

THE MERIDA INITIATIVE: EXPANDING THE U.S./MEXICO PARTNERSHIP



“And the United States remains committed to helping the Mexican Government go after the cartels and organized crime and the corruption they generate..... Our goal is ... to provide support and help to enable our Mexican friends and partners to be as successful as they are seeking to be. And we will continue, through the Merida Initiative, to provide significant support.”

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

The Merida Initiative is an unprecedented partnership between the United States and Mexico to fight organized crime and associated violence while furthering respect for human rights and the rule of law. Based on principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust, and respect for sovereign independence, the two countries’ efforts have built confidence that is transforming the bilateral relationship.

The Four Pillars of Merida:

1. Disrupt Organized Criminal Groups
2. Strengthen Institutions
3. Build a 21st Century Border
4. Build Strong and Resilient Communities

reforms through the training of justice sector personnel including police, prosecutors, and defenders, correction systems development, judicial exchanges, and partnerships between Mexican and U.S. law schools.

- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is partnering with the Government of Mexico and civil society to promote the rule of law and build strong and resilient communities by supporting the implementation of Mexico’s new

Enhancing Citizen Safety

Beginning with the Merida Initiative and its expansion called “Beyond Merida,” the United States has forged strong partnerships to improve citizen safety in affected areas to fight drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, illicit arms trafficking, money-laundering, and demand for drugs on both sides of the border.

Under “Beyond Merida,” bilateral efforts are being accelerated to support stronger democratic institutions, especially police, justice systems, and civil society organizations; to expand our border focus beyond interdiction of contraband to include facilitation of legitimate trade and travel; and to build strong and resilient communities able to withstand the pressures of crime and violence.

Merida Programs and Activities

The U.S. Congress has appropriated \$1.5 billion since the Merida Initiative began in Fiscal Year 2008. Under the partnership;

- The United States is supporting Mexico’s implementation of comprehensive justice sector

justice system; increasing knowledge of, and respect for, human rights; strengthening social networks and community cohesion; addressing the needs of vulnerable populations (youth and victims of crime); and increasing community and government cooperation.

- Air mobility has been increased through the delivery of eight Bell helicopters to the Mexican Army/Air Force and three UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters to the Federal Police to provide for rapid transport of personnel for counternarcotics and other security operations.
- The U.S. government has provided scanners, X-ray machines, and other non-intrusive inspection equipment to enhance Mexican authorities’ ability to detect illicit goods at key checkpoints of land and air ports of entry.
- The Mexican government has established a corrections academy to train Mexican federal correctional staff at Xalapa in Mexico’s Veracruz state.