



Honduran Government to Investigate Election Meddling Claims



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Republic of Honduras →
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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Nov. 17, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/-- Yesterday, in a statement published by Honduran outlet El Heraldo, Otto Reich, the former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela under President Ronald Reagan and the former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs under President George W. Bush, claimed that Venezuelan nationals were attempting to interfere in Honduras's November 26 election.

In response, the Government of the Republic of Honduras issued the following statement:

"The appropriate Honduran authorities are conducting a full and thorough investigation into Ambassador Reich's claims. We have been doing absolutely everything in our power to ensure that this month's election is free and fair, and that means taking every threat to democracy seriously.

"Ambassador Reich said that Venezuelan government activists have attempted to sow 'national destabilization, violence, strikes, [and] attacks' in Honduras by sending Venezuelan nationals into the country over the last two months. Reich claims that these Venezuelans came disguised as 'tourists, technicians and businesspeople' and that they 'came to have an impact on the electoral process of this Central American country.'

"We are aware of these claims and are looking into them as part of our broader campaign to safeguard the integrity of our nation's electoral process.

"The Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal has invited electoral observers from the European Union, the Organization of American States, the U.S. Embassy in Honduras, and several former heads of state from Europe and Latin America to monitor this month's election. In total, more than 800 international and 6,000 domestic observers will oversee voting.

"We are also dispatching the necessary security forces to protect the will of the Honduran people. This week, hundreds of Honduran soldiers and police officers headed to Honduran slums to stop gang interference in political campaigning."

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Honduras Arrests Drug Trafficker Wanted by FBI



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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Nov. 16, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Last week, Honduras's National Inter-Agency Security Force, or FUSINA, arrested Geoffrey Darío Guzmán Tobar, a Honduran national wanted for drug trafficking. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has requested that Guzmán Tobar be extradited to the United States.

"Our administration has been vocal about ending the drug trade and keeping our citizens safe," President Juan Orlando Hernández said. "But actions speak louder than words. My administration has already extradited 16 drug lords."



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Guzmán Tobar, the Honduran Libre Party's candidate for mayor of the municipality El Paraíso, Copán, has been charged in connection with trafficking five kilograms of cocaine into North America.

Cuzmán Tobar's arrest is part of a larger Hernández administration campaign to end the drug trade in Honduras. Since 2014, the Hernández administration has dismantled 150 airstrips used by drug traffickers and sent drug lords to maximum-security prisons. According to estimates from the U.S. State Department, the number of inbound flights carrying drugs to Honduras dropped 30 percent from 2015 to 2016.

"Organized crime and drug trafficking have no place in Honduras," President Hernández said. "Our administration will continue to make domestic security a priority."

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Honduras Takes Significant Precautions to Protect Upcoming Election from Hacking



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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Nov. 15, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- On Sunday, the Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal hosted top officials from the United States, the European Union, and the Organization of American States to showcase the speed and security of Honduras's election software prior to the November 26 national election.

Following a successful simulation of Election Day procedures, Supreme Electoral Tribunal President David Matamoros called the election software "robust, impervious to any cyberattack, [and] completely shielded."

During the simulation, trained election officials at more than 2,000 polling stations across Honduras uploaded test results to a secure server operated by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, or TSE. The server stripped the voting data of party affiliation to prevent bias during vote processing. The results were then compiled and verified at a TSE headquarters in Tegucigalpa. The entire simulation was conducted in under two hours.

Matamoros added that vote processing was unaffected even when TSE triggered an intentional power outage to test the system's reliability.

"Today's simulation at @TSEHonduras gave us the chance to observe the actions that will occur on 26 Nov for a more complete understanding of the electoral process," said U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Heide Fulton, who attended the simulation, on the U.S. Embassy to Honduras's official Twitter page.

Matamoros unveiled TSE's election server earlier this month. On Election Day, observers from the EU, the OAS, and all 10 political parties participating in the election will have immediate access to images of voting results from across the country. The election data will be encrypted and unalterable. Polling station officials will be appointed by political parties. The election will not be certified until all parties and monitors have signed off on the results.

In total, more than 800 international and 6,000 domestic observers will monitor the election.

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Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal Updates International Community on Pre-Election Preparations

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Nov. 14, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Last week, Honduras's Supreme Electoral Tribunal shared details on preparations for the country's national election on November 26 with electoral observers from the diplomatic and international community.

Supreme Electoral Tribunal President David Matamoros said that Honduras is looking to the international community to help oversee the upcoming election. "We are sure that the observers are going to say that we are doing the proper things [to prepare]...and following all procedures," Matamoros said at a joint press conference with Honduran Secretary of Foreign Relations María Dolores Agüero.

Electoral observers from both the European Union and the Organization of American States will receive real-time images of voting results via a secure server. Additionally, several former Latin American and European presidents and heads of state will help monitor the Honduran election, including former presidents Felipe Gonzalez from Spain; Vicente Fox and Felipe Calderón from Mexico; Ricardo Lagos from Chile; Martin Torrijos from Panama; Alvaro Colon from Guatemala; Jorge Quiroga from Bolivia; and Laura Chinchilla from Costa Rica.

Any election should be "a festival of democracy," said Dominican ambassador to Honduras Marino Berigüete. He stressed that electoral transparency is important for both a country's citizens and its international image. He went on to wish the magistrates of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal luck regarding the upcoming election.

In the upcoming election, six million Hondurans will be eligible to vote for a president, three vice presidents, 128 national legislature representatives, 20 Central American legislature representatives, and 298 municipal representatives.

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