

U.S. asks for life in prison for brother of Honduran president

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U.S. government wants Tony Hernandez to return \$138.5 million in 'blood money' and pay an additional \$10 million fine.

New York, March 18 (RHC)-- A brother of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez should be sentenced to life in prison for running a “state-sponsored drug trafficking conspiracy” with the nation’s current leader, U.S. federal prosecutors say in documents filed before a sentencing hearing scheduled next week.

Juan Antonio “Tony” Hernandez, a former Honduran congressman, was convicted in October 2019 of participating in a conspiracy to traffic in cocaine to the United States that involved the use of machineguns. His sentencing, which has been delayed a number of times, is scheduled for next Tuesday in New York.

“The defendant was a Honduran congressman who, along with his brother Juan Orlando Hernandez, played a leadership role in a violent, state sponsored drug trafficking conspiracy,” prosecutors wrote.

The U.S. government wants Tony Hernandez to give up \$138.5 million in “blood money” from his drug trafficking and pay an additional \$10 million fine. “Over a fifteen-year period, the defendant corrupted the democratic institutions of Honduras to enrich himself by transporting at least 185,000 kilograms of cocaine – a staggering amount of poison that he helped import into the United States,” prosecutors wrote. They say he also sold weapons to drug traffickers, some of which came from Honduras’s military, and controlled drug laboratories in Colombia and Honduras.

“Between 2004 and 2019, the defendant secured and distributed millions of dollars in drug-derived bribes to Juan Orlando Hernandez, former Honduran President Porfirio Lobo Sosa and other politicians associated with Honduras’s National Party,” prosecutors said.

They allege that among those bribes was \$1m from notorious Mexican capo Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman to Juan Orlando Hernandez.

President Hernandez has repeatedly denied any ties to drug traffickers, as has Lobo, whose son is currently serving a 24-year prison sentence for drug trafficking in the United States. Neither president has been charged.

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