

Submission to the Working Group on Peasants

Input for the Report on Seeds

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February 12, 2026

The Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS) is grateful for the opportunity to contribute this input to inform the Working Group's thematic report on the right to seeds.¹

This submission draws upon the following resources, which provide analyses and information relevant to the call for input.² Copies of these resources are included in the Annex.

- National Association for the Promotion of Ecological Agriculture ([ANAFAE](#)), Honduran Centre for the Promotion of Community Development ([CEHPRODEC](#)), National Coalition of Environmental Networks and Organizations ([CONROA](#)) and CGRS, [Submission to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food](#) (June 18, 2025).
- CGRS, [Root Causes of Migration: Climate Disasters and Environmental Degradation in Honduran Asylum Claims: Expert Declaration by Donald Hernández Palma](#) (October 24, 2024).
- CGRS, [Honduras: Climate Change, Human Rights Violations, and Forced Displacement](#) (December 20, 2023).

This submission examines how legislative initiatives in Honduras threaten the right to seeds, a key component of the right to food and rural livelihoods. Part I provides context on *campesino*³ and Indigenous Peoples' relationship to land and the structural barriers

¹ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Right to Seeds](#) (last accessed on February 3, 2026). This submission responds to questions: **№ 4** on national laws that govern the saving, use, exchange and sale of peasant seeds, **№ 7** on the challenges in exercising the right to seeds and **№ 9** on gaps in the protection and support of the right to seeds.

² We gratefully acknowledge and thank our on-the-ground partners in Honduras for their contributions to this earlier submission.

³ *Campesinos* are farm laborers who rent, own, or work the land and individuals who originate from or live in

they face. Part II analyzes proposed seed privatization measures and their impact on food sovereignty. And Part III offers recommendations to address this issue.

I. LACK OF LAND ACCESS UNDERMINES FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS IN HONDURAS

In Honduras, land holds deep cultural, economic, and spiritual significance for Indigenous Peoples and *campesinos*, rooted in ancestral stewardship, traditional knowledge, and generations of cultivation. The State has formally recognized aspects of this relationship, including by recognizing Indigenous territories and *campesino* cooperatives in regions such as the Bajo Aguán under the 1974 Agrarian Reform Law.

These rights, however, have been systematically undermined. The 1992 Law on the Modernization of the Agricultural Sector enabled powerful actors to acquire lands intended for collective ownership, severely restricting *campesino* access. State and private interests have further weakened land rights through irregular titling, weak enforcement of property laws, institutional corruption, and violence. As a result, many Indigenous and *campesino* communities rely on customary tenure without formal titles, leaving them highly vulnerable to exploitation and land loss.

These challenges are now compounded by legislative efforts that threaten to exacerbate food insecurity and erode sustainable livelihoods in rural and Indigenous communities.

II. LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO PRIVATIZE SEEDS

In recent years, Honduras' legislative and executive branches have pursued the revival of the controversial Monsanto Law and the enactment of a new Seed Law, proposals that represent a profound threat to *campesino* food sovereignty.⁴ These measures would transfer control of native seeds—cultivated and shared by communities for generations—to private seed companies, effectively criminalizing traditional practices of saving, exchanging, and cultivating local seeds.

rural regions and whose lifestyle and identity are deeply rooted in the rural environment where their families come from.

⁴ *Derecho a Alimentación Peligrará si 'Reviven' Ley*, La Tribuna (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.latribuna.hn/2025/02/13/derecho-a-alimentacion-peligrara-si-reviven-ley/>.

The high cost of privately owned genetically modified seeds is prohibitive for *campesino* families, making them unaffordable to most. Moreover, in regions such as the Indigenous Lenca territories, located at 1,800 meters above sea level, only native and locally adapted varieties of corn and beans can thrive. No company offers seed varieties suited to these unique agroecological conditions. As a result, such laws would effectively condemn these families to poverty and hunger.

Beyond the legal dimensions, these proposals threaten to dismantle centuries-old cultural and ecological seed systems, undermining biodiversity and community resilience. In essence, the danger lies not only in losing seeds but in surrendering control over food, heritage, and self-determination. They would transform a shared human legacy into a privatized commodity, jeopardizing the subsistence of those who feed the nation. The proposed legislation constitutes a clear regression in the rights previously recognized by the Honduran State, as enshrined in Law 1046 of 1980 and the General Seed Regulations.

Moreover, the proposed Monsanto and Seed Laws would make it illegal for *campesinos* and Indigenous Peoples to save, exchange, or cultivate native seeds without certification, effectively criminalizing ancestral practices.

These laws increase risks for *campesinos* who defend their right to seeds, exposing them to fines, criminal charges, and harassment. Ultimately, they further erode *campesinos'* capacity to preserve and protect traditional seed systems that are vital for biodiversity, cultural heritage and local food security.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed seed privatization law would erode ancestral seed systems and criminalize the saving and exchange of native seeds, posing serious threats to food sovereignty and cultural survival. This situation highlights a broader pattern: the erosion of legal and cultural protections for the rights to food and seeds closely intertwined with dispossession, criminalization, and violence against vulnerable communities.

Drawing on the situation in Honduras, this submission urges the Working Group on Peasants to consider including the following in its report:

- Protect the right to freely save, use, exchange and cultivate native seeds, in line with international human rights standards and the 2018 UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.
- Refrain from reviving or introducing legislation that would restrict access to seeds or criminalize traditional agricultural practices.
- Develop or enforce existing legal frameworks rigorously to protect collective land ownership rights, for example, in accordance with the International Labor Organization Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.