

# [***Former Honduran president found guilty in drug trafficking trial***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH6-23D1-JBSS-S21G-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Former President of Honduras Juan Orlando Hernandez was found guilty Friday of drug trafficking by an American jury after a two-week trial in Manhattan federal court.

Prosecutors had accused Hernandez, 55, of conspiring with drug cartels during his tenure as they moved more than 400 tons of cocaine through Honduras toward the United States. In exchange, prosecutors said, Hernandez received millions of dollars in bribes that he used to fuel his rise in Honduran ***politics***.

Hernandez was president of Honduras from 2014 until 2022. He was extradited to the United States in 2022 after the completion of his second term in office on charges of conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States, conspiracy to possess firearms and destructive devices for drug trafficking, and possession of this type of weapon during the drug trafficking conspiracy.

He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison for each of the charges.

During his years in office, Hernandez "protected and enriched the drug traffickers in his inner circle," the Justice Department said, citing his use of executive power to support extraditions of certain drug traffickers to the US "who threatened his grip on power" while "promising drug traffickers who paid him and followed his instructions that they would remain in Honduras."

Prosecutors also said that members of the conspiracy Hernandez participated in relied on the Honduran National Police to protect cocaine loads as they moved through the country.

Hernandez had denied the charges against him and testified in his own defense earlier this week.

A lawyer for Hernandez said Friday they would appeal the conviction.

"He's still strong, but he's quite disillusioned," Raymond Colon, the attorney, said of the former president.

"It's a tragedy," he added, calling Hernandez "a noble man who fought for the same goals that the US had in terms of the war against drugs."

In a statement, US Attorney General Merrick Garland said Hernandez "abused his position as President of Honduras to operate the country as a narco-state where violent drug traffickers were allowed to operate with virtual impunity, and the people of Honduras and the United States were forced to suffer the consequences."

"As today's conviction demonstrates, the Justice Department is disrupting the entire ecosystem of drug trafficking networks that harm the American people, no matter how far or how high we must go," he added.

By Ana Melgar and David Shortell, CNN

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