

Honduras, U.N. to sign pact establishing anti-corruption commission

By Gustavo Palencia



Honduras' President Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento addresses the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York, U.S., September 20, 2022. REUTERS/Amr Alfiky

TEGUCIGALPA, Dec 14 (Reuters) - **Honduras said it will sign a preliminary agreement with the United Nations on Thursday to establish an anti-corruption commission, delivering on one of President Xiomara Castro's key campaign pledges.**

Castro met with U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres in New York on Wednesday, wrapping up talks which began in May to create the commission known as CICIH, her office said in a post on Twitter.

Foreign Minister Enrique Reina told local TV the agreement would be signed on Thursday morning at 9.40 a.m. New York time (1440 GMT), adding that a more formal pact with the U.N. was still being worked on.

Castro's pledge to set up the commission helped her win over voters disillusioned with the scandal-plagued right-wing government of former President Juan Orlando Hernandez. He was extradited to the United States this year on drug-trafficking charges. Corruption in Honduras siphons off some \$3 billion a year, according to U.S. diplomats and non-government organizations, deepening poverty and spurring migration.

A similar mission supported by the Organization of the American States (OAS) operated in Honduras until January 2020, but disbanded after then-President Hernandez let its mandate expire. The OAS mission, called the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH), was created in 2016 and led corruption investigations into officials, legislators and Hernandez himself.