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Honduras urged to investigate prison fire deaths

The Honduran authorities must urgently instigate a thorough and impartial investigation into a fire at Comayagua prison that has reportedly left more than 300 prisoners dead and scores of others with serious burns, Amnesty International said.

The situation at the prison, which is about 85 km north of the capital Tegucigalpa, is reported to be horrific as numerous critically injured prisoners and the charred bodies of other inmates are recovered from the scene.

“It is essential that the survivors of the fire, and relatives of those who perished, know the truth about what happened and the events which led to this appalling loss of life,” said Esther Major, Central America Researcher at Amnesty International.

“The government must also take urgent steps to ensure that crucial lessons are learned and prison conditions are improved, so that such a tragedy does not occur again.”

This is not the first mass death during a prison fire in Honduras – in 2004 a blaze in San Pedro Sula prison killed more than 100 people.

“Eight years on, scores of prisoners have once again perished in the most horrific circumstances, trapped with absolutely no means of escape,” said Esther Major.