

Fact Sheet on U.S. Weapons Sales to Honduras

U.S. guns in Honduras – in the hands of both state forces and gangs – brutalize communities and families, making continued life in the country unsustainable. We must act to stop the weapons trade from the United States to Honduras.

The United States administers military and police assistance to Honduras, which includes equipment and training, but it also transfers weapons to Honduras through arms sales. In addition, many weapons in Honduras come from the United States through illegal trafficking.

In Honduras, the military runs *La Armería*, which controls domestic gun sales to police, to individuals and to more than 1,000 unregulated private security companies. The lack of transparency and controls in both government arsenals and gun sales, and Honduran military and police involvement in security companies, create a large grey area between weapons that are legally sold and illegal gun markets.

Both the proposed Berta Caceres Act ([H.R. 1945](#)) and Trump's aid cut-off affect military and police assistance (which rarely includes firearms), not weapons sales from U.S. companies, which are currently licensed by the State Department.

With one of the highest murder rates in the world, more 70% of homicides in Honduras in 2018 are committed with firearms.¹ The number of civilian-held guns in Honduras is estimated to be anywhere between 420,000 and 1.2 million – most of which are illegal.²

U.S Weapons Exports to Honduras

Colt Manufacturing, based in **Hartford, Connecticut**, exported machineguns to Honduras that were used by military police to fire on protesters against electoral fraud in 2017. Colt shipped 1,714 machineguns to Honduras in 2015, 350 in 2016, and 1,000 in 2017, at a value of \$3,558,686.

Honduran police frequently attack nonviolent protests with CS tear gas, which is manufactured by Nonlethal Technologies in **Homer City, Pennsylvania**.

From a **Wyoming** company, Honduras imported more than \$1.3 million worth of military explosives in 2018, and some military firearms.³ The exporter was most likely Safariland, based in Casper, Wyoming, which manufactures munitions and launchers, including for tear gas.

Exporters in **Florida** have also exported more than \$3 million of guns and ammunition since the 2009 coup in Honduras.



U.S.-made teargas is used against Honduran protesters.

¹ [Boletín](#), Instituto Universitario en Democracia, Paz y Seguridad, UNAH, 2018.

² InSight Crime, *Firearms Trafficking in Honduras*, 2017, p. 8.

³ U.S. Census Bureau data at [usatrade.census.gov](#).

Honduras has also purchased millions of dollars worth of bullets from **Illinois** producers – more than \$3.7 million worth in the last five years.⁴

Gun Illegally Trafficked from the United States to Honduras

Nearly half of illegal guns in Honduras – or more than half, according to Honduran investigators – came from the United States.⁵ Data from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) shows more than 36% of guns recovered in Honduras in 2017 and traced [were purchased in and trafficked from](#) the United States. But since the source country for all other guns in Honduras traced by ATF could not be identified, many likely were trafficked from the United States, including U.S. weapons sent for wars in Central America in the 1980s. Leakage from militaries in the region remains a major source of guns in Honduras.⁶



Honduran military police use Colt-made M4 machineguns. Photo: Miami Herald

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What You Can Do

- Urge Members of Congress to:
 - Co-sponsor [H.R. 1945](#), the Berta Caceres Act. Though it wouldn't stop gun sales, it would re-orient U.S. policy toward the Honduran military and police.
 - Publicly oppose arms sales to Honduras (especially Foreign Affairs Committee)
 - Support [H.R. 1134](#) and [S. 459](#), which would stop the transfer of gun export licensing from the State Department to Commerce Department, maintaining Congressional oversight.
- Visit Honduras on a human rights delegation.

Further Reading

- Sarah Blaskey, "They're killing us in Honduras with U.S.-made guns, some in caravan say," [Miami Herald](#), November 23, 2018.
- [InSight Crime and Asociación por una Sociedad Más Justa](#), *Firearms Trafficking in Honduras*, 2017.
- [Small Arms Survey](#), *Measuring Illicit Arms Flows: Honduras*, November 2016.
- Alex Yablon, "Trump is Sending Guns South as Migrants Flee North," [Foreign Policy](#), March 8, 2019.
- John Lindsay-Poland, "How U.S. Guns Push Central Americans to Flee," March 2019, at: <https://stopusarmstomexico.org/guns-and-forced-migration/>.
- "Casi un millón de armas circulan ilegalmente en Honduras," [Presencia Universitaria](#), 22 sept. 2015.

Data sources

- Security Assistance Monitor: www.securityassistance.org
- United Nations Comtrade: <https://comtrade.un.org/data/>
- U.S. Census Bureau: usatrade.census.gov
- U.S. International Trade Commission: <https://dataweb.usitc.gov/>

Stop US Arms to Mexico, a project of Global Exchange, produced this fact sheet: stopusarmstomexico.org.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau data at usatrade.census.gov.

⁵ InSight Crime, *Firearms Trafficking in Honduras*, p. 18.

⁶ Ibid., p. 24.