



Honduras to Meet with El Salvador to Discuss Customs Union

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Oct. 19, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- This Friday, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández will meet with Salvadoran President Salvador Sánchez Cerén in the border post of El Amatillo to discuss adding El Salvador to the customs union between Honduras and Guatemala.

"A strong economic relationship between Honduras and El Salvador benefits both our nations," President Hernández said. "I look forward to a productive discussion with President Sánchez Cerén."

Adding El Salvador to the union would make transporting goods easier for all three countries. Honduras and Guatemala agreed to form their customs union in 2015 and formally launched it this past June.

The agreement under consideration by Honduras and El Salvador would allow 80 percent of exports and travelers to cross the nations' borders free of charge. It would also build ten cross-border access points.

The Honduras-Guatemala customs union is expected to increase GDP growth in the two nations by 1.2 percent, President Hernández noted. He invited El Salvador and Nicaragua to join the agreement in July.

"This meeting is a great opportunity for Honduras to foster greater economic cooperation in Central America," President Hernández said. "Our ultimate goal is to promote economic development across the region -- and bring prosperity to our citizens."

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SOURCE Republic of Honduras



Honduran President Pledges Support for Anti-Extortion Courts

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TÉGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Oct. 20, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- This week, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández pledged his full support for Honduras's new Specialized Courts in Extortion Matters. Supreme Court President Rolando Argueta inaugurated the legal body's 30 judges.

"My administration is fully committed to rooting out corruption and extortion in Honduras," President Hernández said. "An independent judiciary is crucial to this effort. We stand ready to support the Specialized Courts' efforts."

The new judges passed several rounds of rigorous vetting by third-party legal groups, including the Association of Judges for Democracy, the Association of Judges and Magistrates of Honduras, and the Association of Public Defenders.

The new courts will supplement the Hernández administration's anti-corruption initiatives, including its Special Commission for the Purging and Transformation of the National Police. The commission removed nearly one-third of the police force on corruption charges last year.

President Hernández also signed a new Law on Police Careers in August, which dismissed corrupt National Police officers and set new rules for career promotions.

"My administration is confronting corruption and crime head on," President Hernández said. "These courts show that Honduras will vigorously prosecute anyone who breaks our laws."

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