

Honduran President's Brother Found Guilty of Drug Trafficking

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President Juan Orlando Hernandez said that traffickers were using his brother's trial to seek revenge.

A New York Federal Court on Friday found Juan Antonio Hernandez (aka Tony), the brother of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH), guilty of charges of drug trafficking, use of weapons and lying to authorities.

During this trial President JOH was denounced by cooperating former members of the US Attorney's Office for allegedly receiving bribes for his campaigns to Congress and the presidency, which led the U.S. justice to define the Central American country as a "Narco-State."

In his first public reaction to the verdict, the Honduran President said he was receiving the news with "great sadness" and rejected how his country has been labeled.

"I strongly reject... the unfair and false accusations that Honduras is a narco-state or a state that sponsors drug trafficking," JOH said.

Tony Hernandez was arrested in Miami in 2018 and accused of helping smuggle almost 220 cocaine tons into the U.S. while enjoying the protection of the Honduran president.

Hondurans are demanding again that JOH quit for being a 'narco'. The sign reads, "Out with narcopoliticians, out with JOH"

The U.S. jury heard testimonies from drug traffickers who are now cooperating with authorities, including former mayor Amilcar Ardon and former gang leader Devis Rivera.

Ardon told jurors that Tony promised Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman protection for his shipments in exchange for a US\$1 million donation to JOH's 2013 presidential campaign.

In addition to this, Rivera, who admitted to murdering 78 people, testified that he paid bribes to multiple Honduran officials including Tony's brother.

The Honduran president, who began his second term in January 2018 amid allegations of electoral fraud, has not been charged with a crime yet.

Juan Orlando Hernandez, who has been trying to present himself as responsible for breaking up the most powerful cartels in his country, said that traffickers were using his brother's trial to seek revenge.