II. Sectoral and Institutional Context

Until recently, Honduras has lacked a comprehensive and integrated approach to citizen security. The focus has been mostly reactive and oriented to control. In the first half of the 2000s, the Government adopted an “iron fist” (mano dura) approach, framing citizen security as an objective that could be reached only through more control. Over the last decade, the Government of Honduras (GoH) has made substantial progress towards a more integrated approach that combines law enforcement and prevention.

In terms of law enforcement, the key challenge for the sector has been the weak responsiveness, integrity, and accountability of criminal justice institutions. Police forces are widely perceived as corrupt, the prosecution and courts are notoriously slow, and only a small fraction of criminal cases ever result in convictions. The ratio of police officers to citizens is extremely low, and police forces are armed with limited equipment and live in precarious conditions. The police are often not present, and citizens do not report crimes due to lack of confidence or trust in the institution.

The GoH has been taking significant measures to confront this challenge. It developed the National Policy for the Security and Justice Sectors 2011-2022 (NPSJS) that establishes the main strategic areas and measures oriented to improving the functioning of the sector, and specifically, in reducing impunity levels. It supports the implementation of the strategic plan developed by the Judiciary to strengthen its independence in the processing of cases and bringing a just and prompt solution to cases with the goal of reducing impunity rates. The NPSJS also endorses the strengthening of criminal investigation to improve case management and processing of criminal evidence. In relation to the Honduran National Police (HNP), the policy favors the implementation of the Police Reform process that includes modification to the selection of recruits, training curricula, internal affairs directorate reform, corruption issues, strengthening the criminal investigation units of the HNP and improving coordination between law enforcement and justice operators. The GoH is also committed to expanding the successful experience of community policing, supported by JICA and the Government of Brazil.

With a gross national income of US$ 2,000 per capita, Honduras is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in Latin America. 66.2 percent of the 8.1 million Hondurans live in poverty, and 45.3 percent live in extreme poverty. While extreme poverty remains concentrated in rural areas, increasing trends of extreme urban poverty have been observed in the last five years. From a crime perspective, more worrisome than poverty are the entrenched levels of inequality. With a GINI coefficient of 0.57 in 2007, Honduras had one of the highest levels of income inequality in Latin America. As important is the lack of opportunities for young people: 10 percent of the population under 30 years of age is neither enrolled in school or employed; 50 percent of youth of lower and upper secondary school age do not attend school and as few as 35 percent of them graduate in the expected year.

On June 28, 2009, Honduras experienced a governance crisis when the Honduran Supreme Court ordered the removal of President Zelaya. Porfirio Lobo from the National Party won the November 2009 elections and, following a period of international reconciliation, Honduras’ membership in the Organization of American States was restored. The 2009 political crisis should be considered in the context of broader unresolved national governance issues. Though Honduras has put forth several efforts in recent years aimed at improving governance, progress has been slow and uneven.
In terms of violence prevention, the key challenge has been the marginal and fragmented nature of most government interventions and the absence of a national violence prevention strategy. Studies show that crime, violence, and insecurity do not result from a single factor but from the accumulation of disadvantages and risks at the individual, relationship (family/peer), community, and societal levels. Addressing this multifaceted and complex problem requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. Programs on crime and violence prevention are dispersed across government agencies with little coordination, communication, particularly regarding the systematization of what works best and why. The country lacks an integrated information system capable of collecting, producing, and analyzing crime and violence statistics. Although Honduras does have a national violence observatory, it currently falls short on the needed capacity, equipment, and human resources to operate at its full capacity.

A few promising initiatives have paved the way for a more integrated approach to violence prevention in Honduras, such as the Barrio Ciudad Project, funded by the World Bank and implemented by FHIS (Fondo Hondureño de Inversión Social). It is an urban upgrading project which addressed community-based violence through the integration of urban infrastructure upgrading, social development interventions, and strong community mobilization. It targeted one neighborhood in each of ten urban municipalities since 2006 (and will be closing in June 2013). The contribution that Barrio Ciudad has made at the community level has been complemented by the emphasis of other donors, such as UNDP, USAID, and the Spanish Cooperation, on municipal citizen security plans. Other donors have also supported important interventions on violence prevention. The proposed operation also incorporates important lessons learned from what has not worked in other violent prevention projects, such as the IDB’s project in the Sula Valley. (See section C below and Annex 7 for more information on donor cooperation and Annex 8 for more information on lessons learned).

The approval of the National Citizen Security and Coexistence Policy for 2011-2022, in October 2011 has fostered a more favorable policy environment for the strengthening and scaling up of these isolated initiatives. This policy defers from previous approaches because it combines – for the first time – the traditional emphasis on crime control with a strong emphasis on violence prevention. The development of this policy was supported by the United Nations National Development Program (UNDP) and was recognized by the Bank’s Development Policy Credit on Reducing Vulnerabilities to Growth (2011). As part of this new policy, the GoH created:

i. the Vice-Ministry of Security in the Area of Prevention (hereafter the Vice-Ministry of Prevention) to coordinate the violence prevention agenda of the citizen security policy;

ii. the National Citizen Security Council, which includes ministries from both the law enforcement/criminal justice sector, as well as the violence prevention sector; and

iii. the national “Safer Municipalities Program” (Programa Municipios más Seguros) whose objective is to serve as an ‘umbrella’/framework program to norm, coordinate, and oversee integrated approaches to citizen security at the municipal level, and is managed by the Vice-Ministry of Prevention.

Moving forward, the key challenge for the security sector is to build the capacity of national and local governments to implement integrated municipal approaches to citizen security at the municipal level, that are targeted towards:

- Areas where violence is clustered. Crime and violence is a national level problem, which tends to manifest locally in pockets of urban violence. In 2011, 65 percent of the homicides were concentrated in five percent of urban municipalities and in specific ‘hotspots’ within these urban areas.
- Groups most at risk. Most homicide victims are male (93 percent of the total in 2011) youth (the majority in the 15-39 year-old age range); and most perpetrators are also young males. Violence against women is the third type of violence most common in high crime municipalities. Nearly 85 percent of homicides involved the use of a firearm.
- Distinct forms of victimization. Hotspot communities tend to face four different types of crime and violence, whether related to (i) “coexistence” or the (in)capacity to solve conflicts peacefully (intra family and gender based violence, school violence, and community-based violence related to disputes between neighbors), (ii) street and situational crime (robbery, extortion, sexual assault), and (iii) drug trafficking and organized crime (territorial control of drug and extortion markets) and (iv) the permanent sense of fear and insecurity that permeates life in these communities a type of victimization with profound consequences for individual and collective behavior. Each of these forms of victimization requires a specific response.

The GoH’s Safer Municipalities Program aims to strengthen the capacity of municipal governments to plan and manage citizen security in an integrated manner and following evidence-informed practices. It is a coordinating or umbrella program that strengthens the role of other partners needed to implement services. Its role is not to implement specific subprojects or services at the municipal level. Instead, it has a normative, catalytic/coordinating, and learning/oversight function:

- to develop norms and tools that are evidence-informed and evidence-based (on municipal planning, youth violence programming, etc),
- to promote their adoption among local governments through partnerships with public agencies (i.e., facilitating agreements between local government and community policing efforts) and private sector actors (i.e., facilitating agreements between youth at risk employability programs and local businesses), and
- to monitor and evaluate results to provide a feedback loop into program design, and incentives/disincentives for performance.

The Bank’s Safer Municipalities Project proposed in this credit, to be implemented through a partnership between VMP and FHIS, is an example of a specific modality for implementing the SMP in contexts of mid size urban municipalities, with basic levels of administrative capacity, and high levels of violence. This type of strategic partnership with line ministries, donors, and NGOs will allow the GoH’s program to experiment with different implementation modalities to reach all municipalities, according to the characteristics, capacities and security situation of each type of municipality

### III. Project Development Objectives

The Project Development Objectives (PDO) are to support Honduras (i) to improve the capacities of national and local actors in violence prevention, (ii) to ensure urban municipalities are addressing crime and violence risk factors, and (iii) to respond promptly and effectively to an eligible emergency. It aims to achieve objective (i) through greater capacity of national institutions to coordinate violence prevention interventions, and to diagnose the sources and dynamics of violence. It aims to achieve objective (ii) through improved capacity to design municipal violence prevention plans and interventions that are evidence-informed, and invest in integrated approaches that address the multiple risk factors contributing to specific types of violence, particularly intra-family and gender-based, school-based, and community-based violence. In addition, objective (iii) will be achieved through the Immediate Response Mechanism (IRM) that enables IDA countries to have fast access to financial resources including part of the undisbursed balance of their investment lending portfolio in the event of a crisis or emergency.
As agreed with the Government, to achieve the second part of the PDO, the project will focus initially on three municipalities in the Northern region (La Ceiba, Choloma, and El Progreso). This reflects the prioritization done within the Safer Municipalities Program which puts a premium in areas with high concentrations of crime and violence. For this Project, municipalities were selected by ranking in decreasing order those with an urban population lower than 250,000 inhabitants and with a homicide rate higher than 90 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, which is about the national average. In addition, the team verified that there were propitious conditions in those municipalities in terms of engagement and commitment with citizen security. Additional municipalities may be considered during project implementation if agreed between the Government and the Bank based on the municipal participation criteria described in the Operations Manual.

IV. Project Description

Component Name
Component 1: Strengthening of national violence prevention institutions
Component 2: Investing in Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention at Municipal and Community Level
Component 3: Project Administration and Monitoring and Evaluation
Component 4: IRM Contingency Emergency Component

V. Financing (in USD Million)

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VI. Implementation

The Vice-Ministry of Prevention (VMP) at the Ministry of Security will have the strategic oversight and overall responsibility for project coordination consistent with its leadership of the Safer Municipalities Program (including the review and approval of Municipal Plans for Coexistence and Citizen Security) and will support FHIS with the strategic planning of the project and in the development of systems and tools for monitoring project implementation.

FHIS will be responsible to IDA for overall project implementation activities, including: disbursement, accounting, financial reporting, auditing, and monitoring and evaluation. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) at FHIS will be responsible for overall project management. This unit has been the implementing agency of the Bank’s Barrio Ciudad Project and has experience with all Bank procedures and regulations.

Municipalities will be the main co-executing agency for component 2. The University of Honduras (UNAH) will be responsible for executing all activities related to the National Violence Observatory and providing technical support to municipal observatories. To facilitate coordination a Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) will be created. The committee will have the active participation of the VMP, FHIS, and AMHON. SEFIN as well as other line ministries that will be invited to participate as needed.

VII. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

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VIII. Contact point

World Bank
Contact: Rodrigo Serrano-Berthet
Title: Senior Social Development Specialist
Tel: 458-5380
Email: rserrano1@worldbank.org
Name: Secretaría de Finanzas
Contact: Pompeyo Bonilla Reyes
Title: Minister of Finance
Tel: 5042220-5547
Email: pompeyobonilla@yahoo.com

Implementing Agencies
Name: Fondo Hondure de Inversion Social (FHIS)
Contact: Miguel Edgardo Martinez Pineda
Title: Ministro-Director del FHIS
Tel: 2233-1719
Email: emartinez@fhis.hn

IX. For more information contact:
The InfoShop
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 458-4500
Fax: (202) 522-1500
Web: http://www.worldbank.org/infoshop