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2015-08-19 | Drug Trafficking ([/en_GB/keywords/topic/drug_trafficking](#)) | Guatemala's Los Halcones Train with U.S. Green Berets to Fight Drugs



Los Halcones, anti-drug agents with Guatemala's National Civil Police, recently trained with U.S. Green Berets for more than six weeks. [Photos: Ministry of the Interior of Guatemala]

provided by the U.S.

Raul Barreno

For more than six weeks, 22 agents from the Guatemalan National Civil Police's (PNC) "Los Halcones" (Hawks) unit trained with United States Army Green Berets, participating in exercises focusing on fighting criminal organizations, including drug-trafficking groups that use the Central American country as a transshipment point to transport narcotics into North America.

During the training, Los Halcones, who are part of the elite Anti-narcotics Interdiction and Anti-terrorist Force (FIAAT), studied and practiced Military techniques to execute air and ground operations using helicopters and other equipment

The training, which occurred in different parts of Guatemala between May and July, covered tactical movements, air mobile operations, first aid, ground navigation, marksmanship, and a course on selecting objectives.

Approximately 60 agents participated in the training for rapid shock actions against drug traffickers, according to Guatemalan Vice Minister for Drug Enforcement Pahola Ovalle Cabrera.

“They have undertaken a supremely difficult course, which has pushed them to the very edge of their physical capabilities,” Vice Minister Ovalle said. “The instructors, both from abroad and [from Guatemala], have selected the best agents from among many applicants. And surely, they will now place all their efforts into the head-on combat against drug trafficking and will be a great benefit for their country.”

A cooperative effort

The training is part of the ongoing cooperation between Guatemala and the U.S., who collaborate by sharing resources, information, and training in the fight against international trafficking and transnational organized crime.

For example, in 2013, the U.S. donated six UH-1Y helicopters, which each have the capacity to carry 13 people and are collectively worth \$11 million, to Guatemala.

Los Halcones’ objective is to “fight head-on against drug trafficking in this country and prevent it from causing greater harm,” Vice Min. Ovalle said. “I am satisfied with the training that the Los Halcones rapid action group has received. The support and international cooperation have been vital.”

The unit “is the best Special Forces has to offer, and they are prepared and ready to combat drug trafficking, even giving their lives to do so if need be,” said Oscar Boc Ixcol, a Los Halcones instructor.

The agents who trained with the Green Berets had to pass difficult “selection tests to join this force,” Vice Minister of Internal Affairs Elmer Sosa said. “They were chosen based on the highest standards of trustworthiness, psychological tests, and socioeconomic studies. We need to have the best agents in this elite force to fight against organized crime and drug trafficking.”

The 60 participating agents belong to the PNC, specialize in drug enforcement, and are assigned missions from their base in Guatemala City.

The importance of cooperation

Cooperation with the U.S. is an important component of Guatemala’s fight against drug-trafficking groups and other transnational criminal organizations.

“The support we have received from the United States has been important, above all with regards to training in land interdictions, interdiction techniques, and ground navigation, among others,” Vice Minister Sosa said.

The recent training “represents critical support for Guatemala,” said Brenda Muñoz, a security analyst and former drug prosecutor in the western department of Quetzaltenango.

The training will help Los Halcones use equipment donated by the U.S. effectively to fight drug trafficking and other criminal activities.

“It is important that the United States provide training support,” Muñoz said. “First of all, because doing it themselves is very expensive, and secondly, because they should make sure resources they donate are used effectively.”

As of early August, Guatemalan security forces have seized five tons of cocaine in 2015 after confiscating 3.5 tons of the narcotic in all of 2014, Vice Min. Sosa added.

Guatemala is devoting substantial resources to its counter-narcotics fight.

For example, Guatemala currently has more than 1,000 drug enforcement agents and 35 complete canine security teams that conduct operations at international airports in La Aurora and Mundo Maya, in Guatemala City and Petén, respectively, in addition to the ports of Quetzal on the Pacific Ocean and Santo Tomás de Castilla and Puerto Barrios, both of which are on the Atlantic Ocean.

A number of task forces also are operating throughout the country, including the Tecún Umán Task Force in San Marcos, which is on the border with Mexico, with the Maya-Chortí Task Force conducting security missions on the border with Honduras.

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2015-08-19

[There are two main types of drugs circulating Paraguayan territory: marijuana, which is produced locally, and cocaine, which is in transit to other countries. Paraguay does not house production labs for it, nor does it produce the precursor chemicals and other](#)

substances used to make the narcotic, yet it lies on one of the main transshipment routes for illegal drugs originating mainly in Brazil and Argentina as they head north, especially to the United States. (http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2015/08/19/feature-03)



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01)

Chilean Navy Works with Law Enforcement to Fight Maritime Drug Trafficking (/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2015/08/17/feature-01)

2015-08-17

A group of artisanal fishermen who allegedly used maritime routes to smuggle drugs into Chile's south-central zone was recently dismantled as the result of a yearlong investigation by the Military, police and prosecutors. (http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2015/08/17/feature-01)



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02)

Bolivia, Peru Cooperate to Fight Drug Trafficking (/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2015/07/22/feature-02)

2015-07-22

Bolivian and Peruvian security forces are working together to stop international drug trafficking and other illegal enterprises. (http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/2015/07/22/feature-02)
