



CNMI Office of the Attorney General
Edward Manibusan, Attorney General



Guam Office of the Attorney General
Leevin Taitano Camacho, Attorney General

**Joint Press Release
For Immediate Release**

CNMI and Guam petition to form coalition with Hawaii to combat drug trafficking through HIDTA program

CNMI, Office of the Attorney General – Attorney General Edward Manibusan and Attorney General Leevin T. Camacho have jointly petitioned seeking High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) designations under the Hawaii HIDTA. The petitions were submitted on June 12, 2020 to the National Office of Drug Control Policy in Washington, D.C.

The HIDTA program was created by Congress in accordance with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 and is administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The program provides financial assistance, support, and law enforcement intelligence to federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies and territories operating in regions determined to be affected by drug trafficking, with the aim of reducing illegal drug trafficking and production.

“Fighting the drug crisis in the CNMI and Guam requires unified efforts at the local and federal levels,” says AG Manibusan. “Given Hawaii HIDTA designation, the CNMI and Guam Petitioners will be able to rise above the challenges in the fight against drug importation, interdiction, and prosecution,” concluded the Attorney General.

“This time we recognized that working with the CNMI and Hawai’i would be the most effective way of disrupting the flow of drugs into our islands,” says AG Camacho. “Working with General Manibusan and Executive Director Gary Yabuta on this petition was an important first step in a regional collaboration of local and federal law enforcement efforts.”

With limited resources and our islands’ close proximity to Asian countries where drug use and manufacturing are rampant, a HIDTA designation will magnify our efforts in addressing drug trafficking and drug-related crimes. With the support and encouragement of Hawaii HIDTA, the Attorneys General for the CNMI and Guam shared information and ideas on how to best approach our ambition in obtaining a HIDTA designation. A HIDTA designation under Hawaii will allow the CNMI and Guam and Hawaii to collaborate and share federal resources including access to federal funds, provide training and share information to combat drug importation and distribution, reduce drug-related crimes, and increase enforcement efforts.

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The Petition was made with the support of CNMI Governor Ralph DLG. Torres, Guam Governor Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero and Lieutenant Governor Joshua F. Tenorio, CNMI Senate President Victor B. Hocog, US House of Representative Congressman Gregorio Kilili Sablan, Commissioner of Public Safety Robert A. Guerrero, Director of Customs Service Jose C. Mafnas, and Drug Court Manager Edward P. Diaz.

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