

Committee: Security Council

Issue: Establishing stability in El Salvador

Student Officer: Kaya Çolakoğlu

Position: President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Greetings,

I am Kaya Colakoglu and I will be serving as the President of the Security Council throughout this conference. I am a junior in Uskudar American Academy, a school in Istanbul, Turkey.

Security Council is perhaps the most rigorous committee of all, and the single decision-making one. This status sets the Council with some expectations that it must meet, as it will be held accountable for the consequences of its actions. The Council must be responsible, and always remember that due to its binding nature, some careless decisions it may take can have devastating effects on the world of diplomacy.

I hope that when the delegate is researching for all three of our issues, he/she will try to think like a true diplomat would, and form viable solutions for the betterment of our world. I hope that this Study Guide will provide delegates with the most essential information that one will need throughout the challenging debates of this council. However, the research that the delegates will make should not be confined to this report, and it will be best if delegates simply use this report as a tool to get started.

I look forward to the conference and having many academically thriving debates. The privilege of moderating a debate with motivated scholars around the world in a relatively small atmosphere is what bound the spirit of Security Council to me, and that is what I undoubtedly think the 2nd ACGMUN will be like as well.

If there is any issue about the report or the topic at hand, I can be contacted at kcolakoglu20@my.uaa.k12.tr.

Regards,
Kaya Colakoglu.

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

El Salvador is a Central American nation with a population little exceeding 6 million. In the 20th Century, this small country was plagued by an unending sequence of coups, guerilla warfare, gang activity and an incredibly large economic gap between the wealth of a small, affluent elite and the rest of the population. This led to a large-scale Civil War that lasted from 1979 to 1992, which ended with a

UN-brokered accord signed between the parties of the Civil War. To this day, while no active conflict is present in El Salvador, the country is ravaged by deep instability caused by street crime, a divided society and economic inequality.

The bitter fights between street gangs and the government forces have roots that tend back to the Salvadoran Civil War of the 20th Century, and this report will thoroughly examine this historical line-up. It will address the root causes of the conflict between gangs and the government, the sides and how the Salvadoran society views all. The Security Council meets to bring an end to this division in the Salvadoran society, and ensure a prosperous future to all citizens. It is commonly believed that the unrest in El Salvador will not cease until the streets are cleaned from gangs and death squads. The Council should examine this issue and what it can bring about in detail.



#1 El Salvador and its neighboring states

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Guerilla warfare

Guerilla warfare is a type of warfare commonly associated with the hit-and-run tactic. In military strategy, the smaller, less-organized group to exhaust and economically damage and wear out the larger, more-organized group uses guerilla warfare.

Gang violence

Gang violence refers to all atrocities, attacks, killings and criminal activity a 'gang' is usually involved with.

Truce

A truce is a ceasefire between two or more groups in an active conflict for providing the sides with time to negotiate terms of ceasing the conflict.

The Mara

'Mara' is a type of gang formed in the United States whose members are predominantly from Central American countries. Most of the Mara members are deported back to their countries of origin, where they tend to form the native branch of the gang with their fellow deported gang members. This deportation process is credited as possibly the number one reason of the rise of gang violence in El Salvador.¹

The Salvadoran Civil War

The Salvadoran Civil War was sparked after decades of economic and social inequality and lasted for 13 years. The Civil War opened up many scars in the fabric of Salvadoran sociopolitical life and its effects still remain. The report will detail the events that led up to the Civil War.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Overview

El Salvador is a country that has been historically unequal economically, demographically and politically. In the earlier 19th century, the Salvadoran economy mainly consisted of agriculture and rural activities (mainly coffee bean exportation). However, only a small percent of the population really had access to these means and this resulted in the establishment of an oligarchic elite, which amassed most of the country's wealth. As the country ventured into the new, industrializing world of the 20th century, it failed to reform its means to production and most of its population continued to live outside large cities. The country was then struck with the Great Depression of 1929. The subsequent crash of the stock markets caused the coffee prices to drop and this led to the starving and deprivation of the rural population from basic provisions of life. The rural population, for the first time in El Salvador's history, rose to protest the economic inequality in the nation. The wealthy oligarchy, with little or no experience on demonstration management, responded to these rural protests with force. One example of this was the 1932 Salvadoran peasant massacre, in which the Salvadoran army killed about 20,000 peasant rebels

¹ «How the Street Gangs Took Central America», *Foreign Affairs*, Ana Arana.

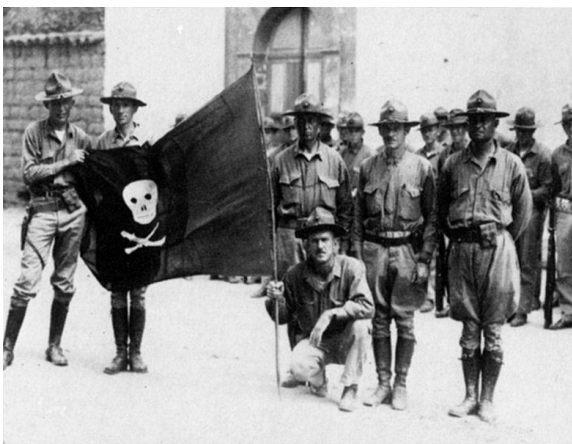
and members of the Communist Party of El Salvador. This repression of the then-Salvadoran government would only be a beginning to the many ruptures in the fabric of social order in El Salvador.



#2 "The Dead, during the peasant insurrection, Sonsonate, El Salvador, 1932."

Many years after the massacre, the country was plagued with social unrest and continued economic inequality. The rebel peasants who were crushed in the massacre managed to organize and form in leftist parties (such as the Socialist Party of El Salvador), demanding economic opportunity and agrarian reform. At this time, the government had formed a strong alliance with the strengthened army and with some regional powers like Nicaragua and the United States. They started programs aiming to arm certain groups of rural fighters; thus giving birth to the paramilitary 'death squads'. While not politically motivated, these death squads almost always took the side of the government (or in other words, the ones with the capital), and helped destroy peasant insurgencies. They were constantly provided with the latest weaponry and never went low on income. The escalating division of the society of El Salvador would later push the country into the hands of a bloody Civil War (1979-1992).

Geopolitical Events Leading Up To The Salvadoran Civil War



#3 «A flag captured by US troops from Augusto César Sandino's forces. 1932.», Wikimedia Commons. The picture is taken from the US invasion of Sandinista Nicaragua.

Up until the 1970s, Nicaragua was governed by a political dynasty known as the Somoza family. The family was closely related to the United States of America and the USA considered Nicaragua as a regional base. It is important to note here that the United States policy towards South America recognized the necessity of 'close relationships' and occasional involvement. As the United States was the main driving force of Western-style democracy and liberalism, it could not and would not strategically want to lose its neighboring continent to the socialist bloc. However, Nicaragua was the flag-bearer of the many

problems the US would face in the decade. The Somoza family was starting to lose control. Revolutionary guerrilla groups started to gain traction and the military did not seem as close to the dynasty as before. The Western Bloc realized that Nicaragua

was a lost cause. A country that gained their attention after this diversion was El Salvador. In El Salvador, leftist organizations were more organized than ever. This attention led to an encouragement of the Salvadoran government and on March 7th, 1980, the government declared a state of siege. An all-out war erupted between the guerrilla groups and popular organizations (including the Catholic Church -which later formally proposed an activist for the less economically advantaged to sainthood) and the paramilitary death squads and the Government.

The Salvadorian Civil War (1979-1992)



#4 A mural depicting the Sumpul Bay Massacre. Image by Rachel Heidenry. El Salvador, 2010.

A massacre occurred at the Sumpul Bay, undertaken by a joint operation of the Honduran and Salvadoran armies. 600 Salvadorans were reported to have died in the massacre. In 1980, the casualties of the Civil War rose to 10,000 Salvadorans and 12,000 in 1981. During that year, a politician called Jose Napoleon Duarte, the president of the junta, gave a political green light to the Salvadoran military. A foreign-backed elite group of the army, called the Atlacatl Battalion, participated in a military 'drill' that resulted in the deaths of over a thousand

civilians. The following months were plagued with bombing of rural communities under a tactic known as 'draining the sea'. The army used tactics from neighboring countries' internal conflicts and attacked countrysides. Amnesty International reported horrible treatment of the civilians during these operations, including decapitations and documented tortures². The death squads, further encouraged by recent military escalations, would go on to terrorize villages and countrysides and were later held responsible for assassinations of the leaders of popular fronts. Between 1982 and 1983, the government forces were directly held responsible for the deaths of 8,000 civilians a year³. The following years were home to sporadic massacres and regional fightings. In 1988, the FMLN, the leading guerrilla organization, provoked by the latest election results, launched a front that dragged the Civil War to the footsteps of wealthy neighborhoods for the first time in the war's history. They carried out assassinations of upper-class citizens, and the government responded by carrying on the operations. However, the war was slowly losing its traction. When the sides of the war became completely weary of the

² "Salvadoran air force taking bigger role in war" Associated Press, May 19, 1984.

³ Mason, T.D.; D.A. Krane (1989). "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror". *International Studies Quarterly*. 33 (2): 175–198.

consequences, they accepted a UN-brokered treaty to end the conflict. On 16 January 1992, the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords formally ended the 13-year old Civil War. However, this would only mark the beginning of a new dark chapter in the country's history.

Refugees of the Civil War

The Civil War left over a million citizens homeless in a country that had a population of 6 million. Civilians sought refuge overseas, in neighbouring countries like Nicaragua, Honduras and Mexico. However, the largest influx of refugees was met by the United States. Half a million Salvadorans had immigrated to the United States, and the southern states, especially in California and New Mexico. This mass immigration from El Salvador left the Immigration Office baffled and the US had to reject many of the applicants seeking legal immigration. This subsequently led to a huge number of Salvadoran refugees to enter the country through illegal means, mostly crossing through Mexico and/or using naval routes. This leads us to the formation of some Major Parties Involved.

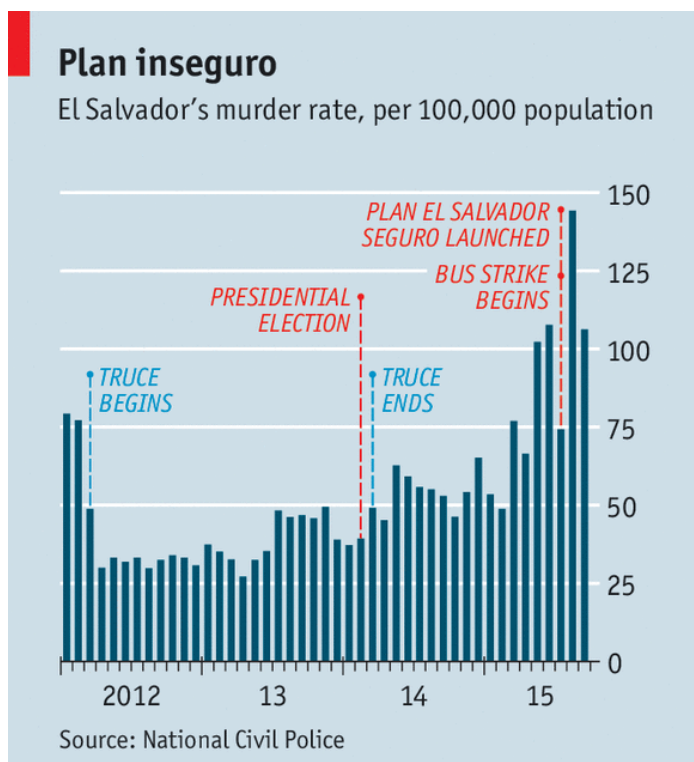
MS-13

The Salvadoran immigrants, especially the ones that entered the country illegally, had hard times finding jobs and adapting to the new lifestyle. They mostly resided in the city of Los Angeles where they were concentrated in the Pico-Union neighborhood. Now at the time, Los Angeles and neighbourhoods surrounding Pico-Union were home to many other gangs. These gangs harassed the Salvadoran immigrants, usually threatening them and their families if they didn't pay them monthly debt. And according to the classic interpretation of events, that's how MS-13 was born - to protect Salvadoran immigrants. MS-13 is one of the two Salvadoran gangs that we are going to discuss thoroughly in the debates; the other being the 18th Street gang, or Calle 18.

18th Street

18th Street was not born organically for Salvadorans, but rather started out as a part of a local gang in Los Angeles called Clanton 14. In time, as Hispanics started joining the gang, some prominent gang leaders wanted to form a separate barrio called 'Clanton 18th Street'. Gang authorities ultimately rejected this, and Hispanics separated from the Clanton gang to form Calle 18 (dies y ocho). Calle 18 was primarily a gang of Mexican immigrants, but as it expanded it started accepting members from Central America, including El Salvador. 18th Street is not a Salvadoran-dominant gang as much as MS-13, but the problem lies with the measure the US has taken to combat this gang: deportation.

Current Situation: Gang Violence



Economist.com

#5 Crime Graph

The current level of gang violence in El Salvador is at an all-time high, and it has especially peaked after the gang truce of 2012, which was negotiated between the gangs and the government by a former guerilla of the civil war, Raul Mijango. At this moment, 11% of all Salvadorans are connected to gangs one way or another, and the public opinion on gangs is constantly changing. Some Salvadorans accept an absolute response, and perceive the gangs as natural and benign byproducts of social divisiveness. Others disagree and support choosing the hardline choice. Currently, the government and army apply the second narrative, and have been shutting down channels of dialogue since the end of

the truce. The government has recently passed a law branding the gangs 'terrorist organizations'. A police officer called Jose Luis Sanz has given an interview to Vice News channel, in which he stated the structure of police 'death squads', whose main duty is to bring about an end to the gangs through instantaneous violence.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Salvadoran Army

The Salvadoran Army has historically had a very important part to play in the country's internal affairs. The army continues to fiercely battle the street gangs. The army leadership is committed to the government's Super Iron Fist policy (which preaches non-rehabilitation rhetoric and immediate response), and believes a peaceful solution is not viable. The army has consistently expressed criticism of the Gang Truce that was negotiated between the gangs and the government, blaming the truce for the strengthening of gangs in the years following 2012. Considering its influence over the policymaking process, the army is the foremost mechanism that will appear to block further negotiations.

Salvadoran Government

The Salvadorian government is currently held by the FMLN party, and holds low approval ratings among the Salvadorians. However, they still enjoy large amounts of support from neighborhoods that are severely damaged by the gangs. Former guerilla groups are still in support of the FMLN government, and the alliance is not likely to fall. The government’s current stance is pro-Super Mano Duro and anti-truce.

United States of America

The United States has been involved with the situations leading up to the Civil War and also following the war. With the Trump administration, deportations of gang members back to El Salvador have been increased. If a certain solution is to be brought to street crime in El Salvador, it must be done along with the United States. Unilateral solution attempts are likely to fail.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1980	Military Junta is formed. Archbishop Oscar Romero is assassinated. FMLN is formed of several guerilla organizations. Ronald Reagan is elected to be the President of the United States.
1981	FMLN starts military operations across the country.
1984	Napoleon Duarte becomes president from the Christian Democrat party. Peace talks begin with incentives from the United States.
1986	Peace talks fall apart. Far-right ARENA increases in power.
1989	The FMLN forces carry out assassinations of top-level government officials.
1990	UN becomes involved and initiates peace talks.
1992	Official end of the internal conflict.
2007	21 inmates are killed in a high-security prison, which was previously subject to criticism due to over-incarceration. Three ARENA members are killed in what was seen as the first indication of syndicated crime in the country.
2009	Mauricio Funes is elected president from the FMLN party.

2010	Street gangs murder fourteen civilians in an attack to public transportation lines.
2012	The government initiates a 'gang truce' with the street gangs, negotiated by the former guerilla Raul Mijango.
2013	The Salvadoran military abandons the gang truce due to complaints from army generals citing gang militarization.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS AND TREATIES

Resolution 991 (1995)

UN Security Council Resolution which terminated the operations of Human Rights Division of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador.

Resolution 714 (1991)

The resolution congratulates the signing of the New York Agreement between the Salvadoran government and FMLN forces. The Peace Accords would later succeed this.

UNDP in El Salvador (2013) – Spanish

Diagnostics report on underdevelopment in El Salvador.

Chapultepec Agreement (1992)

“This comprehensive agreement concluded the peace process in El Salvador. It deals with the comprehensive reform of the armed forces, civilian police, justice system, electoral system, economic and social arrangements as well as land and property issues. The agreement also includes provisions for the political participation of the FMLN and for a final ceasefire with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the armed groups.”⁴

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

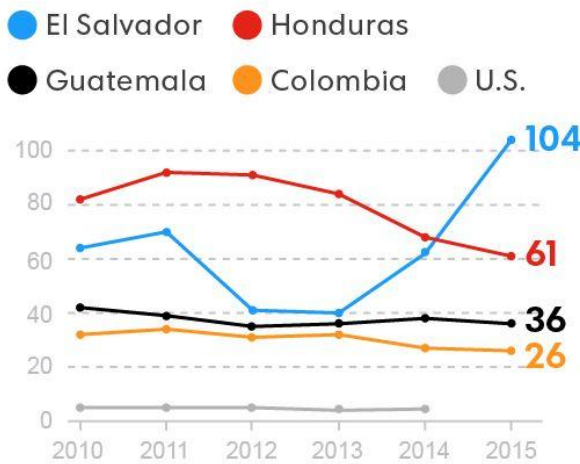
The government of El Salvador has tried many different ways to combat gang activity and street crime. It is suitable to start off by understanding how 'gang activity' exactly started in El Salvador. As MS-13 and Calle 18 members began their street activity in the US, authorities decided that it would be suitable as a punishment for the members to be deported back to El Salvador. These members

⁴ UN Peacemaker, <https://peacemaker.un.org/elsalvador-chapultepec92>

were not charged with criminal activity in El Salvador, so after being deported the gang members were set off to streets. Subsequently, as the deportees started rounding up in certain neighborhoods in El Salvador, MS-13 and Calle 18 were organically carried to the country. Their home country branches soon began to grow in a much more rapid pattern compared to the one in Los Angeles. This was because of the fact that gangs brought more advanced street techniques and strategies with them from the US. For the first time in a Latin American country, a gang had seized

HOMICIDES SOAR IN EL SALVADOR

As homicide rates fell in other Central American countries, El Salvador saw a dramatic increase last year in deadly violence. Homicide rates per 100,000 people:



Note: Data for the U.S. in 2015 has not been finalized by the FBI. SOURCE: World Bank, FBI, U.S. State Department, Associated Press, AFP, Colombia Reports.

Veronica Bravo, USA TODAY



#6 Homicides soar in El Salvador

Then, the newly-elected government of FMLN (the former-guerilla-group-turned-political party) decided that peaceful means could be the only way this issue could be solved and spent 4 to 5 years trying to broker a deal with the gangs. A former guerrilla, Raúl Mijango was the main “brokerer” of this deal between the gangs and subsequently the government. However, this gang truce failed in 2012 when the army decided that the gangs were secretly piling up support and simply using the ceasefire as a way to regain power. Hence it decided to conduct large-scaled operations.

Ever since then, the government has been applying the Super Mano Duro policy, or the Super Iron Fist, allowing the army to fight the gangs in a full-fledged street war. The gangs continue to exist in El Salvador up to this day, however this does not mean that these attempts were unwise and that they failed. Some of their effects could not be implemented in the country (like the gang truce), and some of them may just be getting started (the Super Mano Duro).

complete control (or authority) over multiple neighborhoods, sometimes even entire medium-sized cities (like Usulután). The Salvadorian government soon noticed this, and was baffled on how to combat.

They first resorted to solving the matter through police control, but the police were met with backfire from the gangs when they tried to enter neighborhoods. Gangs had their own surveillance systems through common folk, and police was unable to combat them with a more advanced intelligence system.

Then, the newly-elected government of FMLN (the former-guerilla-group-turned-political

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The government is applying the eye-for-an-eye policy and this is a language well understood by gangs. 11% of Salvadorians are one way or another connected to gangs. The deported Salvadorians continue their gang activity way harsher in El Salvador, sometimes to encourage younger family members to join gangs. Gangs recruit children and teens to commit them to the gang earlier on. Most of top gang leaders are arrested, and since they were moved to high security prisons they can't give orders to the gangs. This results in gangs going out of control and not contained in barrios (cells). 'Gangs are a unit, a reaction - a means to survival.'

How can the Security Council address each of these underlying problems, along with the main problem being street crime?

As bilateral attempts for negotiation have failed, mediators can help produce 'sets of principles' other than 'truces'. A set of principles is usually a manifesto or a declaration of means to combat or disarm. Considering both sides' principles, mediators usually form 'stipulations' (commonly accepted principles) and present it to the sides.

It is an idea that gang violence is a temporary side effect of a developing country's path to progress. It is possible to argue that a war lasting more than a single decade will have effects on a country's future. This is not to say that gang violence should not be dealt with, but to present a viewpoint that considers gang violence to be a side effect of a drug, not a symptom of a disease.

Gangs will cease when the Salvadorians cease their support of them. If you cut the source of energy to the gangs, which is communal support, then the gangs will have trouble finding new members and will eventually dry out. The entire measure can be boiled down to finding ways to divert the Salvadorian people from the gangs. A good way to start is to prevent social mobilization in specific neighborhoods and end the financial need for gangs.

Protecting the youth and teens from joining the gangs is perhaps the most vital need, as they are the ones most prone to violence. The government can ensure controlled communication between arrested gang leaders and members.

The deportation process could be made more 'bureaucratized', making sure that back home, the deported gang criminals don't get to join the gangs once again in their home countries.

Restructuring of cities and rural areas might be needed to weaken the gangs' 'focus points' and headquarters. For example, a safe house cannot be far away from the HQ of a gang.

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