



I am truly honored to reinforce the commitment of the government of Honduras to strengthening our mutually-beneficial relationship with the United States. We have long and strong ties - familial, cultural, economic and value-driven.

For my part, as Honduran Minister of Security and with the full support of our government, I am committed to the following three pillars of our strategy to combat crime and police corruption in our country. These are the foundation of a partnership with the U.S. They are intended to cement our common interests in stabilizing society in Honduras and the region by solving problems that plague us both.

Pillar One: Institutional Reform

A strong, well-trained professional civilian police force is essential to our efforts in fighting the criminal sectors of society and upholding civil law. President Hernandez and I are committed to this. Here is a partial list of major reforms instituted during the past three years, much of it with American aid:

- A security tax was passed to support National Police Reforms by improving training, accountability, and rule of law for and by a strengthened civilian-led police force.
- GOH has invested approximately \$100 million US dollars into police reforms to-date to improve professionalization of the police.
- The Honduran legislature passed and signed into law two major laws that prohibit police from engaging in political activity, doubles police pay, increases the entry education level and extends basic police training from 3 to 11 months. A merit based system of promotion and evaluation was created that includes polygraphs as part of an enhanced background investigation.
- We have created and extended the National Purge Commission that has rooted out corrupt police officials at all levels of the Force. Over 5,000 police have been removed from their police roles.
- A new National Police Academy offers an internationally-approved curriculum with training extended from 3 months to 11 months for new police recruits.
- We have created a new state of the art forensic lab to increase prosecution rates based on the rules of evidence and chain of custody.
- All police recruits are taught about human rights, human trafficking, domestic violence prevention and community policing practices.



SECRETARÍA DE SEGURIDAD

- The Ministry of Security has fostered, encouraged and led outreach to civil society in Honduras including programs such as “Safe Spaces”, community policing, and domestic abuse prevention programs.

Pillar Two: More Effective Communication and Engagement with Civil Society

Strengthening existing relationships with internal and external stakeholders and developing new relationships requires effective and credible communication. The Ministry supports transparency to strengthen Honduran civil society by encouraging citizen participation and building trust.

- Independent outside entities have validated our progress in reducing crime:
 - The Honduran murder rate has dropped from 86.5 per hundred thousand in 2011 to 42.8 in 2017, just over a 50% drop
 - Honduras has risen by 17 positions (out of 163) on the “Global Peace Index” in the past 3 years
 - Crime statistics are published for the public on the Ministry of Security website
 - Thirty troublesome municipalities have been identified where implementation of violence reduction strategies has begun. A primary component is local citizen involvement and input
 - In a recent Gallup poll, 84% of local populace believe that MACCIH is having an impact (MACCIH is the Organization of American States’ “Support Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras” (MACCIH-Spanish acronym))
- An Office of Police Disciplinary Affairs (Internal Affairs function) has been created that responds to citizen complaints and has authority to take disciplinary action, plus a new financial crimes unit, an anti-drug unit and a border control unit.
- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has sponsored independent evaluations of public confidence in the police. Though much work remains to be done, a Gallup survey has public confidence in the police up to 54% in 2017 from 19% in 2015.
- Police response times are now being tracked for calls of citizen reports.
- In over 820 public schools 248,000 students have been exposed to police engagement programs to familiarize them on the role of police in civil society, and on police responsibilities and accountability in the community
- A Ministry of Human Rights -- trained by the International Red Cross -- has been created to insure that police who violate citizens’ rights are punished.



SECRETARÍA DE SEGURIDAD

While touting our successes and progress-to-date is important, it is equally important to face the public's and our strategic partners very real concern about remaining internal corruption, human rights abuses, and other allegations of criminal and unethical police behavior. The Ministry is committed to continuing and improving our efforts in these areas so that we can strengthen the trust of our citizens and our strategic partners.

Pillar Three: Strategic partnerships

No one government, no one entity can do it alone. We can only succeed when we have the trust and cooperation of all sectors of society. We need the active involvement of our Civil Society partners in addressing all crimes including institutional corruption, from violence and petty theft to the more egregious forms of trafficking - drugs, arms and human beings.

We recognize that a regional and comprehensive approach to crime is an absolute necessity. We will take a leadership role to strengthen our coordinated efforts with the other Central American governments, especially those in the Northern Triangle.

The relationship with the donor community, especially with the United States is the cornerstone of our efforts. Without U.S. support, we will not be able to build a stronger, more-effective nation-wide security reform effort that benefits our citizens and helps build a society and government that furthers the ideals of civil society espoused by the U.S. With your continued support we will make every effort to regularly advise, communicate and inform the United States of our efforts, progress, and challenges.