre/status/1836873069228445784) has ruled in favor of an appeal filed when the case was dismissed for lack of evidence in 2022. Five prominent environmental defenders on the Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Public Goods—including the deceased Juan López—are accused of privation of liberty, aggravated arson, robbery, and illicit association, charges the [international community](https://civicspace-casetracker.rfkhumanrights.org/cases/guapinol-case/) deemed spurious during the prior trial. The people of Guapinol and other communities of Tocoa have faced continued attacks and criminalization because they have been peacefully questioning the legality of a [mining project](https://pbicanada.org/2024/09/03/the-struggle-of-the-guapinol-river-defenders-against-the-los-pinares-emco-megaproject-continues-in-honduras/) in the Carlos Escaleras National Park. Mayor Adan Fúnes and other powerful economic actors linked to the mine support its continued operation.

**September 19:** The [Honduran Human Rights Commission](https://twitter.com/CONADEH/status/1836911093416914995/photo/1) and the [Secretariat for Human Rights](https://twitter.com/AlvarengaGradis/status/1836896153234731315), along with the [UN High Commissioners Office on Human Rights](https://oacnudh.hn/19-de-septiembre-oacnudh-expresa-preocupacion-por-la-resolucion-que-revoca-el-sobreseimiento-para-los-defensores-de-guapinol/) in Honduras, decry the criminalization of the Guapinol defenders.

**September 20:** The Attorney General of Honduras, Johel Zelaya, announces that he will begin an impartial investigation of the Court of Appeals of La Ceiba to determine why the case was reopened.

**October 4:** Oscar Alexi Guardado Alvarenga is arrested after a raid on his home, at which a blue motorcycle reportedly used in the murder was found**.** Two other men were later arrested and charged in the killing, Daniel Antonio Juárez Torres and Lenin Adonis Cruz Munguía. The men are believed to be professional killers operating for hire in the area of Tocoa.

**October 6:** All three men, after an initial hearing, are sent to pretrial detention at the Nacional de Támara prison.

**October 10**: Demonstrations are held to demand the arrest of the intellectual authors of the murder.