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Honduran President Thanks U.S. State Department for Recognition on Human Rights Progress

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TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Dec. 7, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández thanked the U.S. State Department for certifying Honduras's progress on human rights and fighting corruption.

"Over the past four years, my administration has worked tirelessly to defend human rights and secure our nation against transnational organized crime," President Hernández said. "On behalf of the Honduran people, I thank the United States and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for recognizing our progress."



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In a press briefing December 5, a State Department spokesperson said, "Under the U.S. Appropriations 2017 Act, 50 percent of U.S. foreign assistance to the central governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras can't be obligated until the State Department certifies that each government is making progress in 12 areas. Those include combating corruption and impunity, reducing violence, protecting human rights, and supporting the role of civil society."

"The department reviewed and analyzed the efforts and the progress of the Honduran Government. Over the past year, we made that determination to certify based on the accumulated data. In the certification, we confirm that Honduras has met the criteria specified in the legislation," the spokesperson said.

Reuters reported that the State Department certified Honduras's progress on November 28, two days after the Honduran national election. The certification allows Honduras to receive millions of dollars in U.S. aid. Through this program, Congress has allocated \$644 million to support institutional stability and human rights in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

"I will keep doing everything in my power to make Honduras safer for our citizens," President Hernández said. "I appreciate the support and confidence of the U.S. State Department as we work together to improve our nation's security and defend human rights."

Since taking office in 2014, the Hernández administration has cut Honduras's homicide rate by nearly 50 percent, and removed nearly one-third of its national police force for various crimes.

In October, Honduras's homicide rate reached its lowest monthly level in 10 years. The Hernández administration has also partnered with the OAS to establish the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity In Honduras, which advises the government on human rights issues and proposes legislation aimed at reducing corruption.

Lower crime rates and increasing social stability have paved the way for economic growth. The Honduran central bank estimates that the economy will grow more than 4 percent in 2017.

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