

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

# Honduran Government Receives Praise from U.S. State Department for Reducing Crime and Corruption Rates

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Mar 30, 2017, 14:51 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, March 30, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A report released this month by the U.S. Department of State credits the Honduran government for reducing rates of homicide, kidnapping, and extortion in the Central American country.

Between 2014 and 2015, the Honduran National Police reported a 48 percent decrease in kidnappings.

"Over the past several years, the Honduran government has taken concrete steps to bolster its security and justice system, while combatting organized crime and drug trafficking," said Christa Castro, Minister Advisor for Strategy and Communications for the Government of Honduras. "The State Department report highlights the fruits of our labor -- a safer country for all Hondurans."

The Honduran government is steadfastly eliminating corruption among the Honduran National Police force, according to the U.S. report. President Juan Orlando Hernández's Police Purge Commission, created last year, removed 1,946 police officers by December. The commission continues to vet its officers -- and is aiming to reach its goal of completing 14,000 personnel reviews by April.

The report also underscores the U.S. government's role in Honduran crime prevention and community programs, highlighting 40 U.S.-supported outreach centers for at-risk youth.

"The United States plays a key role in assisting vulnerable people in Honduras," said Castro. "We look forward to continuing our work with the U.S. government to improve the capacity of our justice system and ensure that civilians are protected."

The State Department report details the efforts of the Honduran government to battle crime and drug trafficking from all sides -- by stamping out corruption, strengthening security forces, and supporting at-risk populations. "The results are visible," the report concludes. "Rates of homicide, kidnapping, and extortion were down from 2015, and citizens' impressions of the HNP are improving."

President Hernández is simultaneously spearheading human rights reforms within the Honduran Armed Forces, according to a separate State Department report. Over 4,500 service members had received human rights training as of August.

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Yael Wollstein

(202) 471-4228 ext. 118

152929@email4pr.com

SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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SENDER: Yael Wollstein

SENDER'S EMAIL: yael@kbc.us

EMAIL SUBJECT: News Release: President of Honduras Meets with Trump Administration in Washington

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Hi {!Lead.FirstName},

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President Hernandez just shared a letter with his countrymen about his trip to the United States -- and his efforts to improve public safety and security in Honduras.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I'd be glad to connect you with a representative of the Honduran embassy in Washington.

Best,  
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Yael Wollstein  
1722-A Wisconsin Ave. NW, Suite 21  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 471-4228, ext. 118

**Address to the People of Honduras by President Juan Orlando Hernandez**

**Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
March 20, 2017**

**Dear Fellow Citizens:**

**In our fight against crime, if for any reason anyone still doubts about our map road and our course of action, I can assure you that in this task we are not going to be intimidated and we are not going to step back not even a millimeter. I shall do whatever I have to do to continue to provide peace and tranquility to all Hondurans.**

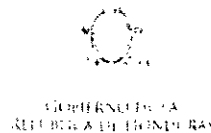
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We have carried out this great fight against crime in tandem with the strengthening of the institutionality of the defense of human rights, which now allows a more solid institutionality on this subject; furthermore our government has placed special care in ensuring the social inclusion of the most disadvantaged population through multiple social welfare initiatives, such as VIDA MEJOR (BETTER LIFE), our flagship social program in which we have invested large quantities of resources and together with the other social benefits provided by the government we have served a little more than one million two hundred thousand poor families.

Our fight has required the commitment and courage of many government officials who have been in the forefront of combat in this war against criminals, some of whom have died in the discharge of their duties, many more have received death threats on many occasions such as congressmen, judges, prosecutors, members of the executive branch, and even the President of the Republic and his family are under threat.



GOBIERNO DE LA  
REPÚBLICA DE HONDURAS

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DESPACHO DE COMUNICACIONES  
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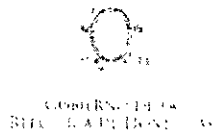
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Thank you very much.

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DISPACHO DE COMUNICACIONES  
Y ESTRATEGIA PRESIDENCIAL

**Juan Orlando Hernández**  
**President of Honduras**

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SENDER'S EMAIL: yael@kbc.us

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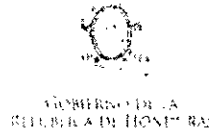
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From January 25, 2010, we had the vision in the National Congress that we should prepare ourselves for a long fight against delinquency and organized crime and we knew that it would not be easy, that the road was going to be full of obstacles, and that at this moment in which we find ourselves, when we have dismantled the most of the criminal bands, we must face the furious attack of the criminals who still remain and are attempting to regroup the remains of those bands in a ferocious fight to maintain their territories.

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NSD/CES/REGISTRATION  
UNIT

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25



To:  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
Subject:

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**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2017 4:03 PM  
**Subject:** Address to the People of Honduras by President Juan Orlando Hernandez

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**The White House**  
Office of the Vice President  
For Immediate Release  
March 23, 2017

## Readout of the Vice President's Meeting with President Juan Orlando Hernandez of Honduras



The Vice President met today with President Juan Orlando Hernandez of Honduras at the White House. The Vice President recognized the important progress that Honduras has made over the past two years in fighting violent crime and corruption and strengthening citizen security, including through its police reform efforts. President Hernandez emphasized that Honduras is

focused on improving the economy and creating jobs through its Alliance for Prosperity Plan, which will address the root causes that drive illegal immigration. The Vice President pledged to maintain close relations with Honduras as part of the Administration's overall engagement with the Northern Triangle of Central America.



GOBIERNO DE LA  
REPÚBLICA DE HONDURAS

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DESPACHO DE COMUNICACIONES  
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**Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
March 20, 2017**

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We have intensified the fight against social insecurity with the incorporation of the Armed Forces in security tasks; we have created the Public Order Military Police (PMOP) and the Anti-Extortion National Force, and in order to achieve the collaboration and effective coordination among the different institutions we created the Interinstitutional Force (FUSINA). We also created the Fuerza Tigres (Fighting Tigers Force) and provided greater resources to the national police such as equipment, vehicles, armament, and technology; while developing the police cleansing and

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certification process, we created the Investigation Police (DPI), strengthened the Public Ministry (prosecution authorities) providing it with a larger budget, and established the Technical Criminal Investigation Agency (ATIC).

We were successful in establishing land, sea, and air shields to stop the transit of drugs, resulting in the confiscation of hundreds of tons of drugs.

The first extradited criminal in the country's history took place during my Government, and as of today we have already extradited the most important drug trafficking lords. We have confiscated their assets, almost all the criminal bands in all the regions of the country have been disarticulated, we are continually destroying clandestine runways in order to prevent the landing of planes loaded with drugs, unlike what happened between 2006 to 2009 when hundreds of aircrafts landed in our territory like a swarm of bees. That is no longer taking place in our territory, nor will it ever happen again. And as long as I am President, I guarantee you that it is not going to happen.

I thank the courage and self-sacrifice shown by the security and justice operators, the courage of good policemen and the military, the courage of judges and prosecutors who have accompanied us in this crusade for justice and freedom, and the courageous congressmen who have passed innovative laws. All of those who have been a part of this fight have engraved their names in this history and I am proud of what we have done and what we have achieved.

We have carried out this great fight against crime in tandem with the strengthening of the institutionality of the defense of human rights, which now allows a more solid institutionality on this subject; furthermore our government has placed special care in ensuring the social inclusion of the most disadvantaged population through multiple social welfare initiatives, such as VIDA MEJOR (BETTER LIFE), our flagship social program in which we have invested large quantities of resources and together with the other social benefits provided by the government we have served a little more than one million two hundred thousand poor families.

Our fight has required the commitment and courage of many government officials who have been in the forefront of combat in this war against criminals, some of whom have died in the discharge of their duties, many more have received death threats on many occasions such as congressmen, judges, prosecutors, members of the executive branch, and even the President of the Republic and his family are under threat.

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I want to reiterate what for me is an undeniable principle: **"No one is above the Law"** and each person is responsible for his/her acts and must be held accountable for their actions, either in a Honduran court or in a court of another country that thus requires it, no one can escape from justice, this is an essential principle for peace in our society.

I have often said it: if anyone violates the law, he/she will have to defend him/herself making use of their legitimate right, but neither I nor my government will protect no one. Now Honduras is a different country, a country of justice and respect of the law and the institutions. No longer is the phrase that someone once said applicable in the sense that justice in Honduras was like a snake that only bit the poor, that is not so now; in Honduras any person who is accused according to the law and due process has to be held accountable, no matter if they are white or blue collar, or whether they wear suits and ties or not.

Since the time I assumed the presidency, as well as within the electoral process, I warned my friends, my relatives, and members of my political party to be very careful with their actions, that all are obliged to comply with and respect the law, because I am not going to protect anyone, absolutely no one, and if any friend or someone from my own party has problems with the law, they must step aside and withdraw to face their judicial process according to the law.

The evidence is all there, everyone has witnessed how we have broken old paradigms. Now we are prosecuting entrepreneurs, members of the military, politicians and policemen, anyone who violates the law will be held accountable.

Today I am leaving on an official visit to the United States; it is the first visit with the new government headed by President Trump. The objective is to revisit the common agenda between the two countries, to discuss economic, social, and security issues, and we will also discuss the migratory issue where, as always, we will request a human and just treatment for our migrants.

We have traditionally shared common objectives with the United States, and I believe that our country is an important and loyal ally of the United States since we have partnered in the war on drugs, insecurity, and terrorism, against poverty and inequity, and in defense of freedom and democracy.

Thank you very much.



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DESPACHO DE COMUNICACIONES  
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**Juan Orlando Hernandez**  
**President of Honduras**

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SENDER: Yael Wollstein  
SENDER'S EMAIL: yael@kbc.us  
EMAIL SUBJECT: Media Advisory: Honduran Government Releases Report on Official Visit to U.S. This Week

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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

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Today, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández released his official report on his visit to Washington, D.C. this past week. During his trip, he met with Members of Congress and of President Trump's administration to discuss the shared interests of the United States and Honduras.

I've pasted a rough, unauthorized English translation of the text of the report below. The report can also be viewed in multiple languages, including the official Spanish, with pictures and video from President Hernández's visit on the Honduran government's website.

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Best,  
Yael

Yael Wollstein  
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Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 471-4228, ext. 118

—MEDIA ADVISORY—

**U.S. Praises Honduras as an Example in the Region: President Hernández**

**Tegucigalpa, March 23** — President Juan Orlando Hernández said today, "The United States considers Honduras an exemplar within the region thanks to the policies we have implemented to promote security and transparency, fight corruption and impunity, create jobs, and develop infrastructure."

Addressing the press upon his arrival after an official visit to Washington, the Honduran president said, "All have expressed admiration for the challenges Honduras faces, the results we are seeing, and the roadmap we have drawn."

During meetings with the Honduran president, senators, Congressmen and U.S. officials stressed Honduras's regional leadership and its role as a credible and reliable interlocutor.

They also stressed that Honduras has delivered concrete results, over both the medium and long term.

"I want to send a message to the Honduran people -- now, more than ever, we are receiving unprecedented international recognition for our sacrifices and the struggles we have undertaken, not only during this period of government but also through decisions made by Congress, which are producing results," said President Hernández.

"That means we have worked hard to plow the land and plant the seed, and now we are beginning to reap a clear sense of where our country is going," he said.

### **The Meetings**

The president outlined the work meetings held during his trip to the United States, which included:

1. Congressmen Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., and Albio Sires, D-N.J., members of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee of the House of Representatives.
2. Congresswoman Kay Granger, R-Texas, who is "a great friend of Honduras and follows up on our issues" and is chairwoman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and a member of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee of the House of Representatives.
3. Congresswoman Norma Torres, D-Calif., member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Co-President of the Central American Caucus of the House of Representatives. She promoted a meeting with stakeholders in Central America, which included Congressmen Scott Taylor, Mark Bogan, and John Boehner.
4. Congressmen Harold Rogers, R-Ky., whom we thanked for having expedited a series of procedures for approval of resources for Honduras, and Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., the chair and ranking member, respectively, of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs in the House of Representatives.
5. Senator Robert Menendez, D-N.J., ranking member of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. President Hernández said, "I reminded him that five or six years ago we talked about the need to adopt the mechanism of extradition, and he has seen how we have advanced on that topic."
6. Senator Bob Corker, R-Tenn., and Senator Benjamin Cardin, D-Md., chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, respectively.

### **What Has Been Found**

President Hernández said that the common theme in his meetings with Congressmen and senators was that they are "very clear in the State Department report on the issues of narcotics, human rights, police reforms, the decline in the homicide rate, the fight against corruption and impunity. All are issues of great pleasure for them with the support of that report."

The report of the United Nations on these issues is consistent with the statement by the State Department, he argued.

"I took the opportunity to tell you that the approach to the Alliance for Prosperity Plan in the previous Congress had bipartisan support, and that it was essential for us to move forward with this plan, and I understand that there is a serious commitment on the part of Congress, Senate and the House of Representatives to continue to support this initiative," President Hernández said.

He added that he could also publicize his vision for where it is going. "We talked about Honduras 2020, the most ambitious economic development initiative in the country's history, which has already begun to generate some of the 600,000 new jobs projected between 2016 and 2020."

President Hernández added that Congressmen and senators had learned how Honduras is moving forward to become the Logistics Center of the Americas with an unprecedented investment in infrastructure, by allocating more than 48 billion lempiras to build a network of roads, ports and airports.

#### 7. Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State

At that meeting, President Hernández pointed out that Honduras wants to be more competitive generating power with gas energy. "The United States has a lot of gas, and if that could be transported to Honduras to produce energy, this could cheapen the price of energy both in the country and in Central America by 40 percent," he said.

"I found in him a very strong and clear understanding that for the United States, Honduras and Central America, the issue of security is closely linked, which has always been our main argument since taking office in 2014, and it is for the new Secretary of State, too," he said.

President Hernández said that they also discussed the possibility of holding a Central American summit with the support of Mexico, Canada, Colombia, and the United States.

"It was concluded that General John Kelly, who is Secretary of Homeland Security, is cleared to attend the summit, and Vice President Mike Pence promised today to attend, and the summit will surely be in the city of Miami at first," he said.

He added that the summit will invite investors from Mexico, Canada, Colombia, and Central America as a mechanism for generating investment and employment, so that Hondurans have the opportunity to find a decent job and avoid forced migration to the United States.

He reiterated, if "Honduras is a prosperous land, if Honduras is a land at peace, if Honduras is a land of opportunity, it is a good investment for the United States, and today Honduras is a good investment for the United States and the new administration has understood perfectly."

#### **Honduras Is Surprising the World**

Moreover, President Hernández said that progress has been made in improving the country's image, and it takes a lot to do so. "But we are on the right track," he said.

"I told you a few days ago -- we will surprise the continent, and we are going to shock the world, and that is already happening," he said.

### **Migration**

On migration, the Honduran president reported that held talks with the State Department. "They are focused on the migrants that have a criminal record," he said.

"That Hondurans who are working and are not at odds with the law for past conduct, for me, that is a very important relief," said Hernández.

President Hernández acknowledged that Congressman Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, is committed to Honduras.

He also spoke with Senator Marco Rubio, R-Fla., whom he considers "a great friend of Honduras, willing to continue to support the strategy for Central America."

He also thanked Senator Thomas Carper, D-Del., and said, "He is an extraordinary person and is very interested not only in Honduras but also in the Northern Triangle."

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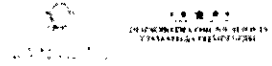
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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

# Honduran Government Announces 30 Percent Decline in Homicides

Extortion crimes also decrease by 45 percent.



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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
May 02, 2017, 08:45 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, May 2, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Homicides have declined 30 percent in Honduras, according to the most recent government data, announced last week by President Juan Orlando Hernández.

Hernández also gave an update on Operation Arpía 2, wherein 384 prisoners were transferred from various penitentiaries to El Pozo, which will house Honduras's most dangerous prisoners.

Operation Arpía is the highest-impact operation undertaken in Latin America. Earlier this year, authorities transferred 755 detainees who were members of two enemy criminal gangs, Mara Salvatrucha and Pandilla 18. Under Operations Arpía 1 and 2, one-third of the prison population at San Pedro Sula has been relocated.

The operations also yielded a 45 percent reduction in extortion crimes, the seventh-most common reason for incarceration in Honduras.

President Hernández attributed the reduction in crime to reforms passed by Honduras's National Congress last February, the prisoner transfer program, and the Government's law enforcement efforts, especially those of judicial officials, the National Anti-Extortion Force, and the National Inter-Agency Security Force (Fusina).

In 2016, Honduras's homicide rate was 59 per 100,000 residents, according to the Violence Observatory at the National Autonomous University of Honduras.

"This means that Fusina was correct to propose these reforms, and that Congress did what needed to be done when it passed them," said Hernández.

He added that Arpía 2 "was a successful and noteworthy operation, showing not only our political will but also the Honduran State's new capabilities."

## **Migration and Security**

Hernández said that Central America, particularly Honduras, continues to be important to U.S. interests.

"I want to share what, to me, is an important element of the United States' immigration policy, the subject of security; how the Trump Administration sees this subject; and what Honduras and the Central American and Mesoamerican region mean for the security of the United States," he said.

He referred to a speech U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly recently gave at George Washington University. "He clearly identified there how the new U.S. Administration sees the subject of security and immigration," said Hernández.

Kelly said, "But it's not enough to tackle the problems here at home . . . Border security starts 1,500 miles to the south of the United States with incredible partners like Colombia, the Central American countries, and Mexico."

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## **U.S. Priorities**

When asked about the 30 percent decrease in U.S. assistance to countries in the Central American Northern Triangle, Hernández said, "If we receive assistance, it will be welcomed, but if not, there are things that only we as Hondurans are going to make a priority."

Hernández stated that, in his most recent working trip to Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson confirmed that President Trump had requested a 30 percent reduction in aid for Central American countries, which some members of Congress supported and others opposed.

In response to this extreme action, Hernández said, "This is a very sovereign decision by the United States."

## **Support for Law Enforcement Should Continue**

Hernández also stated that the establishment of a Tri-National Force -- from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador -- to fight crime was a Honduran initiative, before President Trump was inaugurated.

He highlighted the advancements that Honduras and the region have made in this area and what that means for the United States, given that President Trump promised to combat criminal gangs.

Hernández said that law enforcement operations should be executed jointly, with mutual assistance among all affected countries, including the United States. "United, we are stronger and more effective," he said.

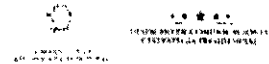
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Lauren Archambeault  
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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

## Honduran President Announces Commission to Review Criminal Justice Reforms for Minors

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
May 12, 2017, 08:30 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, May 12, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- This week, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández announced the formation of a commission that will consider reforms to the country's criminal justice system -- including whether to lower the age at which alleged offenders can be charged as adults.



President Juan Orlando Hernández



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Republic of Honduras

"I have given instructions to the secretary general of Internal Affairs, Dr. Jorge Ramón Hernández Alcerro, to gather jurists and sociologists who can bring together different sectors of society to review two questions," he said. "Do we treat minors differently, even when they have committed horrendous crimes, or do we treat them like adults, as they do in other countries?"

The commission will also explore how to restructure the country's penitentiary system in order to reintegrate young offenders into society. As part of that work, the commission will conduct an in-depth review of Honduras's juvenile detention centers.

"The entire penitentiary system has become paralyzed, and part of what is not working is its treatment of minors," Hernández said.

Hernández lamented that criminal organizations exploit minors to commit crimes, knowing that the law does not allow them to be tried as adults. The result is that youths -- frequently boys -- enter into a life of crime before they reach adulthood. Adult criminals, meanwhile, avoid justice.

"We should give minors options, so that they can be reintegrated into society and not lost to us," he said.

Youths participate in almost 40 percent of high-impact crimes in Honduras.

The commission will seek input from human rights groups, children's rights groups, civil society organizations, and churches.

President Hernández stated that he does not have an exact age in mind at which he believes minors should be tried as adults. "The commission will delve deeply into this question and give us the information to make that decision," he said.

"But we cannot delay any longer. This goal of this initiative is to protect the lives of Hondurans."

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May 12, 2017, 08:30 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, May 12, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- This week, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández announced the formation of a commission that will consider reforms to the country's criminal justice system -- including whether to lower the age at which alleged offenders can be charged as adults.



President Juan Orlando Hernández



GOBIERNO DE LA  
REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS

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DESPACHO DE COMUNICACIONES  
Y ESTRATEGIA PRESIDENCIAL

Republic of Honduras

"I have given instructions to the secretary general of Internal Affairs, Dr. Jorge Ramón Hernández Alcerro, to gather jurists and sociologists who can bring together different sectors of society to review two questions," he said, "Do we treat minors differently, even when they have committed horrendous crimes, or do we treat them like adults, as they do in other countries?"

The commission will also explore how to restructure the country's penitentiary system in order to reintegrate young offenders into society. As part of that work, the commission will conduct an in-depth review of Honduras's juvenile detention centers.

"The entire penitentiary system has become paralyzed, and part of what is not working is its treatment of minors," Hernández said.

Hernández lamented that criminal organizations exploit minors to commit crimes, knowing that the law does not allow them to be tried as adults. The result is that youths -- frequently boys -- enter into a life of crime before they reach adulthood. Adult criminals, meanwhile, avoid justice.

"We should give minors options, so that they can be reintegrated into society and not lost to us," he said.

Youths participate in almost 40 percent of high-impact crimes in Honduras.

The commission will seek input from human rights groups, children's rights groups, civil society organizations, and churches.

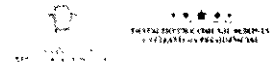
President Hernández stated that he does not have an exact age in mind at which he believes minors should be tried as adults. "The commission will delve deeply into this question and give us the information to make that decision," he said.

"But we cannot delay any longer. This goal of this initiative is to protect the lives of Hondurans."

Media Contact:

2017 SEP 11 AM 7: 25

# Honduras Creates New Ministry for Human Rights



The president reaffirmed his intent to see justice done in cases of murdered journalists.

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
May 31, 2017, 08:35 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, May 31, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández has announced the creation of a new Ministry for Human Rights, which will include responsibility for cases of crimes against journalists.

The Honduran president announced the decision during his speech at a Honduran Association of Journalists ceremony bestowing the Álvaro Contreras Award (2017-2018) on journalist Blanca Moreno, on the occasion of Honduras's Journalism Day.

The president supported the Association of Journalists' request that the authorities investigate murders of media and communications professionals.

"To the members of the Executive Branch, the instruction is clear and direct: Bring to trial those who must be tried to see justice done for Honduras and for journalists," Hernández said.

He added, "The instrument we have built together with you and with other leaders who defend and promote human rights not only in Honduras but in other parts of the world is beginning its work."

"I recognize that we have to relaunch this, I recognize that there is a lot left to do. We have assumed our responsibility, and I take this opportunity to say that I have made the decision to elevate the Office of the Undersecretary for everything involving human rights, to a new Ministry, because this portfolio should be important, today, tomorrow and always," Hernández said.

"I hope that you will join us in this effort," said Hernández.

Media contact:

Yael Wollstein

162238@email4pr.com

202-471-4228 ext. 118

SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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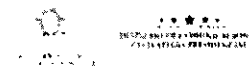
202-471-4228 ext. 118

SOURCE Republic of Honduras

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

# Honduran Government Lauds New IMF Findings on Country's Economy

International Monetary Fund calls Honduras's economic outlook "favorable"



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
Jun 08, 2017, 08:45 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, June 8, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The Government of Honduras applauded the International Monetary Fund for expressing optimism about the country's economy in a new statement of preliminary findings following an 11-day visit to Honduras by Fund representatives.

An official statement from Roberto García-Saltos, chief of the IMF delegation, said that he and his team were "encouraged by the continuing strengthening of the Honduran economy, including advances in the security situation."

President Juan Orlando Hernández responded by reiterating his commitment to build a better Honduras for all Hondurans.

"Honduras has come a long way under our administration. Today, we are beginning to see the tangible results of our efforts, as the international community recognizes that Honduras is an attractive country for domestic and foreign investment," Hernández said.

"We are working hard to become one of the safest countries in the Americas," said Hernández. "Our achievements are supported by facts and statistics as measured by independent observers like the IMF. That engenders trust among the Honduran people in their country, and among foreign individuals who visit and invest here."

The IMF delegation found that the Honduran economy grew 3.6 percent in 2016 and projected real GDP growth of 4 percent to 4.5 percent in the first quarter of 2017.

The IMF's findings are timely, as Honduran government officials will meet in Miami June 15-16 with U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and other high-ranking U.S. and Mexican officials at the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America. Investors from the Americas, Europe and Asia, and the Inter-American Development Bank will also be in attendance to discuss investment opportunities in Honduras and neighboring countries in the Northern Triangle. ☞

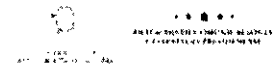
"The IMF's recent visit reaffirms that we are on the right path," Hernández said. "There is much left to do, but evaluations like the IMF's confirm that the policies that our administration has outlined are working."

To read the International Monetary Fund's official recap of its recent mission to Honduras, please visit:  
<http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/06/01/pr17203-imf-staff-concludes-visit-to-honduras>.

For more information or to schedule an interview with Honduran officials, please contact Yael Wollstein at [163462@email4pr.com](mailto:163462@email4pr.com) or +1-202-471-4228 ext. 118.

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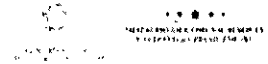
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

# Honduran President Asks U.S. Government to Extend Temporary Protected Status for Central American Immigrants



Officials will consider renewal at the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America

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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jun 14, 2017, 08:35 ET

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MIAMI, June 14, 2017 /PRNewswire/-- This week, at the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández will meet with Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary Rex Tillerson and Secretary John Kelly to request an extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Hondurans in the United States.

TPS, originally established in 1998, currently allows 60,000 Hondurans to live, study, work and travel legally in the United States. In 2016, Hondurans in this program sent approximately \$4 billion back home in remittances, making TPS a key component of the Honduran economy.

The current TPS extension expires on January 5. At the conference, hosted in Miami from June 15-16, Hernández will present the case for renewal -- citing factors like poverty and climate change.

Other government officials and civil leaders from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico and the United States are also expected to participate in these discussions.

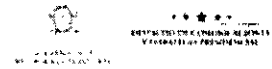
"In the past 18 years, TPS Hondurans have integrated into American society, built businesses and raised American children. We will continue our best efforts to achieve TPS renewal for them," said Hernández.

**Media Contact:**

Yael Wolfstein  
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202-471-4228 ext. 118

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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

## Honduras Moves to Strengthen Integrity of Its Police Force

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
Jun 14, 2017, 17:59 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, June 14, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The Republic of Honduras' National Police Purification Commission will soon submit 25 names for Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández to consider for police leadership positions.



Gobierno de la  
República de Honduras



DESPACHO DE COMUNICACIONES  
Y ESTRATEGIA PRESIDENCIAL

Republic of Honduras

The leadership revamp is part of recent government efforts to monitor for police integrity. Efforts include identifying and firing corrupt individuals who have participated in crimes like drug trafficking, illegal weapons sales, and murder. Overall, the National Police Purification Commission is working to reorganize the police and only retain officers who have demonstrated their commitment to anti-corruption policies.

To date, the commission has dismissed 4,004 police officers that did not meet the requirements for police work in Honduras.

Hoping to inject new blood into the police force, the commission is considering both young and well-seasoned candidates for leadership positions, all of whom have received high-quality training and proven their integrity.

Omar Rivera, a commission member, stated that the primary challenge is finding police leaders of the future who will champion the current institutional reforms. "We want to enlist an efficient, legitimate and honest leadership," he emphasized.

Commission members Vilma Morales, the former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Justice, Omar Rivera, and Alberto Solórzano, are leading the selection process along with Security Secretary Julián Pacheco. They are evaluating candidates from the first levels of the senior officer ranks.

The 25 potential candidates include three generals and 22 police commissioners. The most important open positions are Director General, Deputy Director General, and Inspector General of the Police.

Department of Security sources indicate that the commission is looking for candidates that will lead the police force with a dynamic and innovative vision.

The National Police Purification Commission was formed in April of last year, under a national emergency law to purge the police force. The commission's members were appointed by the Executive Branch. Under a direct mandate from President Hernández, the commission is charged with determining suitability requirements for police service, judging the integrity and loyalty of Honduran police, and implementing mechanisms for follow-up and oversight.

**Media Contact:**

Yael Wollstein

164458@email4pr.com

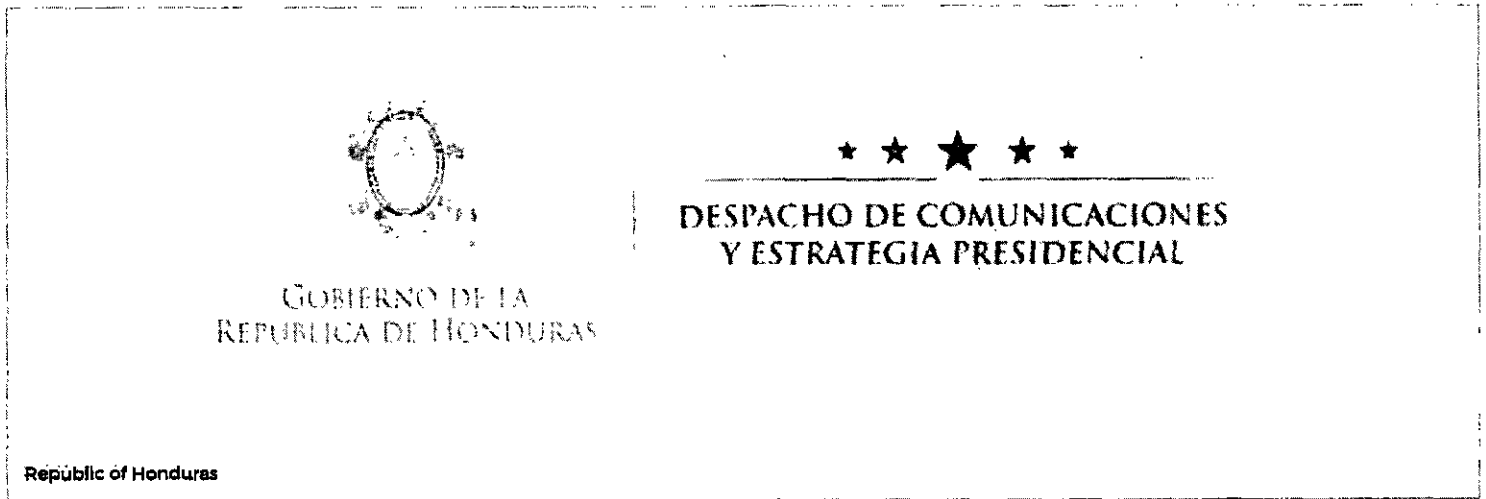
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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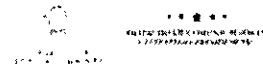
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:25

# Honduran Police Arrest Suspect in Murder of Journalist Víctor Fúnez



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jun 16, 2017, 17:55 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, June 16, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Honduran authorities have arrested a suspect in the murder of journalist and congressional candidate Víctor Fúnez.

Fúnez, running for Congress as a member of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández's National Party, was murdered in his home on June 15 in the port city of La Ceiba, Honduras.

Police arrested the suspect, Álvaro Euceda Cruz, aka Edwin Reynieri Suazo, aka "el pájaro," in La Ceiba's La Julia neighborhood after a stand-off that left two officers wounded. According to intelligence units, Euceda is a known hitman and drug dealer in the area.

A quick response from Honduran specialized forces and evidence collected during the investigation, helped authorities identify and capture the suspect. The two wounded officers were immediately transferred to a treatment center.

During the investigation, police seized the following pieces of evidence from the suspect: two firearms that will be tested for ballistics evidence to determine which one was used to kill Fúnez; one mobile phone, and the green and black motorcycle ridden to and from the crime scene.

Authorities are still investigating whether or not Euceda was working with an accomplice. If so, concrete steps will be taken to make a timely arrest.

The event has led the Honduran National Police to recommit to fostering security in their country by fighting common and organized crime.

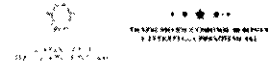
**Media Contact:**

Sandra Ramos

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Contact Info: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letter-to-the-editor/?utm\\_term=.874bf66cdf8a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letter-to-the-editor/?utm_term=.874bf66cdf8a)

2017 SEP 11 AM 7: 25

Link to article: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/a-hidden-cost-of-corruption-environmental-devastation/2017/06/16/03f93c1e-52b8-11e7-b064-828ba60fbb98\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.64e287d5f819](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/a-hidden-cost-of-corruption-environmental-devastation/2017/06/16/03f93c1e-52b8-11e7-b064-828ba60fbb98_story.html?utm_term=.64e287d5f819)

Email Subject: Letter to the Editor

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Dear Editor,

A recent opinion piece accused the Honduran government of "shroud[ing] government activities in secrecy" and of using its Patuca III dam project as a "conduit for corruption." ("A hidden cost of corruption: environmental devastation," June 16) Both accusations are off base.

Honduras has adopted aggressive anti-corruption efforts. Over the past year, we've purged our national police force of more than 4,000 unfit police officers -- including individuals that have engaged in drug trafficking and extortion.<sup>1</sup> A recent public information transparency audit rated nearly 60 percent of our agencies as excellent.<sup>2</sup> And in the past two years, we've prosecuted more corruption cases than in the previous 20.<sup>3</sup>

We've also joined the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative -- an organization that helps countries pursue public infrastructure accountability. Thanks to our partnership with CoST, our project disclosure compliance has shot up from 27 percent to 84 percent, and we're publicly sharing data on over 450 public infrastructure projects online.<sup>4</sup>

As for Patuca III, the dam is 70 percent completed and could be operational as early as August.<sup>5</sup> The project will bring in about \$39 million in gross energy revenue and has already brought increased trade, jobs, and business to the 40,000 residents of Patuca.<sup>67</sup> We consulted area residents before construction began, and have paid more than the customary amount in land compensation.<sup>8</sup>

We've also enlisted scientists to ensure that the project is carried out in a socially and environmentally responsible way. Claudia Aguilar, the project's head, has noted that Patuca III capitalizes on natural resources "in service of the people."<sup>9</sup>

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/honduras-moves-to-strengthen-integrity-of-its-police-force-300474312.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2015/vol1/238978.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Email from Gus West -- Notes for LTE.pdf

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.constructiontransparency.org/honduras>

<sup>5</sup> doc1\_ENGLISH

<sup>6</sup> doc1\_ENGLISH

<sup>7</sup> Principales puntos\_ENGLISH

<sup>8</sup>

<sup>9</sup> doc1\_ENGLISH

[NAME OF OFFICIAL]

[TITLE OF OFFICIAL]

[ADDRESS LINE 1]

[ADDRESS LINE 2]

[PHONE NUMBER]

Contact Info: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letter-to-the-editor/?utm\\_term=.874bf66cdf8a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letter-to-the-editor/?utm_term=.874bf66cdf8a)

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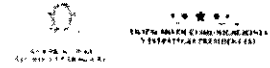
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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:26

## Honduras and Guatemala Launch Historic Customs Union



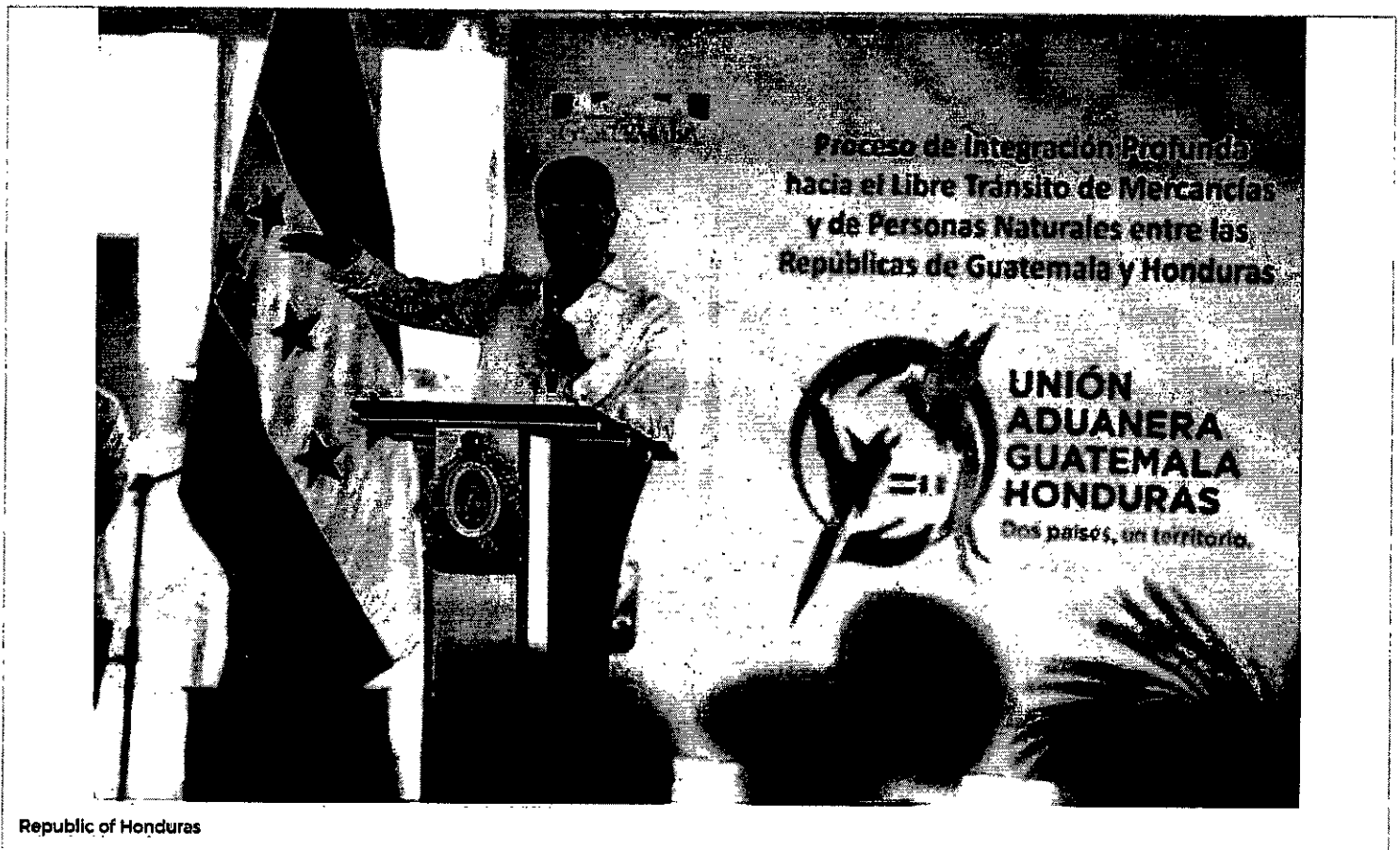
NEWS PROVIDED BY

Republic of Honduras →

Jun 28, 2017, 08:41 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, June 28, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- This week, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández and Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales launched a customs union predicted to boost both their countries' economies by over one percent. They kicked off the union at the Corinto border post connecting their nations.

"We believe this union will bring a new chapter of economic growth and cooperation to our region," said President Hernández. "We are excited to open up avenues for trade, travel and cultural exchange with our Guatemalan neighbors."



Republic of Honduras

Under the new agreement, Guatemala and Honduras will allow 80 percent of exports and travelers to cross their borders free of charge. Ten access points along the border, built under regulations agreed to by both nations, will facilitate easy passage.

The customs union is expected to raise tax revenue by about \$40 million a month, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since Honduras and Guatemala comprise 42 percent of Central America's population and 46 percent of its GDP, the customs union will also attract investment and grow the entire regional economy.

Camilo Atala, president of the Latin American Business Council, praised the union as the first customs partnership on the continent. "The customs union will increase the flow of trade between both nations and set an example for Latin America," he stated. By fostering economic growth, he noted, the union "will create more and better jobs in both countries."

"Central America has sought economic unity for over 50 years," said Hernández. "We believe that this unprecedented agreement will allow us to make progress toward that goal."

**Media Contact:**

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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

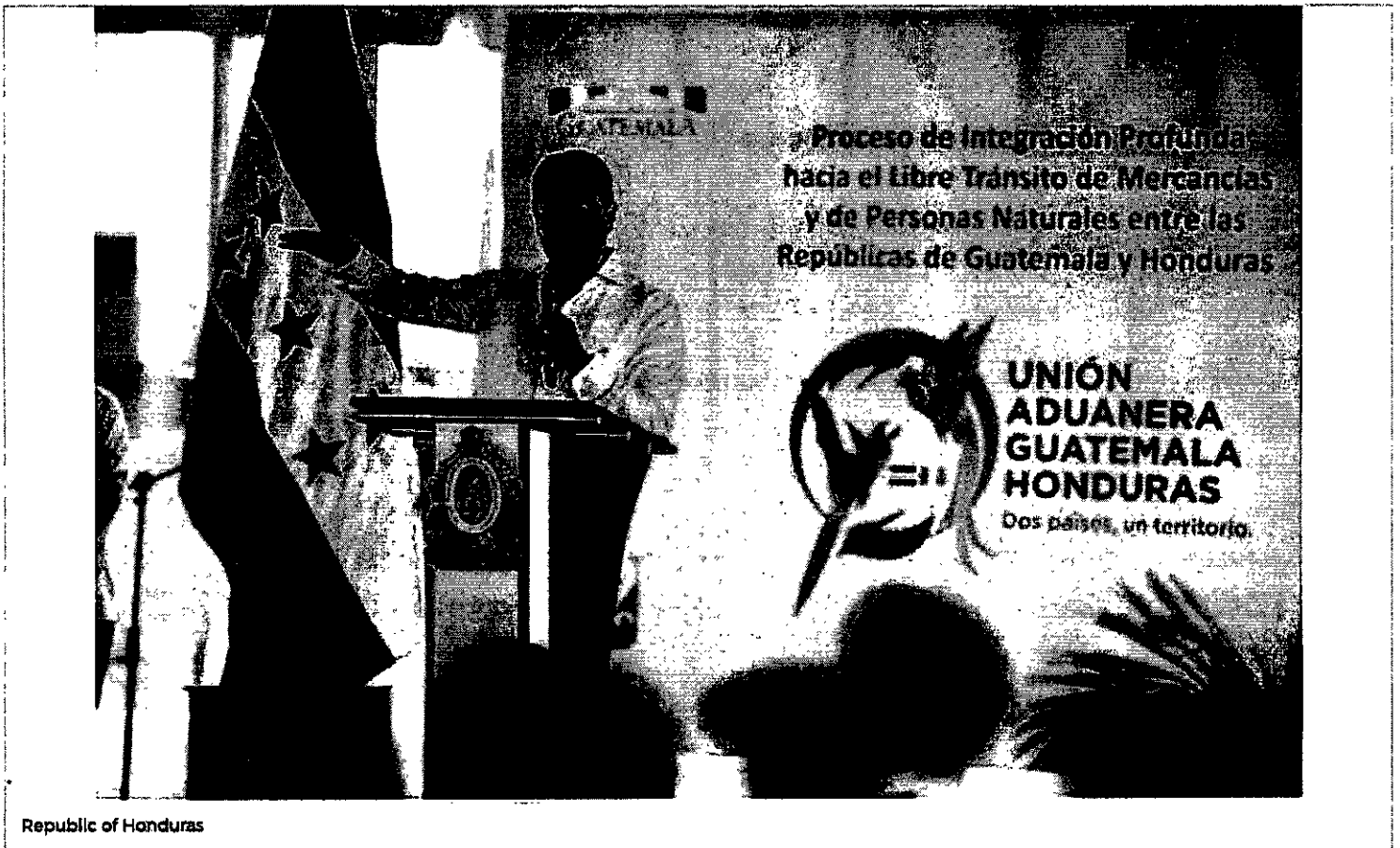
## Honduras and Guatemala Launch Historic Customs Union



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## Honduran Government Clears Over 25 Percent of Backlogged Court Cases

48,668 of 180,000 pending cases have been closed, according to a judicial report

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
Jun 30, 2017, 13:54 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, June 30, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- This week, Honduran Chief Justice Rolando Argueta announced that the country's entire justice system reduced its court backlog by 26.3%. The Supreme Court presented these findings in its biannual report.

"We are proud of the strides we have made toward closing all of the country's pending cases," said Argueta. "We will continue moving forward in our efforts to make our justice system fair for all Hondurans."



Court backlogs have historically plagued Honduras' justice system. The country's judicial branch approved a plan to remedy the issue last year, and has achieved significant progress.

The Supreme Court's report analyzed data from courts throughout the country. According to its figures, nearly 50,000 cases were resolved and eight trial courts now have no backlog at all.

Between August 2016 and April 2017 the courts resolved a total of 96,671 cases, which is impressive considering it received about 100,037 new cases during that period.

"I'd like to congratulate the judicial branch on this enormous step toward justice and social peace," said Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. "We respect the separation of state powers, but are also pleased to celebrate the progress the entire government has made toward a new and better Honduras."

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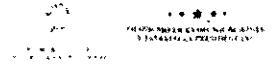
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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:26

## Honduran President Urges Central American Neighbors to Join Customs Union

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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jul 03, 2017, 17:20 ET

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SAN JOSÉ, Costa Rica, July 3, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Last week, while attending the Central American Integration System (SICA) Summit in Costa Rica, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández proposed expanding the Honduran-Guatemalan customs union to include other Central American nations.

"Guatemala and Honduras would like to invite our neighbors to share in the growing market that our countries are creating," said President Hernández. "The customs union is a boon for the economy, benefiting consumers, producers, and businesspeople alike."



The 49th SICA Summit addressed trade, cooperation, and regional security.



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The 49th SICA Summit addressed trade, cooperation, and regional security. President Hernández met with Salvadoran President Salvador Sánchez Cerén at the summit, and then traveled to Nicaragua to meet with President Daniel Ortega. Honduran officials hope that both El Salvador and Nicaragua will soon begin proceedings to join the union.

Presidents of SICA's member countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, and the Dominican Republic, appointed former Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo as secretary of SICA. The heads of state also supported the appointment of Honduran Vice Minister for Foreign Trade Melvin Redondo as the secretary general of the Central America Economic Integration System (SIECA), which oversees the economic integration of SICA's member countries.

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# Honduras Rises Five Places in Global Peace Index

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jul 07, 2017, 12:32 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 7, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Honduras has improved its national safety more than any Caribbean or Central American country, according to the Global Peace Index (GPI), recently release by the Institute for Economics and Peace. Honduras rose five places in the 163 country index.



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"Honduras is working hard to defend the rights and safety of its citizens by confronting transnational crime and delinquency in all its forms," stated Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. "According to the GPI, Honduras is no longer among the world's most violent countries. Achieving this has not been easy, but we are proud of our accomplishments and committed to further advancing our national wellbeing."

Released annually, the GPI analyzes 23 indicators of peace including domestic security, scope of internal conflicts, and degree of militarization. The index reports that Honduras has "benefitted from government efforts to combat crime," and notes that the country is becoming more peaceful "thanks to improvements in political violence, strong anti-corruption policies, financial contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, and impact of terrorism [indicators]."

The GPI also credits Honduras with confronting regional security challenges through the Alliance for Prosperity, a plan to stem U.S. migration from the Northern Triangle.

The new ranking follows a wave of successful anticorruption efforts in Honduras. Between 2011 and 2015, Honduras' homicide rate dropped 30 percent. And between January and June, the country experienced a historic reduction in homicides compared to the same period last year.

Overall, the global state of peace and safety rose this year, according to the GPI report.

Syria held its spot as the most dangerous country in the world, while Iceland remained the most peaceful.

"The fact that Honduras is showing improvement in a highly professional and independent report is noteworthy," said President Hernández. "Through diligence and hard work we have reduced violent crime, removed corrupt officials, and promoted peace throughout the country. We are delivering tangible results to our people."

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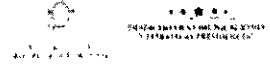
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# Honduras Improves Transparency on Public-Private Infrastructure Investments



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
Jul 06, 2017, 11:36 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 6, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Honduras has achieved an information disclosure rate of 85.3 percent regarding its public-private partnerships (PPP) -- up from just 27 percent in 2014. The finding comes from a report issued by Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST) Honduras, an effort to increase the nation's public infrastructure transparency.

The report also found that Honduras is currently investing \$1.3 billion in infrastructure projects under PPPs.



Honduras Improves Transparency on Public-Private Infrastructure Investments

"By engaging stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, our country can develop infrastructure that will benefit Hondurans for generations to come," said President Juan Orlando Hernández. "Substantial PPP investments will improve quality of life, increase commerce, and facilitate transportation."

Among the projects highlighted in the report are a bus terminal in the city of Danlí, which will serve over 200,000 people, and the Centro Cívico Gubernamental, a building complex that will include 40 government offices and save over half a million dollars each year in rent expenses.

Transparency efforts on such projects are achieving tangible results. Nearly 300 documents regarding Honduran PPPs are now publically available, according to the CoST report.

"We've achieved unprecedented levels of infrastructure project transparency," said President Hernández. "That's proof that the rigorous anticorruption policies I committed to when elected are paying off. My government is delivering on its promises."

**Media Contact:**

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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS  
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE TRANSPARENCIA  
Y ACCESO A LA INFORMACION

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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:26

# Honduran Government Tells U.N.: We've Made Strong Progress on Human Rights

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jul 12, 2017, 16:30 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 12, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The government of Honduras has successfully completed its second periodic report to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In his testimony, Rolando Argueta Perez, President of the Supreme Court of Justice of Honduras, shared the concrete steps that the Central American nation has taken to protect human rights within its borders.



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"We are pleased that the U.N. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner has recognized our tireless efforts to address corruption and impunity in Honduras," said Ricardo Cardona, minister of the presidency of Honduras. "This official testimony provides a strong rebuke to the misinformation that several non-governmental organizations have disseminated about the state of human rights in our nation."

Chief Justice Argueta delivered his report before a panel of 18 human rights experts in Geneva, Switzerland, on July 5. He detailed Honduras's progress regarding human rights, security, the fight against organized crime and corruption, and the treatment of vulnerable sectors of society.

The government currently has eight suspects in custody, including two criminal organizers, for the 2016 murder of well-known Honduran environmental activist Berta Cáceres, and has issued an executive order to provide her family with official protection from special security forces.

In addition, President Juan Orlando Hernández decided to elevate the current office of the undersecretary for Human Rights to a national cabinet department. He also has enacted the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Media Professionals and Judicial Officers, which provides government protection to activists and journalists who request it.

Honduras has also made strides tackling crime and corruption. The nation's homicide rate plummeted 30 percent between 2011 and 2015, and a national purge of the police force has been underway since April 2016.

Honduras is committed to issuing accurate and transparent information on its human rights progress, its fight against organized crime, and on the Berta Cáceres case.

"We recognize that we have work to do, but we are steadfastly committed to improving the respect for and protection of human rights in Honduras," said Cardona. "The U.N. has recognized the progress that we have made. It's time for the rest of the international community to take notice."

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The government of Honduras would like to assure the national and international communities of its commitment to defending human rights and solving crimes that affect human rights defenders.

March 3, 2016, the day that well-known defender of indigenous rights and environmental activist Berta Cáceres was murdered, was a sad day for Honduras. The day of the incident, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández denounced the crime as a "direct attack" on the state of Honduras.

President Hernández stated, ***"We are committed to finding the truth in this matter and bringing [those responsible] to justice, no matter who they are, no matter who is involved. As we have always said, no one is above the law. The state of Honduras must send a firm message that this crime will not go unpunished."***

It has been a year and a half since Cáceres's death, and the government of Honduras has made significant progress in investigating this deplorable crime.

The government respects human rights and will not allow insidious Hondurans, or foreign or domestic organizations to disseminate false information and damage Honduras's global reputation for personal gain.

### ***Human Rights Progress***

Last May, President Hernández elevated the office of the undersecretary for human rights to a national cabinet-level department. This move has allowed civil society organizations to work more closely with the government to guarantee human rights.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson congratulated Honduras on its human rights progress during the recent Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America and invited other countries to follow Honduras's lead.

"This very important step [elevating human rights to ministerial status] is to be commended, as it demonstrates the Honduran government's commitment to protecting and advancing shared human rights values and enabling the work of vulnerable human rights defenders," Tillerson stated. "We hope others will follow Honduras's example."

Honduras also enacted the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Media Professionals and Judicial Officers in August 2016. This law allows Honduran human rights advocates who feel threatened to ask the authorities for protection.

At the request of the Honduran government, an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) opened in Honduras on November 23, 2016. Representatives from the Honduran government, the international community, civil society, and both foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations attended the official opening.

The OHCHR recently recognized Honduras's domestic security achievements, including a nearly 30 percent reduction in homicide rates and a purge of its police department. The purge began in April 2016 under a special commission that includes members of civil society.

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SEP 11 AM 11:26

As a show of transparency, the state of Honduras requested that the Organization of American States (OAS) create the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). MACCIH has been operating with full government support since the beginning of last year.

In addition, the Honduran Departments of Human Rights, Justice, Internal Affairs and Decentralization created a roundtable with 28 human rights organizations designed to improve respect for human rights nationwide.

The roundtable's mission is to foster oversight and discussion of human rights in Honduras and to support policies that protect human rights defenders.

### ***On the Ongoing Berta Cáceres Case***

The Honduran Prosecutor's Office is carrying out a public trial for four of the eight people implicated in Cáceres's murder. Prosecutors believe two of the suspects are the masterminds behind the crime.

The first arrests related to this incident were made two months after Cáceres's murder via Operation Jaguar, a joint effort between the Prosecutor's Office and the Technical Criminal Investigation Agency (ATIC). The operation executed ten searches: four in Tegucigalpa; another four in La Ceiba, Atlántida; and two in Trujillo, Colón.

Specialized teams from the United States and Colombia assisted with these investigations.

The state of Honduras invoked the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders to protect Mexican human rights defender Gustavo Castro Soto, who witnessed Cáceres's murder. Soto is also protected by the Law on the Protection of Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings.

Additionally, the state of Honduras issued administrative penalties to the court officer whose negligence resulted in missing court files in Cáceres's case.

### **The prisoners include three current or former service members and five civilians:**

- Army Maj. Mariano Díaz Chávez.
- Ret. Army Lieut. and former chief of security for Desarrollos Energéticos (DESA) Douglas Giovañny Bustillo.
- Sgt. Henry Javier Hernández Rodríguez (photo).
- Sergio Rodríguez Orellana, social, environmental, and communications manager for DESA.
- Edilson Atilio Duarte, the purported organizer of the crime.
- Emerson Eusebio Duarte, Edilson's twin brother. Duarte was carrying the .38 caliber revolver used to shoot Cáceres.

- Óscar Aroldo Torres Velásquez, accused of participating in Cáceres's murder and attempting to murder Gustavo Castro.
- Elvin Rápalo Orellana, the believed "co-principal" in Cáceres's murder. Orellana shot Gustavo Castro.

### ***On Berta Zúñiga***

Regarding the recent alleged attempted attack on Berta Cáceres's youngest daughter, Berta Zúñiga, government officials dispatched three specialized teams from the Police Investigations Bureau (DPI) as soon as they received word of the purported incident. The DPI conducted relevant criminal inquiries in La Paz, Intibucá, and Siguatepeque.

This was the first instance of harassment reported to police by any of Berta Cáceres's children.

Zúñiga reported that she and two other members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) were threatened by men carrying machetes while en route to Cancire, a neighborhood in the city of Santiago de Puringla, La Paz.

Terencio de Jesús Martínez Benítez was questioned regarding Zúñiga's statement. Benítez, a La Paz native, was driving a pick-up truck that matched the description of the truck Zúñiga claimed her assailants were riding in. He claims the men riding in his truck, who allegedly threatened Zúñiga, were day laborers who had requested a ride home from him. Machetes are commonly carried by rural day laborers, he explained.

Under instructions from the Prosecutor's Office, DPI is awaiting statements from Zúñiga's two companions. Upon receiving these statements, judicial proceedings will begin.

Following this alleged violent attempt, authorities assigned motorcycle and vehicle patrols to protect Berta Cáceres's family. Since the death of Berta Cáceres, her family has been provided state-sponsored protection -- agreed upon by the secretary of Public Security, commanders of the National Civil Police, and the secretary and undersecretaries of Human Rights, Justice, Internal Affairs and Decentralization.

Two of Berta Cáceres's children have made requests for additional protection, including security cameras, razor wire around the perimeter of their mother's property, constant patrols, motion-activated lights, better public lighting in the surrounding area, and a wireless internet connection.

Furthermore, President Hernández has issued specific instructions under the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Media Professionals and Judicial Officers, to provide Zúñiga with additional protection, should she request it.

### **Law and Order**

- In the 2017 Gallup Global Law and Order Index, Honduras's score surged eight points; the country tied with Chile as the highest-ranking in Latin America.
- The government has overseen successful law enforcement campaigns that have reduced the homicide rate by 30 percent.

### **Economic Growth**

- Standard & Poor's recently upgraded Honduras's credit rating from B+ to BB-, a strong indication of growing financial stability
- The National Congress proposed a new set of tourism incentives last month that would generate approximately \$250 million in economic activity and 250,000 new jobs for Hondurans

### **Peace and Justice**

- Honduras rose five spots in the latest Global Peace Index (GPI), and improved its ranking more than any Caribbean or Central American country
- The Honduran government has arrested eight suspects in connection to the murder of human rights activist Berta Cáceres

### **Ending Corruption**

- United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour visited Honduras last month, and commended the Hernández administration for their progress on human rights
- This year, the Honduran judicial system has cleared more than 25 percent of its backlogged criminal cases, allowing the court system to try new human rights offenders.

The government of Honduras would like to assure the national and international communities of its commitment to defending human rights and solving crimes that affect human rights defenders.

March 3, 2016, the day that well-known defender of indigenous rights and environmental activist Berta Cáceres was murdered, was a sad day for Honduras. The day of the incident, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández denounced the crime as a "direct attack" on the state of Honduras.

President Hernández stated, *"We are committed to finding the truth in this matter and bringing [those responsible] to justice, no matter who they are, no matter who is involved. As we have always said, no one is above the law. The state of Honduras must send a firm message that this crime will not go unpunished."*

It has been a year and a half since Cáceres's death, and the government of Honduras has made significant progress in investigating this deplorable crime.

The government respects human rights and will not allow insidious Hondurans, or foreign or domestic organizations to disseminate false information and damage Honduras's global reputation for personal gain.

### ***Human Rights Progress***

Last May, President Hernández elevated the office of the undersecretary for human rights to a national cabinet-level department. This move has allowed civil society organizations to work more closely with the government to guarantee human rights.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson congratulated Honduras on its human rights progress during the recent Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America and invited other countries to follow Honduras's lead.

"This very important step [elevating human rights to ministerial status] is to be commended, as it demonstrates the Honduran government's commitment to protecting and advancing our shared human rights values and enabling the work of vulnerable human rights defenders," Tillerson stated. "We hope others will follow Honduras's example."

Honduras also enacted the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Media Professionals and Judicial Officers in August 2016. This law allows Honduran human rights advocates who feel threatened to ask the authorities for protection.

At the request of the Honduran government, an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) opened in Honduras on November 23, 2016. Representatives from the Honduran government, the international community, civil society, and both foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations attended the official opening.

The OHCHR recently recognized Honduras's domestic security achievements, including a nearly 30 percent reduction in homicide rates and a purge of its police department. The purge began in April 2016 under a special commission that includes members of civil society.

As a show of transparency, the state of Honduras requested that the Organization of American States (OAS) create the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). MACCIH has been operating with full government support since the beginning of last year.

In addition, the Honduran Departments of Human Rights, Justice, Internal Affairs and Decentralization created a roundtable with 28 human rights organizations designed to improve respect for human rights nationwide.

The roundtable's mission is to foster oversight and discussion of human rights in Honduras and to support policies that protect human rights defenders.

### ***On the Ongoing Berta Cáceres Case***

The Honduran Prosecutor's Office is carrying out a public trial for four of the eight people implicated in Cáceres's murder. Prosecutors believe two of the suspects are the masterminds behind the crime.

The first arrests related to this incident were made two months after Cáceres's murder via Operation Jaguar, a joint effort between the Prosecutor's Office and the Technical Criminal Investigation Agency (ATIC). The operation executed ten searches: four in Tegucigalpa; another four in La Ceiba, Atlántida; and two in Trujillo, Colón.

Specialized teams from the United States and Colombia assisted with these investigations.

The state of Honduras invoked the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders to protect Mexican human rights defender Gustavo Castro Soto, who witnessed Cáceres's murder. Soto is also protected by the Law on the Protection of Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings.

Additionally, the state of Honduras issued administrative penalties to the court officer whose negligence resulted in missing court files in Cáceres's case.

### **The prisoners include three current or former service members and five civilians:**

- Army Maj. Mariano Díaz Chávez.
- Ret. Army Lieut. and former chief of security for Desarrollos Energéticos (DESA) Douglas Giovanni Bustillo.
- Sgt. Henry Javier Hernández Rodríguez (photo).
- Sergio Rodríguez Orellana, social, environmental, and communications manager for DESA.
- Edilson Atilio Duarte, the purported organizer of the crime.
- Emerson Eusebio Duarte, Edilson's twin brother. Duarte was carrying the .38 caliber revolver used to shoot Cáceres.

- Óscar Aroldo Torres Velásquez, accused of participating in Cáceres's murder and attempting to murder Gustavo Castro.
- Elvin Rápalo Orellana, the believed "co-principal" in Cáceres's murder. Orellana shot Gustavo Castro.

### ***On Berta Zúñiga***

Regarding the recent alleged attempted attack on Berta Cáceres's youngest daughter, Berta Zúñiga, government officials dispatched three specialized teams from the Police Investigations Bureau (DPI) as soon as they received word of the purported incident. The DPI conducted relevant criminal inquiries in La Paz, Intibucá, and Siguatepeque.

This was the first instance of harassment reported to police by any of Berta Cáceres's children.

Zúñiga reported that she and two other members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) were threatened by men carrying machetes while en route to Cancire, a neighborhood in the city of Santiago de Puringla, La Paz.

Terencio de Jesús Martínez Benítez was questioned regarding Zúñiga's statement. Benítez, a La Paz native, was driving a pick-up truck that matched the description of the truck Zúñiga claimed her assailants were riding in. He claims the men riding in his truck, who allegedly threatened Zúñiga, were day laborers who had requested a ride home from him. Machetes are commonly carried by rural day laborers, he explained.

Under instructions from the Prosecutor's Office, DPI is awaiting statements from Zúñiga's two companions. Upon receiving these statements, judicial proceedings will begin.

Following this alleged violent attempt, authorities assigned motorcycle and vehicle patrols to protect Berta Cáceres's family. Since the death of Berta Cáceres, her family has been provided state-sponsored protection -- agreed upon by the secretary of Public Security, commanders of the National Civil Police, and the secretary and undersecretaries of Human Rights, Justice, Internal Affairs and Decentralization.

Two of Berta Cáceres's children have made requests for additional protection, including security cameras, razor wire around the perimeter of their mother's property, constant patrols, motion-activated lights, better public lighting in the surrounding area, and a wireless internet connection.

Furthermore, President Hernández has issued specific instructions under the Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Media Professionals and Judicial Officers, to provide Zúñiga with additional protection, should she request it.

### **Law and Order**

- In the 2017 Gallup Global Law and Order Index, Honduras's score surged eight points; the country tied with Chile as the highest-ranking in Latin America.
- The government has overseen successful law enforcement campaigns that have reduced the homicide rate by 30 percent.

### **Economic Growth**

- Standard & Poor's recently upgraded Honduras's credit rating from B+ to BB-, a strong indication of growing financial stability
- The National Congress proposed a new set of tourism incentives last month that would generate approximately \$250 million in economic activity and 250,000 new jobs for Hondurans

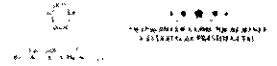
### **Peace and Justice**

- Honduras rose five spots in the latest Global Peace Index (GPI), and improved its ranking more than any Caribbean or Central American country
- The Honduran government has arrested eight suspects in connection to the murder of human rights activist Berta Cáceres

### **Ending Corruption**

- United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour visited Honduras last month, and commended the Hernández administration for their progress on human rights
- This year, the Honduran judicial system has cleared more than 25 percent of its backlogged criminal cases, allowing the court system to try new human rights offenders.

# Honduran Government Welcomes Investigation into Allegations of Corruption with Dam Project



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jul 17, 2017, 10:50 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 17, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández announced that he welcomes an investigation into allegations of corruption in the awarding of contracts and concession agreements for the *Agua Zarca* energy project in western Honduras.



Republic of Honduras

Renowned environmental activist Berta Cáceres made these allegations before her untimely death last year. The Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH), an independent group created by the Organization of American States, will conduct the investigation, in conjunction with the Honduran Attorney General's Special Office for Ethnic and Cultural Heritage.

"My administration is committed to rooting out corruption in Honduras, and this investigation will help us fulfill that commitment," said President Hernández. "No one is above the law in our nation, and we will aggressively prosecute any crimes unearthed by the investigation."

The MACCIH has indicated that it will examine the way in which the contract for *Agua Zarca* project was awarded to *Desarrollos Energetics SA (DESA)*. Two of the eight suspects the Honduran government has detained as part of the investigation in to Berta Cáceres's murder have been linked to *DESA*.

The Mission will also be looking for any irregularities in environmental licenses and studies regarding property titling. In addition, the investigation will explore how the environmental licenses were granted. Darío Roberto Cardona Valle, the former deputy minister of the Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment, has already been detained for acts related to granting a license without properly informing and consulting indigenous peoples in the area.

"Honduras asked the Organization of American States to create the MACCIH, and it's been operating with the full support of our government since the beginning of last year," said President Hernández. "If the MACCIH uncovers any evidence of wrongdoing, we will work to bring those responsible to justice."

**Media Contact:**

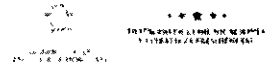
Yael Wöllstein

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202-471-4228 ext. 118

SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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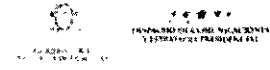
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

# Honduran President Touts Nation's Improved S&P Credit Rating



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras →**  
Jul 20, 2017, 07:57 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 20, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Yesterday, at a joint press conference with Honduran Minister of Finance Wilfredo Cerrato, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández highlighted that Standard & Poor's raised Honduras' credit rating from B+ to BB-, and changed the country's outlook from stable to positive.

Hernández congratulated his economic cabinet and the Honduran people, noting that the new rating is "the result of hard work and discipline."



According to S&P, Honduras can "expect broad continuity in economic policies and contained debt increases following national elections in November 2017."

Standard & Poor's provides national credit ratings on the basis of long-term economic outlook.

The jump from B to BB indicates Honduras' lower vulnerability to nonpayment.

Hernández stated that the new rating is "the highest in Honduras' history," and puts Honduras "on par with Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic."

The president also stressed that this financial upgrade is a direct result of his administration's fiscal policies, reasserting his government's commitment to keeping the economy on track while addressing crime and poverty.

For his part, Cerrato expressed confidence in the nation's economic future. He commended the government for its responsible economic strategy, and for keeping the nation's finances in order.

The S&P, which examined Honduras' economic outlook last June, also noted that the nation's agricultural, manufacturing, commerce, and tourism growth is poised to keep the nation's GDP growth at 3.6 percent in 2017.

"The future looks bright for the Honduran economy," concluded Hernández.

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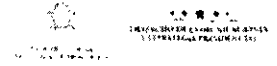
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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PR Newswire

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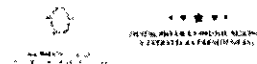
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PR Newswire

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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:26

## Honduran President Urges National Congress to Approve Tourism Incentives



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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jul 21, 2017, 12:03 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 21, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- This week, President Juan Orlando Hernández urged the National Congress of Honduras to approve the Tourism Incentives Act. The legislation would help create 250,000 jobs by 2019 as part of Honduras' 20/20 growth plan.

"Honduras is becoming a highly desirable destination for tourists," said Hernández. "This new legislation would provide \$165 million USD in tourism incentives over 18 years -- an investment set to generate about a quarter billion dollars for Honduras."



Republic of Honduras

Honduran Tourism Institute Director Emilio Silvestri recently met with Hernández, National Congress Speaker Mauricio Oliva, and tourism sector representatives to discuss the legislation at the Legislative Palace in Tegucigalpa.

The act includes tax incentives for the tourism industry, financial support for land and air travel to Honduras, and funds to increase and improve lodging options in the nation over the next 10 to 15 years.

The Honduran tourism industry is poised to take off. The number of stayover visitors to the country has jumped 4 percent since 2015, and international tourism spending is on the rise. Compared to 2015, 14.7 percent more passengers arrived to the country via cruise ship last year.

Oliva has assured members of the national tourism industry that "Congress will not fail them." "We are going to proceed with the responsibility and commitment this country needs," he said.

"Honduras has enormous growth potential," Hernández stated. "This legislation will be a turning point for Honduran tourism."

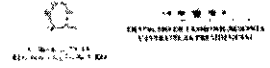
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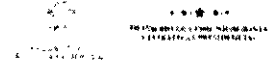
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# Honduran Naval Forces Receive International Training to Combat Drug Trafficking



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Jul 28, 2017, 18:04 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, July 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- More than 250 members of the Honduran Navy (FEN) just completed a rigorous training program led by military instructors from the United States, Colombia, and Chile at the Naval Training Center in Trujillo Bay, Honduras.

"Honduras has made a steadfast commitment to stamp out organized crime and drug trafficking," said Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. "Our naval forces, who work hard to keep our borders secure, will help us fulfill that commitment."



Honduran Naval Forces Receive International Training to Combat Drug Trafficking

Most of the cocaine that passes through Honduras enters by sea, according to the U.S. Defense Department's latest International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.

The training in Trujillo Bay focused on "operational readiness," according to Captain Héctor Manuel Tercero López of the Honduran Navy. He expects the trainees to share their new knowledge with their home units.

A well-trained navy is a key component of the Honduran government's strategy for fighting crime. Between 2013, the year FEN was established, and 2016, Honduras's murder rate dropped by more than 30 percent.

The Trujillo Bay training isn't the first time that FEN has worked with navies from other countries. In 2013, members of the U.S. Naval Special Warfare Task Element Alpha spent six months in Honduras teaching FEN some of the most cutting-edge military techniques.

"Honduras is committed to ensuring peace and protecting human rights," said Hernández. "We are accomplishing these goals by giving our armed forces the tools they need not just to fight crime but to eliminate it."

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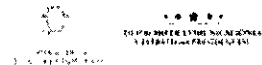
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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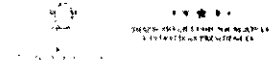
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

# Honduran Government Welcomes UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Aug 01, 2017, 11:55 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras and GENEVA, Aug. 1, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Honduran state officials and civil society representatives shared their country's progress on human rights with United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour during his three-day visit to Tegucigalpa last week.

"Honduras is making undeniable strides in the human rights realm," said President Juan Orlando Hernández. "My administration will continue to fight for the security of all Hondurans."



Honduran Government Welcomes UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

Gilmour cited the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) as vital to the nation's human rights efforts.

"We are glad that the direct link between corruption and human rights abuses is increasingly recognized," Gilmour noted in the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner's official press release on the visit.

The Hernandez administration founded the MACCIH in January 2016 with the support of the Organization of American States. The Mission aims to reduce corruption, maximize public accountability, and strengthen the integrity of public institutions in Honduras.

In its account of the Assistant Secretary-General's visit to Honduras, the OHCHR said, "Gilmour welcomed the strengthened cooperation between the newly-established UN Human Rights Office in Tegucigalpa and state institutions," and reasserted the UN's role in helping the Honduran government guarantee human rights.

During Gilmour's visit, the government also highlighted President Hernández's decision to promote the Vice-Ministry for Human Rights to a cabinet-level position and institute the National Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders. Gilmour praised these moves in the OHCHR's press release, noting that human rights defenders "are doing a tremendous service for the long-term future of Honduras."

"This administration values the safety and well-being of its citizens above all else," said President Hernandez. "We are pleased that the United Nations is recognizing our efforts, and will always welcome the UN's expert counsel."

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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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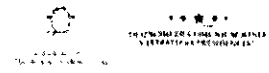
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

# Honduras Enacts New Laws to Strengthen Civilian Oversight of Police



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Aug 03, 2017, 08:35 ET

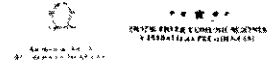
TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 3, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The Honduran National Congress has approved several portions of the new Law on Police Careers, a major step forward in the government's efforts to reform the National Police.

"This law will help restore public faith in the National Police," said President Juan Orlando Hernández. "I applaud Congress for empowering the public to hold the police in their communities to the highest standards of conduct."



Honduras Enacts New Laws to Strengthen Civilian Oversight of Police

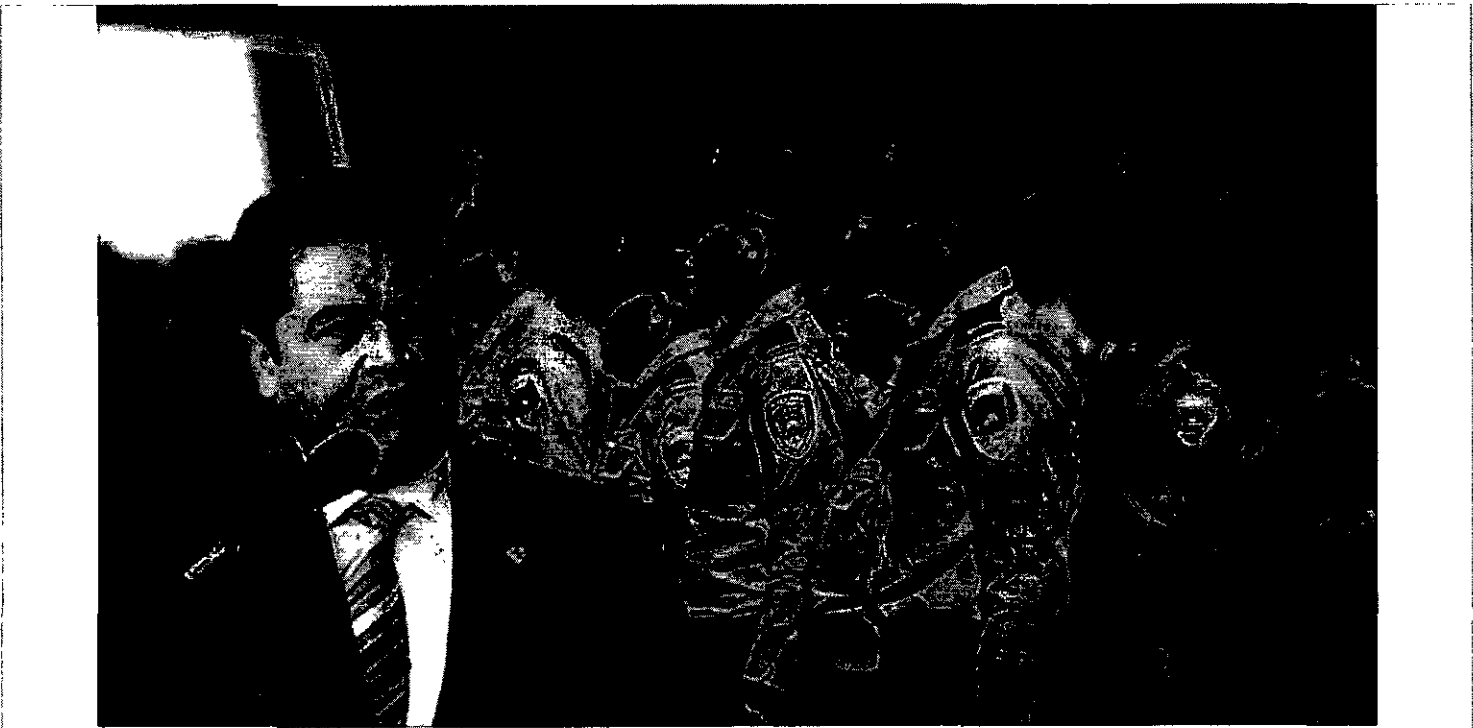
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Aug 03, 2017, 08:35 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 3, 2017 /PRNewswire/-- The Honduran National Congress has approved several portions of the new Law on Police Careers, a major step forward in the government's efforts to reform the National Police.

"This law will help restore public faith in the National Police," said President Juan Orlando Hernández. "I applaud Congress for empowering the public to hold the police in their communities to the highest standards of conduct."



Honduras Enacts New Laws to Strengthen Civilian Oversight of Police

The Law on Police Careers installs greater citizen oversight over police conduct and clarifies that the National Police is a civilian institution, not a branch of the military. It also eliminates lifetime appointments and prohibits officers with disciplinary issues or those who fail background checks from being promoted.

The new law is a supplement to the Organic Law on the National Police, which was revised earlier this year.

The Law on Police Careers is the latest in a long-term drive by the Hernández administration to reform and improve the National Police. Last year, President Hernández began a wide-ranging purge of corrupt individuals from the police force by establishing the Special Commission for the Purging and Transformation of the National Police. This past January, he announced that the Commission would continue its work through the end of this year.

"Ensuring the safety and well-being of the Honduran people remains my primary goal," said President Hernández. "Our efforts to end corruption within the ranks of our National Police are working -- and are making our nation safer and more prosperous."

**Media Contact:**

Yael Wollstein

170866@email4pr.com

202-471-4228 ext. 118

SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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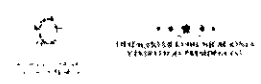
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

# Honduras Partners with Central American Neighbors, U.S. to Fight Gang Violence



NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Republic of Honduras →  
Aug 04, 2017, 10:28 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 4, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Honduran government is tackling violence and going after gang leaders with renewed vigor following a meeting last week with top law enforcement officials from the United States, El Salvador, and Guatemala.



Honduras Partners with Central American Neighbors, U.S. to Fight Gang Violence

Honduran Prosecutor General Oscar Fernando Chinchilla, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, El Salvadorian Prosecutor General Douglas Arquímedes Meléndez Ruiz, and Guatemalan Prosecutor General Thelma Esperanza Aldana convened in El Salvador to discuss how to better battle organized crime in the three Central American countries, collectively known as the Northern Triangle.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández celebrated the gathering as a step toward quashing the "illegal, disruptive, and violent gang networks in the Northern Triangle." "In the fight against organized crime," he said, "Northern Triangle countries can accomplish a lot more together than alone."

One topic of particular focus was Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, a multinational street gang that has committed heinous crimes in both Central America and the United States.

"Attorney General Sessions praised Prosecutor General Óscar Chinchilla for his efforts in the fight against MS-13, such as Operation Avalancha," U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Honduras Heide Fulton tweeted.

Under the leadership of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Transparency and Fighting Corruption and the Technical Criminal Investigation Agency (ATIC), Honduras has made significant progress suppressing gang violence.

In February 2016, ATIC arrested several MS-13 gang leaders and seized over 1,500 MS-13 assets -- including 43 residences, 61 land plots, 17 businesses, and over 1,400 vehicles. In October 2016, the Honduran government searched over 60 properties in San Pedro Sula, an MS-13 hotspot. Last month, the government weakened the gang's financial arm by arresting a notorious MS-13 drug trafficker and money launderer.

The meeting attendees also discussed strengthening extradition relationships between their countries. Honduras has surrendered 15 Honduran nationals to be tried in the United States and is planning to send three more.

"When it comes to addressing violence, Honduras is setting an example for its Northern Triangle neighbors," President Hernández stated. "We must continue to work with the United States to tackle gang violence. That is only way to defeat an enemy that does not respect national borders."

**Media Contact:**

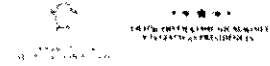
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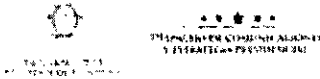
**CISION**

PR Newswire

NSD/CES/REGISTRATION UNIT

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:27

# Honduras Celebrates Lower Crime Rates, Vows to Keep Fighting



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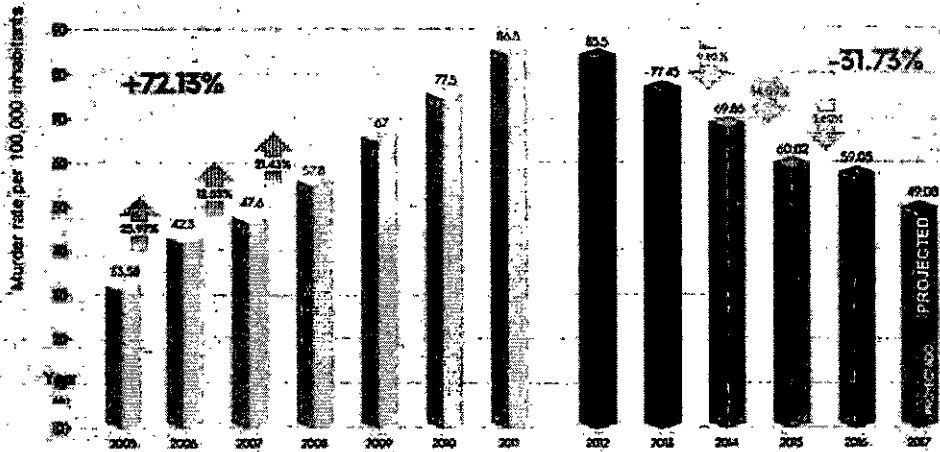
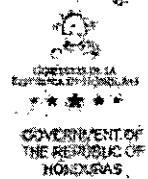
NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras →**  
Aug 07, 2017, 12:46 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 7, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Last week, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández announced that Honduras is on track to cut its 2011 homicide rate nearly in half by December.

"This is a momentous achievement for Honduras," said President Hernández. "The government's actions to combat violence and arrest criminals have saved lives. But our work is not done."

# HISTORIC REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE DEMONSTRATES OUR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT



The rate increased 72.13%

The rate decreased 31.73%

Growing violence was observed starting in 2006, the result of a weak security policy that encouraged transnational organized crime and drug trafficking from north to south, using our country as a drug trafficking bridge.

By 2011, murders in Honduras had practically doubled in relation to the country's murder levels at the close of 2005. In less than four years, the murder rate increased from 33.58 to 87 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

Certain sectors travel the world seeking to sanction Honduras for not guaranteeing the right to life, the most fundamental of human rights.

In three and a half years, the murder rate has gone down more than 30 points, saving many lives. This effort has been recognized as a true "miracle" by high-level officials of the Trump administration at the recent Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America.

The 2017 Global Peace Index recognizes that Honduras is no longer the most violent country in the world, and it underscores that the country is the highest-rated Mesoamerican country with 52 positive points.

This reduction in murders is the main demonstration of the Honduran government's commitment to human rights, the right to life, peace, and peace of mind of Hondurans.

Republic of Honduras

Hernández stressed that Honduras must continue its efforts to reduce violence in the country. He vowed to curb domestic violence, construct new prisons, and arrest corrupt former public officials.

President Hernández said that he intends to fight gang violence by developing community spaces and expanding economic opportunity for young people.

One initiative that's already been launched is Vida Mejor, or A Better Life. The program works with the Inter-American Development Bank to provide cash transfers, housing assistance, and family counseling to poor Honduran families. Since its inception in 2015, Vida Mejor has reached 2 million Hondurans.

In addition, President Hernández stressed the importance of education, saying, "Parents must work closely with teachers and community leaders to bring principles and values back to schools."

The president also pushed for other reforms to enhance public safety, including the construction of new prisons. He noted that Honduran prisons were essentially crime planning centers and drug trafficking stations before he took office.

The Hernández administration has transferred dangerous prisoners from San Pedro Sula to maximum-security prisons El Pozo 1 and 2, with the goal of stopping prison breaks and isolating prisoners from their criminal networks. The government is also building El Pozo 3 and 4 in some of the remotest areas of the country.

"My administration's efforts have made Honduras a much safer place," Hernández said. "But we will not rest until all Honduran families feel secure in their homes."

**Media Contact:**

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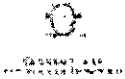
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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PR Newswire

# Honduras Celebrates Lower Crime Rates, Vows to Keep Fighting



REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS  
ESTADO SOBERANO Y DEMOCRÁTICO  
Y REPÚBLICA FEDERAL DE LA AMÉRICA CENTRAL

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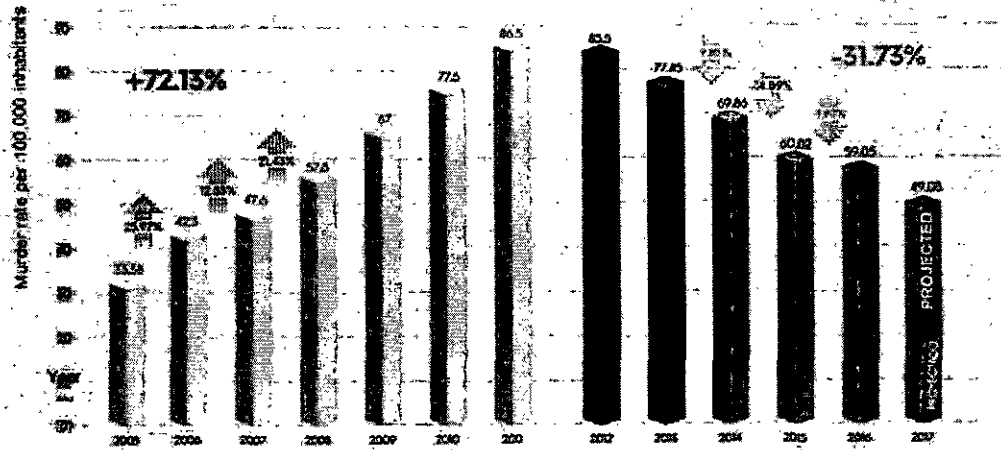
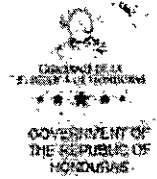
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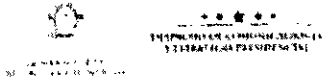
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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:27

# Honduran President Lauds Nation's Law and Order Gains



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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Aug 09, 2017, 10:15 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 9, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández praised his country's performance in the newly released 2017 Gallup Global Law and Order Index. Honduras gained eight points in this year's index -- and tied with Chile as the highest-ranking country in Latin America.

"My administration has worked diligently to stem violence within our borders," said President Hernández. "Today's report verifies what Hondurans already know -- that our nation is a safe place in which to live, work, and conduct business."



Republic of Honduras

This year's Global Law and Order Index is based on 136,000 interviews conducted in 2016 across 135 countries. It surveys people on how safe they feel "walking alone at night" in their respective cities, how much confidence they place in the local police force, and whether they have been mugged, robbed, or assaulted within the past year.

Honduras received a score of 72 out of 100. Notably, the level of confidence Hondurans have in their local police force jumped from 29 percent in 2015 to 50 percent in 2016.

The Hernández administration has waged a multifaceted campaign to reduce violence and corruption in Honduras. It has created the OAS-backed Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, or MACCIH; purged the police force of corrupt officers; given civilians greater oversight of the police; and arrested dangerous gang leaders.

"This is a proud day for Honduras," stated President Hernandez. "We are glad that an organization as well-respected as Gallup has recognized our hard-won progress."

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PR Newswire

## Honduran President Lauds Nation's Law and Order Gains



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ESTADO LIBRE ASOCIADO DE HONDURAS  
Y TERRITORIO DE SOLO DEPARTAMENTO

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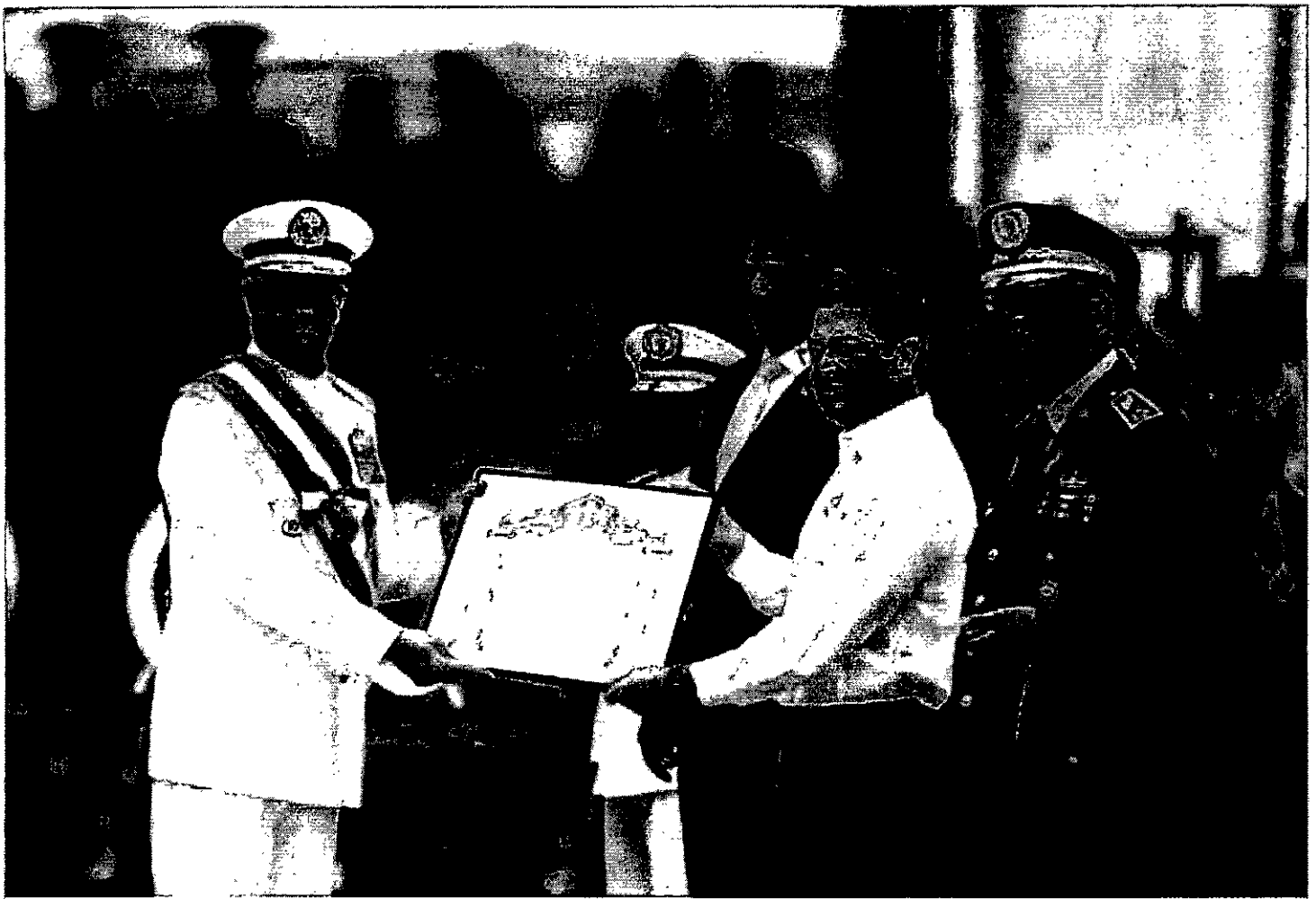
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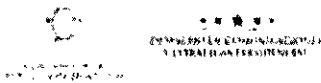
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# Honduras to Champion Transparency in Construction at Regional Meeting Next Month

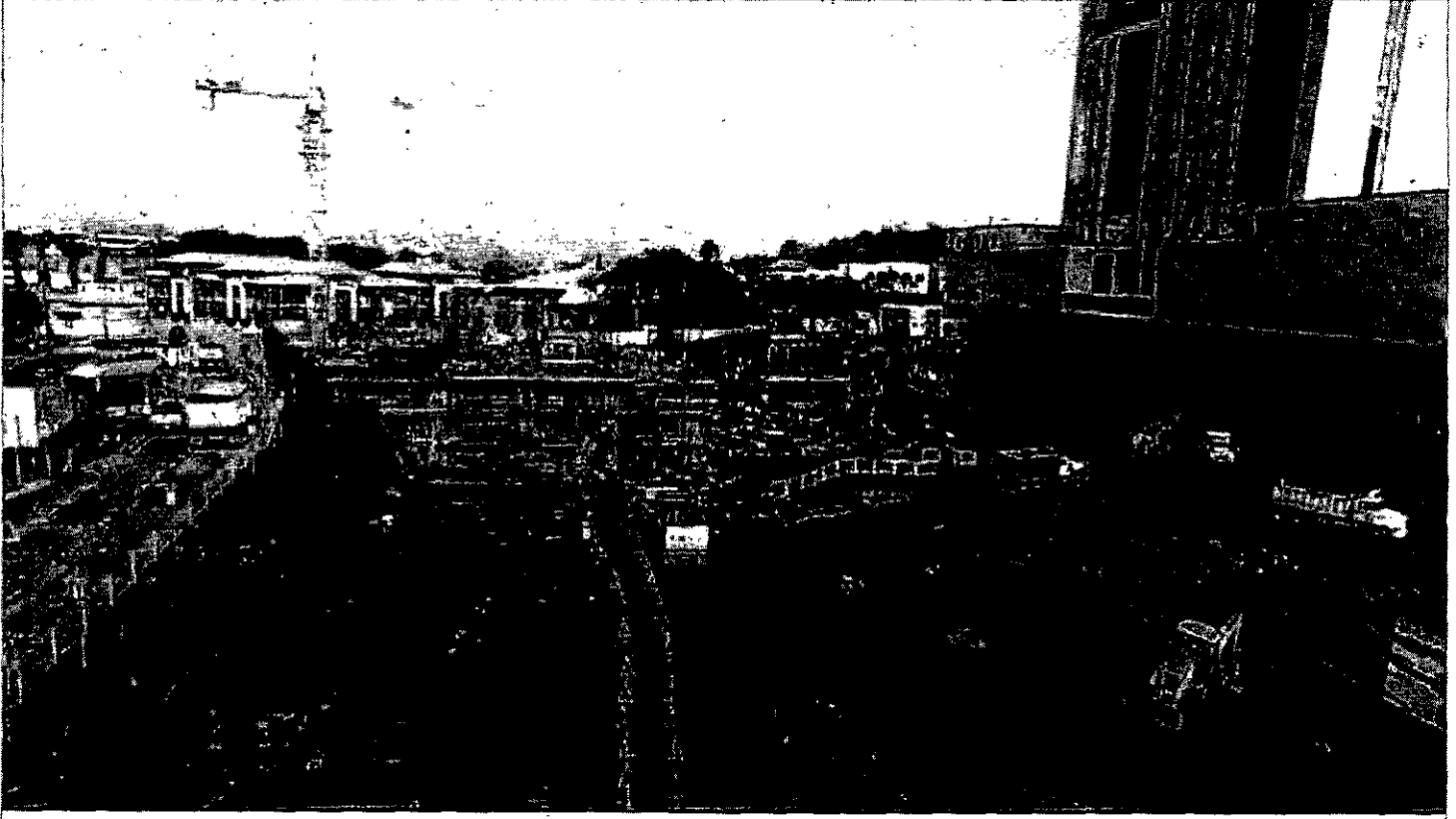


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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Aug 11, 2017, 07:29 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 11, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Next month, the Honduran government will host a meeting of the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative, or CoST, an international organization dedicated to maximizing the value of public works projects via data reporting and project monitoring. The gathering will take place September 4-5 in Tegucigalpa.



Republic of Honduras

"President Juan Orlando Hernández has spent years fighting to make the construction sector more transparent," Honduran Infrastructure Minister Roberto Pineda said. "This meeting will showcase the tremendous progress our administration has made."

The meeting will include fellow CoST members Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Each country's CoST program consists of representatives of public, private, and civil society organizations that work with the national government and CoST headquarters in London to collect data, conduct oversight of public works projects, and ensure that taxpayer dollars are used wisely.

September's meeting will focus on the System for Information and Follow-up on Public Works and Supervision Contracts, or SISOCS, a program co-managed by CoST Honduras and the Honduran General Directorate of Highways. SISOCS is a model for other CoST members of how to provide government support for construction data disclosures. In the last three years, the program has successfully overseen construction projects valued at over \$60 billion.

Since CoST Honduras was founded in 2015, the share of projects reporting their costs has more than tripled, from 27 percent to 84 percent. In 2016, on the recommendation of CoST Honduras, the government founded the Honduran Roadways Fund Auditing Committee to increase financial disclosure for transportation projects.

CoST Honduras also closely monitors the Honduran government's commitments to disclose spending in the energy, telecommunications, and housing sectors.

"CoST has helped Honduras responsibly manage government funds and develop high-quality public infrastructure," President Hernández said. "This meeting will reaffirm our pledge to be transparent with our citizens about how we're investing government resources."

**Media Contact:**

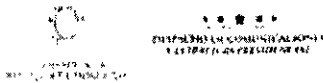
Andrew Grafton  
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202-471-4228 ext. 119

**SOURCE** Republic of Honduras

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PR Newswire

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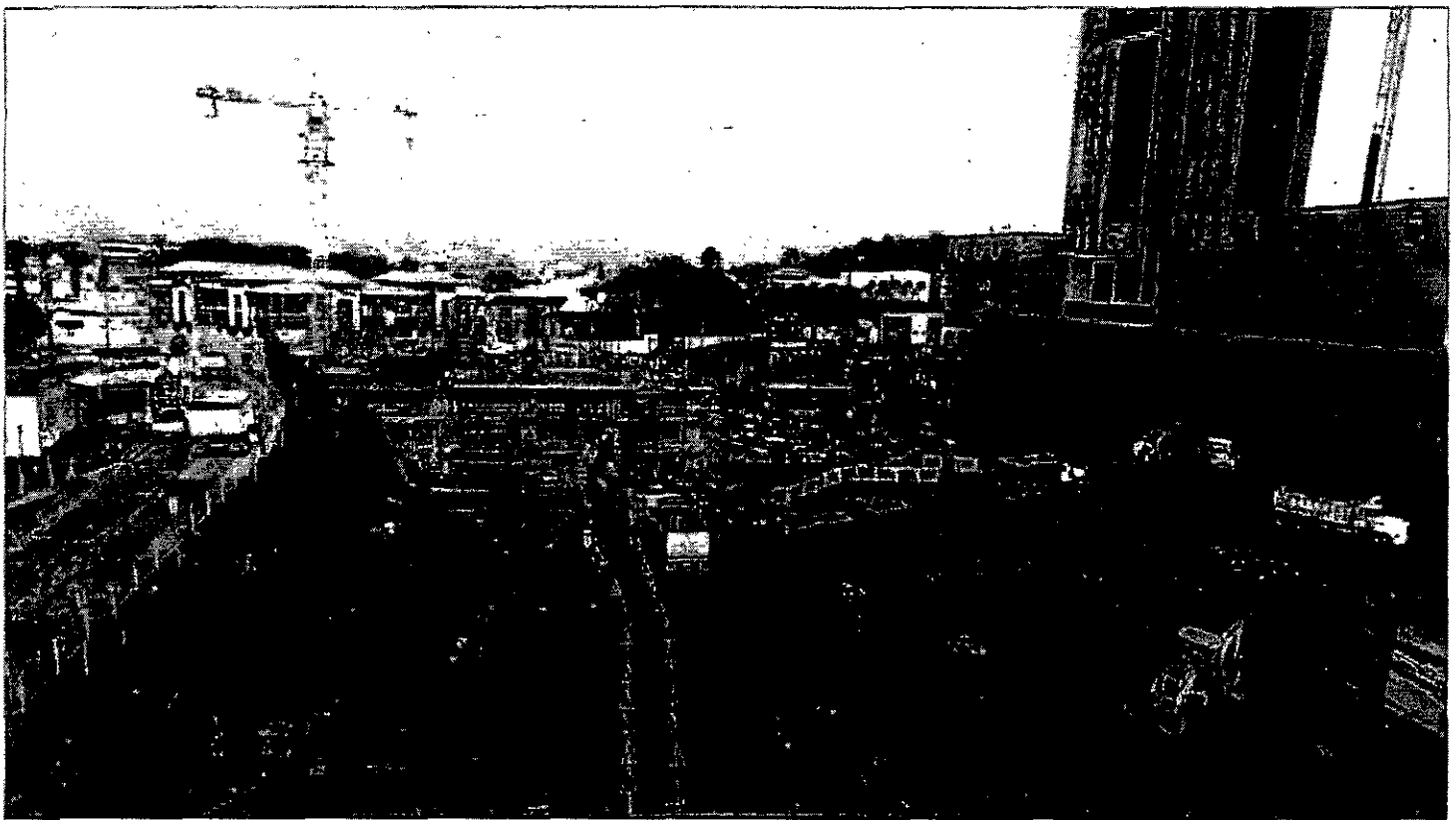


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SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:27

## Honduran President Hernández Lauds Country's Progress on Criminal Justice



OFICINA GENERAL DEL PROSECUTOR  
GENERAL DE LA REPUBLICA DE HONDURAS

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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Aug 17, 2017, 14:41 ET

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ZAMBRANO, Honduras, Aug. 17, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Last week, in a speech to the incoming class of agents for the country's Office of the General Prosecutor, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández applauded the Office for its efforts fighting corruption.

"In the last few years, the Office of the General Prosecutor has achieved what was previously thought impossible," Hernández said. "It has brought peace and security to Honduras."



Honduran President Hernández Lauds Country's Progress on Criminal Justice

In the 2017 Gallup Global Law and Order Index, Honduras's score surged eight points; the country tied with Chile as the highest-ranking in Latin America. The annual index examines public perceptions of safety and police integrity.

Additionally, Honduras rose five places in this year's edition of the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index. The Index analyzes 163 countries on their "level of societal safety and security; the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict; and the degree of militarization."

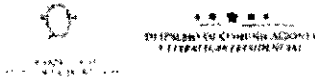
The president also highlighted the Office of the General Prosecutor's contributions to Honduras's 30 percent reduction in the homicide rate.

The new class of agents is backed by the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Honduras, or INL. INL was created in 2001 as a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the Honduran government to fight drug trafficking

# CISION

PR Newswire

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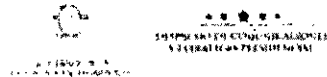
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# Honduras Hosts Technology Camp for Youth in Response to Skills Gap



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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras →**  
Aug 21, 2017, 11:13 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 21, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- HONDUCAMP.TECH, Honduras's largest-ever technology camp for youth, will take place August 25-28 in the San José de Carmen Institute's Sports Arena in Tegucigalpa. The camp is co-run by the Honduran Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation, or IHCITI, and the Honduran government.

"Honduras is eager to join the world's technology leaders," President Juan Orlando Hernández said. "HONDUCAMP.TECH will train Honduran youth to confront the world's most pressing challenges with modern technological resources."



Republic of Honduras

At the three-day, overnight camp, 20,000 of Honduras's brightest young minds will attend workshops in robotics, computer programming, hardware design, and technology entrepreneurship led by international tech leaders.

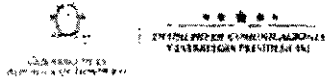
HONDUCAMP.TECH is a direct response by the Hernández administration to the region's education skills gap. Nearly three in four Latin American youth lack the education necessary to find quality jobs. Over 20 million children in Latin America are at risk of dropping out of school each year. HONDUCAMP.TECH aims to bolster the region's labor force by introducing young people to careers in technology.

"HONDUCAMP.TECH is one of many actions this administration is taking to equip its young citizens to find gainful employment and to compete economically on an international level," Honduran Secretary of Science and Technology Ramón Espinoza said.

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## Honduras Hosts Technology Camp for Youth in Response to Skills Gap



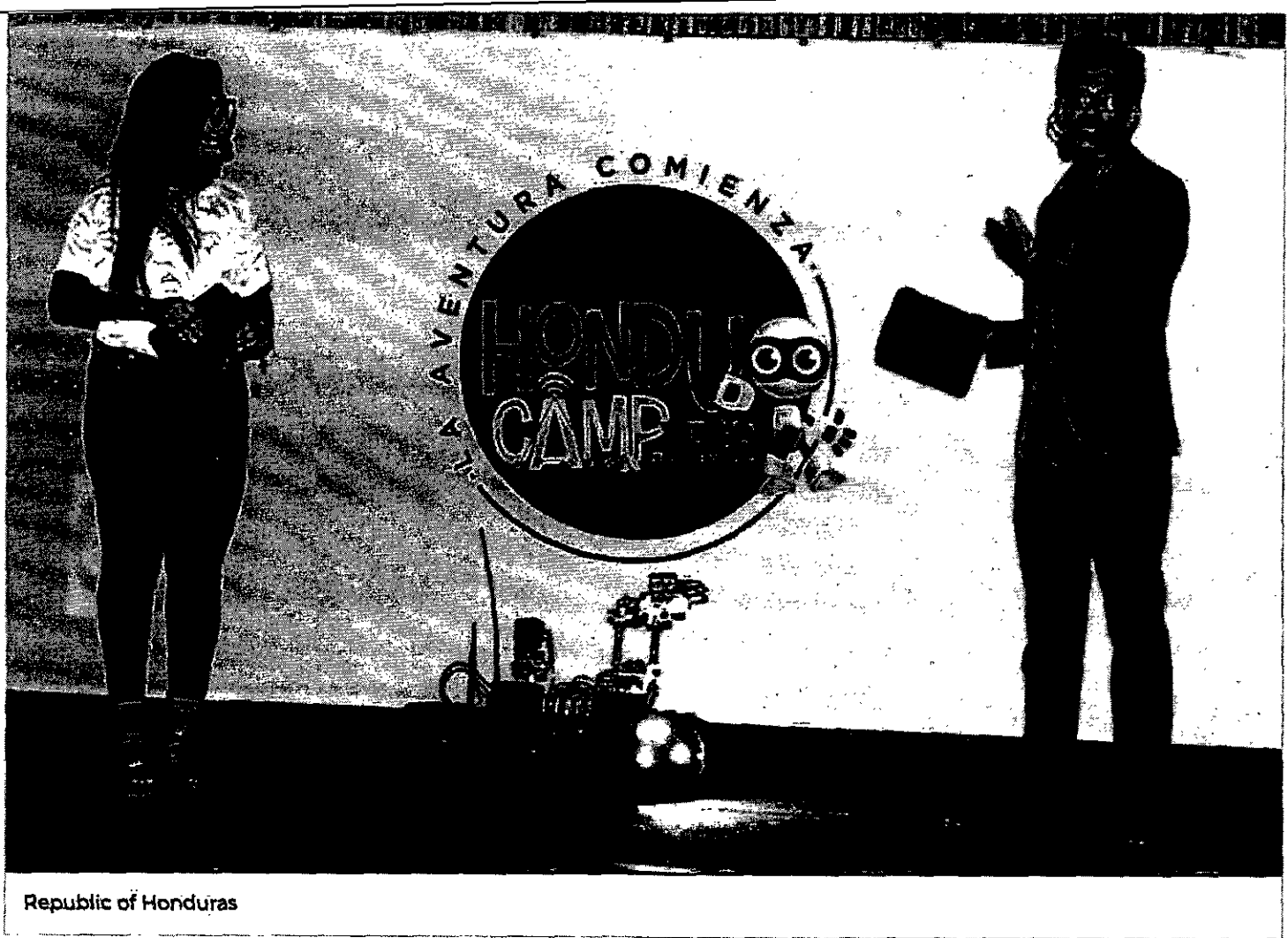
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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras →**  
Aug 21, 2017, 11:13 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 21, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- HONDUCAMP.TECH, Honduras's largest-ever technology camp for youth, will take place August 25-28 in the San José de Carmen Institute's Sports Arena in Tegucigalpa. The camp is co-run by the Honduran Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation, or IHCIETI, and the Honduran government.

"Honduras is eager to join the world's technology leaders," President Juan Orlando Hernández said. "HONDUCAMP.TECH will train Honduran youth to confront the world's most pressing challenges with modern technological resources."



Republic of Honduras

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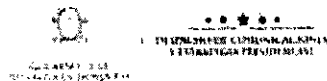
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HSD/CES/REGISTRATION  
UNIT

2017 SEP 11 AM 7:27

## Honduras Holds Festival for LGBTI Rights



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NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras →**  
Aug 24, 2017, 14:59 ET

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 24, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Honduras recently hosted the Diversity in the Arts and Culture Festival in Tegucigalpa's Parque Central Amphitheater. The festival aimed to showcase talent from the country's Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual and Intersexual community, and to encourage the public to safeguard LGBTI rights.

"I am extremely grateful for the artists and organizers who made this event a success," said President Juan Orlando Hernández. "Your stories, poems, plays, and dances are an integral part of Honduras's cultural identity."



Honduras recently hosted the Diversity in the Arts and Culture Festival in Tegucigalpa's Parque Central Amphitheater.

In May, the president announced the creation of the Ministry for Human Rights as part of a larger effort to defend and promote human rights in Honduras, as well as boost government protections for vulnerable groups, including LGBTI activists. In its efforts to secure human rights for its citizens, Honduras is working with the U.S. Agency for International Development, the European Union, and Freedom House.

The festival featured live performances from LGBTI artists, as well as information on human rights and sexual health.

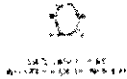
Attendees included LGBTI rights organizations, members of the diplomatic community, representatives from international aid organizations, human rights advocates, and Honduran government officials. The Embassy of Chile helped sponsor the event.

"This festival served as an important reminder that our human rights work is not done until every single Honduran citizen feels safe and respected," Hernández said.

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## Honduras Holds Festival for LGBTI Rights



MINISTERIO DE CULTURA Y JUVENTUD  
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2017 SEP 11 AM 7:27

# Honduras Peace Forum Marks National Progress in Crime Prevention

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
**Republic of Honduras** →  
Aug 29, 2017, 07:54 ET

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Aug. 29, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Last week, Honduras welcomed officials from the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a global think tank, to the Honduras Peace Forum in Tegucigalpa.

"Honduras is moving in the right direction," said IEP Mexico Coordinator Patricia de Obeso. "Having a cabinet that invests in [crime] prevention is a good indication that the country is making progress."

In just three years, the homicide rate in Honduras dropped 30 percent.

Obeso commended Honduras for reducing terrorism and internal conflict, and for creating safe spaces for citizens. Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández has launched an initiative to build secure, peaceful parks for citizens.

"We recognize Honduras' advances in security over the last few years," said IEP Director Michelle Breslauer.

The Hernández administration recently strengthened civilian oversight of the national police, and revamped its Navy's drug trafficking unit.

Thanks to such initiatives, Honduras rose five places in the IEP's Global Peace Index, which ranks 163 countries on 23 indicators of peace. Honduras improved its national safety more than any Caribbean or Central American country in the index.

"Receiving such high praise from an institute that once named this country the most violent in the world is extremely significant," said President Hernández. "My administration will keep fighting to protect all Honduran citizens."

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202-471-4228 ext. 119

SOURCE Republic of Honduras

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