



The United Nations
Security Council, 1980

UNSC

MUNUC 35

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

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CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Security Council for MUNUC 35!

My name is Marce Sanchez and I'm so excited to be your chair for UNSC at MUNUC 35. I'm a fourth year majoring in Global Studies. It will be my second time serving as an executive after having been an AC at MUNUC 32 for the Economic Community of West African States, an EAC at MUNUC 33 for the National American Women's Suffrage Association, and a moderator for the Security Council at MUNUC 34. In my spare time, I'm a tutor for New Americans, a Junior Admissions Counselor with the Admissions Office, and a Program Assistant for the Collegiate Scholars Program within the Office of Civic Engagement.

I'm so excited to bring fresh Security Council perspectives to the Salvadoran Civil War. This will be the first time in three years that the Security Council at MUNUC will be focusing on Central America, and we hope that this allows delegates to come up with creative solutions that will support cooperation between international powers. As your chair I hope to guide debate in a manner that produces thoughtful content and creates solutions. From the dais I will also be sure to navigate smoothly between the general assembly and crisis portions of the committee and ensure all delegates are keeping up with the pace of the committee.

That being said, several issues in the region are extremely sensitive and should be handled with the utmost respect and empathy. It is easy to feel distant and disconnected from these conflicts, but I urge you to stop and think about the trauma that comes with civil war and how to address it with the respect it deserves. Juliet, Nyah, and I have high expectations for all delegates in this committee and we have outlined them in the *Reminder From the Dais* that directly follows our letters.

With all of this said, I want this weekend to be fun and filled with great memories and great learning. If you have any questions, concerns, want to chat about biological research or your favorite sitcom don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to meeting you all and having an incredible weekend!

Best,

Marce Sanchez

marcelasanchez@uchicago.edu

CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTERS

Hello Delegates –

Welcome to the United Nations Security Council of MUNUC 35!

My name is Juliet Goswami, and I look forward to meeting you this February as your crisis director (in person!). I am a fourth-year at the University of Chicago with a major in Public Policy Studies and a minor in Computer Science. I have been the crisis director for MUNUC's UNSC for the past two years, and was an AC on the same committee three years ago (can't teach an old dog new tricks, I suppose). Before coming to UChicago, I competed as a delegate for seven years. I also research for an undergraduate think tank, focusing on urban and housing policy particularly in Chicago, and work with a pro-bono political consulting group. I usually spend my free time watching Youtube cooking videos and telling people that I will definitely check out that TV show they're talking about before rewatching *Russian Doll* for the fourteenth time.

I look forward to hearing your ideas surrounding the Salvadoran Civil War. While the topic is the context for many of the socioeconomic and geopolitical conflicts today, the UN intervention is seen as one of its first success stories after the Cold War, and its role in the Civil War is rather uncritically studied. We hope that you will look at the conflict in its whole, rather than just its end, and think of innovative ideas addressing it that still correspond to your blocs. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the history of the war and to be prepared with possible solutions. Truly understanding the motivations of the actors involved will help you come into the conference armed with fresh, constructive solutions to combat these conflicts. We recognize that this is a difficult task, but we believe that with hindsight, hard work, and creativity, you will all be well-prepared for this topic.

As your crisis directors, Nyah and I plan to facilitate a weekend of enriching, entertaining debate and resolution and directive writing. The structure of this committee will contain continuous crisis elements in most sessions with the goal of writing a resolution that addresses the topic in the

background guide. Given the nature of the Salvadoran conflict, Marce, Nyah, and I expect all of our delegates to read and fully understand the background guide's *Reminder from the Dais*.

Please reach out if you have any questions about the committee. I am very excited to meet you for a fun and educational weekend!

Best,

Juliet

jgoswami@uchicago.edu

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Security Council of MUNUC 35!

My name is Nyah DeValle, and I cannot wait to meet all of you this February as your crisis director! I am a fourth-year at the University of Chicago. I am majoring in Global Studies and minoring in Human Rights and French. For the past three years at UChicago I have been an assistant chair, moderator, and crisis director for MUNUC's UNSC. Outside of MUNUC, I have worked for nonprofits such as AllChicago, Every Voice Coalition, City Year, all of which have an emphasis on a certain aspect of human rights. I am also a tour guide for the University, so I know some pretty interesting facts about UChicago if you are interested in knowing them. In my freetime, I like to bake, watch any of the new netflix reality shows that are slowly melting my brain, and try to keep my many plants alive (I will become a plant mom if I try hard enough)!

I am very interested in hearing about your perspectives on the topic of the Salvadoran Civil War. Many conflicts that El Salvador is facing today can be traced back to this civil war and its causes. This includes ongoing economic and social inequality issues, and suffering continues today as a result of the war. To be most prepared for the UNSC it is best to familiarize yourself with the history of the war, the UN's (and particularly the Security Council's) role in it, and to come prepared with alternative solutions. We recognize that this is a difficult task, especially with the many complicated interests of the members of the UNSC and international community during the actual Salvadoran Civil War. However, we believe that you will all be well-prepared for this topic by thinking creatively and researching alternate opportunities.

As your crisis directors, Juliet and I will plan to facilitate a weekend of enriching, entertaining debate and resolution and directive writing. We are working with the goal of you leaving with a feeling of accomplishment within the committee. We also want you to have learned more than what you started with as well as have fun on a professional level. The structure of this committee will contain continuous crisis elements in every session with the goal of writing a resolution that addresses the topic in the background guide. Given the nature of the Salvadoran conflict, Marce, Juliet, and I expect all of our delegates to read and fully understand the background guide's *Reminder from the Dais*.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns about the committee. You can reach me at devallenyah@uchicago.edu.

I am very much looking forward to meeting you and having a fun, educational weekend!

Best,

Nyah

REMINDER FROM THE DAIS

Delegates, it is easy to remove ourselves from the historical horrors that unfolded in El Salvador. In this committee and throughout the background guide we will discuss the conflict in clinical, diplomatic terms. At some point these discussions can feel impersonal. It is difficult to imagine the extent of even one family's trauma that has compounded over decades, and even more difficult to do so in a way that respects their suffering.

In some ways, we are asking the impossible of you. We are asking for your compassion and objectivity--for both the humanity to grieve with those suffering and the detachment to analyze their political systems critically. In this committee we ask that you only focus on concrete solutions, while in our hearts, we constantly weigh the impact of these solutions. It is a balance that even seasoned diplomats struggle with - as evidenced by the contemporary Security Council's own lackluster response to the Salvadoran Civil War - and yet this dais will expect it of you in every speech that you give and clause that you write. We hold you to this standard because we believe you are capable of it. Year after year, we have been astonished by your maturity, your creativity, and your humanity in addressing problems that have baffled the international community for decades. This MUNUC conference, we ask you to direct that humanity to this war and its compounding humanitarian conflicts that spilled over the region.

This means two things. First, it means that we expect the highest level of respect in discussing this issue. Debate on how to deal with violence and how to best provide assistance and refuge to those affected by it, will be welcomed. Taking advantage of crimes against humanity in committee or crisis, on the other hand, will not be tolerated by the dais. Second, it means that if at any point this weekend, you want to talk about the Salvadoran Civil War in a context removed from Model UN, competition, and the Hyatt, you need only ask. Above everything, this weekend is an opportunity for you to grow as citizens of the world: to acknowledge but never accept the unspeakable horrors that have confronted students just like us, half a world and half a century away.

While the dais will focus on analysis and facts for the rest of this background guide, we sincerely hope you pause every so often to allow yourself to digest and come to terms with the situation. Your

dais is here to support you in any way we can; we will always be available over email for whatever questions or concerns you may have ahead of the conference.

Best,

Marce Sanchez

Juliet Goswami

Nyah DeValle

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

Introduction

At its best, Model United Nations is a simulation that may not be highly realistic, but nonetheless is a critical learning experience for all those involved. Juliet, Nyah, and Marce hope that every delegate in this committee walks away with a meaningful understanding of the contradicting mandates that diplomats can face; the struggle of balancing multiple perspectives in policy; how to maximize payoff for all parties while minimizing damages, future tensions, and unintended consequences—we have the benefit of hindsight, and we can see the effects of this war and the Security Council's fix of it thirty years later, but as such, any action (or inaction) you take must account for all of these issues. From this simulation, we hope delegates will learn to question all sides of an issue and critically examine the underlying reasons for a country's and the Council's policy. Additionally, delegates should focus on how to balance both the macro-impacts of international policy with the micro-level consequences that real people will face as a result. Lastly, we hope that the committee recognizes that there are no correct solutions and there are no final solutions. Hindsight can only get you so far; international policy is a difficult realm that requires solutions that continue to evolve to fit the needs of the situation.

Single Topic

The UNSC at MUNUC 35 will cover only one topic: the historical conflict of the Salvadoran Civil War. The rest of this background guide will cover several subtopics pertaining to the lead-up to the war and the internal and external tensions surrounding it, but it will not delve into another topic. As executives, we hope that only having one topic will encourage delegates to thoroughly research all sides of the issue, with little question of what will be debated once you enter the committee room. Delegates should come into the committee prepared to discuss all subtopics covered in the background guide as there is no ambiguity about what the committee will cover.

Position Papers

This year the UNSC will continue its unique structure for position papers. Rather than the usual several paragraphs that provide a general outline of the problems of the committee and a brief overview of the country solutions, Juliet, Nyah, and Marce ask that delegates submit position papers that are simple bulleted lists of possible solutions that they think their country would support on the issue of the different points of the conflict; consider potential solutions that would prevent the outbreak of the war, and also consider solutions to the humanitarian, geopolitical, and ideological fallout from a civil war in El Salvador. We feel this is the best way to ensure that all delegates enter the committee with flexible solutions that they can use in the paper writing and debate process, without relying too heavily on one solution or stance. Delegates who submit positions papers by the week before conference will receive emails from Juliet, Nyah, and Marce containing brief feedback on their solutions, either telling them this would be appropriate and should be further expanded upon in committee or receiving constructive criticism that will allow them to retool their possible solutions before coming into committee. Please ensure that you do not simply restate the *Bloc Positions* section of this background guide - for your sake!

Resolution Elements

The resolution-side of this committee will simulate policy-making in the UNSC: the careful, calculated process by which resolutions are proposed and adopted or struck down. There are two main skills that we will simulate: debate during the creation of these policies and lobbying for those policies once they have been decided.

Speeches simulate the debate surrounding the creation of each policy considered by the UNSC. Generally speaking, there are two types of effective speeches in this committee. The first is meant to broadcast your country's position on a topic. The second is meant to critique another country's policies. Policy speeches explain how the policy you are advocating for should be implemented, and why it is necessary to solve the problem at hand. Ideally, the policies in these speeches are feasible, relevant, and leave the world and your country better off. Proposing a policy of this caliber requires carefully researching case studies and similar policies, with particular emphasis on how those approaches can be tweaked to maximize impact in the current situation.

The second type of speech opposes a policy proposed in a speech. The best critical speeches are direct, but respectful. Clearly stating a pitfall with a solution will not be perceived by the dais as hostile, unless those pitfalls are conveyed in a manner that is disrespectful. No delegate will walk into the committee room on Thursday with a perfect solution. This means that every policy proposed will be workshopped and debated. We will argue over whether one consequence is less significant than another, and for the sake of time and clarity, those arguments should be concise and clear. Critical speeches are the main way in which this debate happens, and as long as criticisms are grounded in country policy, research, and respect, this dais will encourage them.

A speech that is dramatic or flashy but doesn't actually keep people's attention, won't serve the purpose of the speech. Likewise, a speech that is full of content, but misses the pulse of the debate also fails to shape the direction of the room. *Whatever your style of speaking, you should be able to shape the discussion in the room to your advantage.* But these are generalizations. Debate in the committee room is a conversation, and conversations don't always happen in a stiff, two-sided back and forth. There is always room for style and thoughtful comments, whatever form those might take. This dais will listen to every word you say, and consider it in terms of your sincerity, research,

verve and understanding of the flow of debate in the room. Our dais always takes brief notes of your speeches, so please ask us for feedback! We are here to help you develop your speaking skills.

Resolutions, as you can read from the MUNUC delegate training resources, as well as learn if you attend the pre-conference MUNUC training sessions, are often the culmination of a conference. They are the committee's response to the challenges it faces, and the combined solutions of multiple policy proposals that have been debated and negotiated over throughout the conference. UNSC resolutions, in particular, should focus on directly addressing the Salvadoran Civil War, with the secondary (but still crucially important) concern of mitigating future problems that might arise in the region.

Crisis Elements

If the resolution process is meant to simulate the creation of policies, the crisis elements in this committee will simulate real-life reactions to those policies. Delegates who have never competed in crisis committees should come prepared to learn and have fun interacting with a much more dynamic type of Model United Nations than is found in traditional GA committees. Delegates who have done crisis committees before should throw out everything they think they know about this style of committee; the UNSC demands a unique style of crisis that strikes a different tone than most crisis committees on the high school circuit.

Crisis in MUNUC's UNSC involves taking policies that are being considered in the room and simulating what the real-life reactions would be to those policies. For situations as complicated and as delicate as those debated in UNSC resolutions, every policy, no matter the scale or subject matter, has a definite and immediate impact on the ground. The decision to send food aid to an unstable region might prompt a cascade of effects that result in the completely unintended consequence of injury to peacekeepers and aid workers as well as the continued starvation of the intended recipients of the food aid. In the UNSC, crisis forces delegates to confront the consequences of their actions, and realize that there is never a correct answer or a policy that is one hundred percent beneficial. Instead, crisis elements map out the myriad of consequences stemming from a single word, in a single clause, of just one resolution. Succeeding in crisis means strategically choosing and enacting the set of consequences that is most beneficial to your country and the situation that was on the ground in El Salvador in the 1980s.

On a less abstract level, crisis in the UNSC at MUNUC 35 will occur in stages. In the first stage, the crisis directors will accept resource building notes. In these notes, delegates may write to the backroom, asking for clarification on their country's current assets in the region that are relevant to the Salvadoran Civil War, and write to build resources that will help them further their country's goals. During this stage delegates should also feel free to write to the crisis directors and clarify their country's policies in the region.

Examples of valuable resources include media capabilities, connections with local political parties, food aid, troops that are familiar with the region's geography, ties to the government, etc. By no

means is that an exhaustive list. The best crisis delegates are those who take novel, creative approaches in building influence and power in a region. In resource notes, delegates will request resources that will be approved or denied by the crisis staff based on their feasibility, realism, and research into what types of resources would reasonably be available to their countries. The dais recommends having a goal in mind when asking for each resource; delegates should be able to answer the following questions when writing each resource note:

1. Why does my country need this resource now?
2. What goals are served by acquiring this resource?
3. Is it reasonable for my country to have the means to acquire this resource? Are there any resources that must be established first, before it is possible to acquire this resource?

If you can, answer all of these questions preemptively in the note. The backroom will ask your intentions with every note when not provided justification - this is to help both us and you!

Once delegates are familiar with writing resource notes, and each country has established resources, crisis will move on to the execution stage. At this point, delegates may use their resources to execute actions that affect the committee. The goal of an execution note is to meaningfully change the situation that the committee is grappling with. In the case of MUNUC 35's UNSC, that means affecting the conflict in El Salvador. We expect you all to think through the potential fallout from your execution notes, as these may affect the front room, where you and your fellow delegates are still crafting solutions.

There are a variety of actions that are appropriate for the committee; we expect delegates to impress us with their creativity and effectiveness in shaping the conflict, and wresting power from each other and from the crisis staff. However, under no circumstances will any action that leads to, encourages, or implies gender violence, racism, ethnic cleansing, or violations of human rights be tolerated. Juliet, Nyah, and Marce believe that creating change or gathering power does not necessitate atrocities or actions that you would be ashamed to debate in a history class. In fact, much of your job in this committee is to avoid the atrocities that occurred in reality.

Some execution notes result in crisis updates, where the delegate's actions during crisis sessions are so relevant and directly related to committee that they are introduced into the committee for debate by the crisis directors. Those execution notes then become crisis breaks that the committee then attempts to address alongside the standard set of problems plaguing the Salvadoran Civil War. Crisis breaks are manifestations of a delegate's crisis notes in the committee room; they often alter the circumstances which the committee is operating under to solve the problem, or change the problem entirely. In the context of MUNUC, crisis breaks serve to help delegates understand the impact of their actions on the world in real-time.

The UNSC can take action on crisis breaks through directives, which are short (one or two pages-long) sets of operative clauses that directly address the crisis update at hand. Similar to resolutions, directives attempt to solve the problems brought up in the crisis update, but unlike resolutions, they have neither preambulatory clauses nor specific solutions to the long-term problems outlined in this background guide. Directives are intended as targeted actions for the UNSC to take in response to an emergency created by the crisis update.

Juliet, Nyah, and Marce have mapped this transition from resource building notes to full execution notes so that delegates can engage in crisis regardless of experience. Hopefully, the lessons learned in crisis regarding the perils of careless policy-making translate into resolution-writing.

Timeline

Regarding the timeline of committee, this committee will see sessions with just a resolution element, just a crisis element, and combinations of the two. However, the sessions will follow chronologically, beginning in 1980 after the civilian-military coup in October 1979, and the ousting of civilian leaders from the subsequent junta, and continuing sequentially through the assassination of Archbishop Romero and the resulting civil war. Delegates should be prepared to build blocks and debate policies on Thursday, and acquire crisis skills leading up through Friday. Rather than the slow build to crisis of the past, the committee will flip between General Assembly and crisis each session. Sessions I, III, and V will be General Assembly (with some note runs at the dais's discretion) while Sessions II and IV will be purely crisis. We look forward to meeting each of you, and can't wait to see what direction the committee moves in! For a full outline of the UNSC's daily timeline, please refer to the UNSC page under "committees" on the MUNUC 35 website.

TOPIC: SALVADORAN CIVIL WAR

Statement of the Problem

Historical Pretext

Socioeconomic Disparity

As previously established in the *History of the Problem*, extreme socioeconomic inequality characterized Salvadoran society from its very conception. "An analysis of the class structure in 1930 suggests the concentration of wealth categorized 0.2 percent of the population as upper class ... The vast majority [of the population] was rural. Yet, only 8.2 percent could be classified as landowners"¹. By 1981, the upper class "constituted approximately 2 percent of the population ... [but] owned 60 percent of the nation's productive land."² These elites tended to live in the cities, usually San Salvador, and left the administration of their land to hired managers.

The lower class was mostly composed of agriculture workers and the unemployed. A majority of Salvadorans lived in rural parts of the country and almost never owned their own land. The workers themselves were divided into three distinct categories: "as full-time estate workers (*colonos*), others owning or more likely renting (*arrendatarios*) small plots of marginal land, and many, both those with small plots of land and the vast number who were landless, as seasonal wage laborers or unemployed"³. While still overworked and underpaid, *colonos* enjoyed the privilege of steady work and the ability to politically organize. Because of growing social unrest among workers, increased mechanization in agribusiness, and the expansion of sugar and cotton production, "large estate owners preferred wherever possible to increase the use of seasonal rather than permanent workers

¹ The modernization of underdevelopment: El Salvador, 1858-1931 - uvm.edu. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.uvm.edu/rsenr/rm230/burns.pdf>

² El Salvador - the 1970s: The road to revolt. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/12.htm>

³ El Salvador - the 1970s: The road to revolt. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/12.htm>

... By 1980 an estimated 65 percent of the rural population was landless and dependent on wage employment” and a full thirty percent could only find work for a few months of the year.

Since independence, the military had offered one of the only options for socioeconomic mobility in El Salvador. Most of the rural poor who joined the military remained conscripts, but had access to enough food and some extra spending money. For those who joined from the small Salvadoran middle class, there was hope of becoming high-ranking officers. The main purpose of the military was to protect the interests of the landowning upper class, but the humble origins of much of its corps meant that the elite held the military at arm's length. A select few were accepted into *criollos* ranks, but most presidents and political leaders were retired military, both before and during the age of the military juntas. Still, other retired military officers joined the elite economic structure as managers of financial institutions, estates, and retail companies.

1969 War with Honduras

As the numbers of seasonal wage workers in El Salvador swelled in the 20th century, many began to cross the border into “Honduras to take advantage of the more available farmland, and to work for the US fruit companies which operated in the country. Roughly 300,000 were living in the neighbouring state by [1969]”.⁴ While this migration was encouraged by the Salvadoran elite to ease the social pressure for agrarian land reform, Honduran farmer peasants deeply resented the competition. Given other territorial disputes, tensions between the countries were skyrocketing by the June 1969 soccer match. El Salvador eked out a win the day after the countries cut diplomatic ties; within the next few days, border skirmishes gave way to the Salvadoran invasion of Honduras. Within a couple of weeks, there was a ceasefire, and under international pressure, Salvadoran troops withdrew that August: 3,000 Hondurans were killed, the Salvadoran military grew in strength, “Trade ceased between both nations for decades and the border was closed” – that is, a majority of the estimated 300,000 displaced Salvadorans were those expelled from Honduras. This influx was too disproportionately high to El Salvador’s 1969 population of roughly 3.6 million.

⁴ Luckhurst, T. (2019, June 26). Honduras v El Salvador: The football match that kicked off a war. BBC News. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-48673853>

Illegitimate Elections Keep PCN in Power

In the 1972 elections, the military-backed PCN appeared victorious over Duarte's National Opposing Union (UNO, the successor to PDC) in the popular vote after obvious ballot-stuffing. Both left and right-wing groups opposed the PCN's win, and the left-wing Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL) began small-scale guerrilla operations. PCN attempted to enact land reform measures that were easily struck down by the elite as food prices soared, exports declined, and general economic disparity increased.

In 1977, similar election tampering occurred to ensure a PCN win. State-sponsored paramilitary groups reportedly physically intimidated voters into voting for General Carlos Humberto Romero. Before Romero's swearing-in, massive protests swept through the country; on February 28, 1977, security forces killed anywhere from 200 to 1,500 demonstrators and bystanders indiscriminately. Romero seized this moment to exile many powerful UNO leaders.

Repression under Romero

Romero almost immediately suspended civil liberties. The oligarch funded "death squads," initially autonomous and some being established in the 1960s, to "assassinate 'subversives' in an effort to discourage further anti-government activities and to deter potential expansion of the ranks of the mass organizations and other protest groups."⁵ The groups were organized under the National Democratic Organization (ORDEN), part of the Salvadoran government. UNO/PDC recruited many of its members from "politicized Bible study and self-help groups" – as such, ORDEN guerilla's targets controversially included clergy members and politically-unaffiliated attendees. When the Catholic church denounced these groups, ORDEN groups responded by purposely targeting clergy more often. Thousands of academics, students, and union leaders were suspected of opposing PCN and were summarily killed following the 1977 elections.

⁵ El Salvador - the 1970s: The road to revolt. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/12.htm>

1979-1981

1979 Coup d'Etat

Instability permeated every aspect of Salvadoran life: guerilla groups, supporting the government and UNO, targeted rivals and potential economic resources of their respective enemies; agrarian land reforms continued to fail due to the power of the economic elites and the economic gap widened between the wealthy and the poor farmers; unemployment soared, agrarian productivity diminished, and export prices skyrocketed. As these tensions threatened to choke El Salvador, the US-backed, center-left civil-military Revolutionary Government Junta (JRG) deposed Romero in October of 1979. The local clergy cautiously endorsed the new junta when it almost immediately dissolved ORDEN and promised meaningful reforms. However, the new regime still used its own death squads to enact its own extrajudicial tortures, kidnappings, and killings. The civilian members of the junta resigned within the first few months; the junta enacted sweeping land reforms, but the elite responded with equal intensity. Many killed their own livestock and moved their farming equipment across the Guatemalan border to other lands they owned.

JRG: An Improvement, or Trading One Oppressor for Another?

Militant left-wing groups that grew in the previous five years joined forces under the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in 1980 to counter the JRG; its cobbled-together army ranged from young students to elderly campesinos. The new government utilized both the military and its death squads to repress these groups but often targeted civilians as well in an effort to root out any rebellion. While it became increasingly dangerous to oppose the government even verbally, many began to express their opposition through protests, guerilla forces, or support for the two. Campesinos in particular joined these causes, often for religious, ideological, and/or material reasons. Such organizations targeted both the government and the landowning elite, given their class-specific injustices.



Figure 1: ERP Combatants⁶



Figure 2: ERP Combatants from Perquín⁷

⁶ Linda Hess Miller, *Español: Combatientes Del ERP En El Norte de Morazán, En Perquín 1990* English: *ERP Combatants in Perquín, El Salvador in 1990*, July 1990, July 1990, <http://www.lindahessmiller.com/coppermine/displayimage.php?album=167&pid=9856>, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ERP_combatants_Perqu%C3%ADn_1990_00.jpg.

⁷ Ibid.

We will be beginning our committee action at this flashpoint. The regional conflict is at the brink of exploding into a war, but it has not begun yet. The UNSC is still in the position of managing humanitarian crises and enacting policies that will either prevent or mitigate this conflict.

Remember, Chapter VII of the UN charter allows the UNSC to intervene when “there is a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression.”⁸ The job of this committee is to mitigate and/or resolve these conflicts without offending the sovereignty of El Salvador and the surrounding countries. These are some considerations that the UNSC must take into account when choosing whether or not to enter this conflict.

Confidence in Elections

Some of this conflict stemmed from the flagrant election tampering in 1972 and 1977. These concerns included blocking candidates from ballots, stuffing voter rolls, and voter intimidation. In fact, in 1977, the PCN government enforced a three-day media blackout when it appeared UNO was about to win; when the restrictions were lifted, the clearly doctored results showed PCN with the lead. While UN election monitoring was not officially sanctioned by the UN until 1991, participation rates of outside organizations picked up in the 1960s upon the countries’ request for election observers that could either validate or reveal problems with election processes.⁹ However, this requires the invitation of the UN observers by the country itself, and some amount of cooperation with local election administrators.

⁸ United Nations Charter. Chapter VII: “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression.

⁹ How international actors help enforce domestic deals | annual review of ... (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-033504>



Figure 3: Salvadoran Farmers¹⁰

Humanitarian Crises: Extreme Poverty

By this point, millions of Salvadorans were out of work and/or living in extreme poverty. Up to 45% of the population was unemployed and 41% of the population was landless in 1971, numbers which would only increase as the global price of coffee dropped¹¹. The country had failed to accommodate the influx of its own citizens who had been expelled from Honduras during the Football War. In the late 1970s, large swaths of northern and central El Salvador were cleared by the military so that they could target the guerilla groups¹². Increasing numbers of homes did not have potable and/or running water, electricity, and sanitary services. Internal displacement, poverty, and malnutrition rates will only increase as the Civil War unfolds. Remember, the UNSC has to be careful in its actions such that

¹⁰ Gary Mark Smith, *A Casualty of the Salvadoran Civil War Is Carried Back to His Farm for Burial* (1982). Photo by Gary Mark Smith., 1982, 1982, [www.streetphoto.com, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_Salvador_Back_to_the_Farm.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_Salvador_Back_to_the_Farm.png).

¹¹ El Salvador: Civil War, natural disasters, and gang violence drive migration - El Salvador. ReliefWeb. (2018, August 29). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/el-salvador/el-salvador-civil-war-natural-disasters-and-gang-violence-drive-migration>

¹² Displaced persons and human rights: The crisis in El Salvador - Jstor Home. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3338599>

they are not interpreted as violations of national sovereignty nor counter to the positions of its member countries—as a body, it cannot advocate for specific economic systemic reform.

Crimes Against Humanity: Death Squads

By this point, the death squads that operated under Romero's regime were known to exist, though were not receiving mass public attention given the government's control over the flow of information to the international community. Amnesty International had reported on the hundreds of civilians who were disappearing under the Romero regime in 1978¹³. The actions of other opposition blocs' guerilla groups in El Salvador were also gaining international attention, especially from the West which was particularly concerned with the militant spread of Communism and leftist ideology. Beyond paramilitary groups, unjustified military violence against civilians was also beginning to receive attention¹⁴. El Salvador had agreed to visits from the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights in 1977, but long-term cooperation appears to have ceased, and stories of the actions of both state-sanctioned death squads and the military were gaining traction in international media¹⁵. The UNSC has a chance to provide aid and potentially alleviate this conflict.

¹³ Amnesty International Newsletter, vol. IX, no. 2. February 1979. Amnesty International. (2021, June 5). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/nws21/002/1979/en/>

¹⁴ Amnesty International Report 2020/21. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/POL1032022021ENGLISH.pdf>

¹⁵ Vogelgesang, S. (2022, July 21). What price principle? - U.S. policy on human rights. Foreign Affairs. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1978-07-01/what-price-principle-us-policy-human-rights>



Figure 4: Mural of Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero¹⁶

¹⁶ teleSUR, "Salvadorans to Celebrate 30 Years of the Peace Accords Signing," January 14, 2022, <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Salvadorans-to-Celebrate-30-Years-of-the-Peace-Accords-Signing-20220114-0006.html>.

History of the Problem

Pre-Conquest Mesoamerica

Much of the preexisting inequality that acted as a pretext to the Salvadoran Civil War has its roots in Spanish colonial history. The region was split among several indigenous states, including territories belonging to the Nahua Pipils, the Lenca, the Cacaopera, and some divisions of the Maya¹⁷.

Indigenous communities first settled the area during the late Classic period (250-900 CE). The Pipils, in particular, were known for their well-developed city-state system, strong woven-goods trade networks, and their sophisticated cacao and indigo agricultural practices. Cacao was considered to be the primary product of the region. Their *de facto* capital city was Cuzcatlan, later also used as the name for the eastern part of the region. The Lenca had a similarly complex society, and their most-produced crop was corn using milpa crop-growing techniques (the practice of growing crops on a piece of land for two years before letting it fallow for the next eight). The Cacaopera produced both cacao and corn crops in addition to beans. "All these groups were in close contact with one another [and] although their relations were often hostile, both the Xincas [another group of indigenous inhabitants] and the Lencas were strongly influenced by the Pipils"¹⁸. Most of the states were known for their formidable military prowess.

¹⁷ Afromestizo. Lest We Forget - African American Military History by Researcher, Author and Veteran Bennie McRae, Jr. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://lestweforget.hamptonu.edu/page.cfm?uuid=9FEC3168-D2F7-7115-F544812DDF4B8FC6>

¹⁸ The pipils of El Salvador. Teaching Central America. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.teachingcentralamerica.org/pipils-el-salvador>



Figure 5: Map of Native American Indigenous People of El Salvador¹⁹

Spanish Conquest

The Spanish first attempted to conquer the land in 1524, led by Pedro de Alvarado and launched from Guatemala. They were rebuffed by the Pipil warriors, and retreated to their launch point. Guatemala soon became the strategic center of most colonial efforts in the Salvadoran region, so, a year later, the Spaniards came back to successfully conquer most of the land that now constitutes modern-day El Salvador. This territory was subsumed into what would be New Spain for the next several centuries; the land would be formally secured after numerous uprisings by 1539. The Spanish forces still experienced strong resistance; for example, some Lenca communities were considered free from Spanish rule, even through the end of Spanish colonial rule in the 1800s. Spanish conquistadores exploited the existing tensions between different tribes, coercing Pipil's enemies whom they had already conquered to act as auxiliary forces. Diego de Alvarado was the first successful leader of the Spanish incursion, but faced competition from Spanish conquistadores from other jurisdictions. His cousin, famous Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado, and others from the

¹⁹ "Map of nine Native American indigenous groups of El Salvador in Central America. Lenca, Cacaopera, Maya Poqomam, Maya Chorti, Xinka, Alaguilac, Mixe, Nahua Pipil, Nahua Mangué." Retrieved from Wikimedia.

de Alvarado family managed to repulse these threats, and brutally suppressed Lenca uprisings in 1537-1538.

The region was now undisputedly under Spanish rule, and its leaders embraced the *encomienda* system - "In exchange for the stolen labor of Indigenous people and tribute, the Spanish lord would provide protection and education. In reality, however, the *encomienda* system was thinly-masked enslavement and led to some of the worst horrors of the colonial era"²⁰.

The cultural extinction efforts meant to suppress indigenous cultures and governance took forms beyond this burgeoning slave system. The Spanish introduced many diseases to the indigenous populations, with some of their previous incursions spreading infections like smallpox ahead of their forces. It is estimated that, by the time the first conquistadors reached the region, about 50% of the Pipil population had been wiped out due to European diseases. "By the late sixteenth century the Pipil population was reduced to about 95% of its late pre-conquest level," largely due to smallpox, typhus, measles, yellow fever, and pneumonia. The Lenca faced similarly grim outcomes: some pre-conquest estimates placed Lenca numbers at 300,000, but dwindled to 8,000 by 1540.

Colonized: New Spain

Administration

The Spanish colonial government divided the region into three parts: San Salvador (previously Cuzcatlan), Sonsonate (previously Izalco), and San Miguel. These administrative divisions were governed by the Captaincy of Guatemala, and its Roman Catholic ecclesiastical power spawned from Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala. Under the Bourbon Reforms of 1785, the administrative region was reorganized such that most modern-day El Salvador became one territory: the Intendancy of San Salvador. This new administrative division centralized far more power within the territory's borders, rather than the government of New Spain or Spain itself.

²⁰ Minster, C. (2019, May 30). Colonial Spain and the horrors of the encomienda system. ThoughtCo. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/spains-american-colonies-encomienda-system-2136545>

Economy and Agriculture

The Spanish initially attempted to mine the land and engage in a sophisticated slave trade but found that the efforts were not as profitable as they had initially hoped. Instead, the Spanish turned their attention to the natural resources of the land. The Izalco region was particularly exploited for its valuable cacao production capabilities; the land was overtilled and the industry had collapsed within the first century of colonization. This case study of agricultural exploitation became the continuous and cruelly merciless narrative of New Spain's rule over El Salvador. The Spanish also reaped profits from the indigo industry. Notably, the Spanish largely used forced labor from the indigenous populations, whose numbers greatly surpassed the Spanish numbers. Relatively few enslaved Africans were brought to this region compared to other Central American and Caribbean colonies – over the next 75 years, “10,000 Africans were brought to work on the haciendas and in the mines of El Salvador,” but given that the mines were unproductive, the slave trade largely ceased to exist because of its expense. This led to the existing African population mixing with the indigenous population²¹. Queen Isabel of Spain dictated that the indigenous people not be enslaved but converted to Catholicism. However, through the *encomiendas* system and economic exploitation, the Spanish colonists mostly ignored this edict and had a substantial, largely unpaid labor force at their disposal.

While the region was fairly fertile, it could not compete with the other plantations and farms in Caribbean New Spain; the Captaincy of Guatemala was particularly susceptible to the boom and bust cycle, and it was relegated to a backwater of New Spain. Cacao was its main export of the 16th century, but competition from other colonies marked a “significant decrease in revenue”²². After remaining economically stagnant for almost a century, the economy recovered with the mass exportation and increasing popularity of indigo crops: this trade created “a fairly sophisticated form of commercial agriculture and the creation of large estates operated by families whose members played a leading role in provincial affairs. For the indigenous people, however, the indigo boom

²¹ Afronestizo. Lest We Forget - African American Military History by Researcher, Author and Veteran Bennie McRae, Jr. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://lestweforget.hamptonu.edu/page.cfm?uuid=9FEC3168-D2F7-7115-F544812DDF4B8FC6>

²² Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). El Salvador. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/El-Salvador>

chiefly meant that an additional burden was placed on an already exhausted workforce.”²³ Also in this time, “A major historical theme ... [emerged] which is still played out today: violent appropriation of large amounts of land by a heavily armed minority, and the continuing resistance of the dispossessed”²⁴. Apparently, much of the fertile land still remained in the hands of the native inhabitants as communal subsistence farming land, but the elite aimed to appropriate this land for themselves as well.

Catholic Evangelization

As customary in the Spanish Empire, Catholic missionaries flocked to the Captaincy of Guatemala (including El Salvador) to convert the native populations. The region fell under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic diocese of Guatemala, which became independent in the 1700s after having been under the administration of the Archdiocese of Mexico for the first two hundred years; missionaries often attempted to learn the languages of the native inhabitants in the 16th century, and at first, their efforts seeking to convert the indigenous populations appeared successful. However, the missionaries found that their new converts often adopted some Catholic teachings, but maintained their old belief systems as well. In response, the Catholic church banned practices and items that it associated with indigenous religions, destroying cultural and religious artifacts and outlawing the use of some languages. The missionaries were ultimately successful; almost the entire population converted to Catholicism by the 18th century. However, like many colonies of Spain, strains of indigenous culture survived through art, food, and social institutions.

The Intendancy of El Salvador and Independence

While considered to be one of the less important parts of the Spanish Empire, the territory of El Salvador was wealthy by the middle of the 18th century; the land was particularly well suited to the cultivation of indigo. The *encomienda* system was replaced by the theoretically more humane *repartimiento* system in the 1600s, but the system was still susceptible to abuse. The practice was

²³ Ibid

²⁴ History of El Salvador. Teaching Central America. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.teachingcentralamerica.org/history-of-el-salvador>

grueling for the native population who had the knowledge of proper horticultural practices²⁵, and the small percentage of Spanish families who owned the land concentrated their power and formed the socioeconomic elite class as *criollos*. By the 1750s, the Bourbon monarchs in Spain sought to increase their efficiency and the profitability of their colonies; not only did the reforms set forth by the monarchs create the Intendancy of El Salvador in 1785, they also made trade between the colony and mainland Spain much cheaper through the creation of state-run agricultural monopolies. The indigo economy boomed, but as a result of the working conditions, the indigenous population diminished. As such, the Intendancy of El Salvador recruited Spanish workers to the region to work the fields, increasing the Spanish population in relation to the indigenous and mestizo numbers; however, the latter groups still remained in the majority, ruled by the few landowning elites. The monarchy sought to reclaim some of the economic and political powers from this American-born elite class through Bourbon Reforms, to mixed effects. To similarly mediocre results, the Reforms also intended to curtail the power of the Catholic church over Central America. Nevertheless, they alienated and angered the local ruling class and the religious establishment in El Salvador.

The Crown appointed Spanish-born Antonio Gutiérrez y Ulloa in 1805, following a trend of snubbing American-born candidates for local political administration; he was deeply unpopular with Salvadoran settlers. With the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808 and the subsequent abdication of Spanish King Ferdinand VII, local middle-class elites (one upper-class, but relegated to a subordinate position following the Bourbon reforms) seized upon regional unrest in 1811. The Catholic priests joined the revolt, and the cause spread throughout the region. Leaders declared independence from the Spanish Crown, but these rebellions were eventually suppressed by the Intendant from Guatemala. While further revolts in the 1810s were suppressed, in 1821, the Captaincy of Guatemala, with acceptance from the Intendancy of San Salvador, proclaimed the Spanish colonies independent from the crown through the Act of Independence of Central America. Accepted by all but the San Salvadoran delegates, Central America (under the control of Guatemala) was annexed by the newly-formed empire of Mexico. When the Mexican empire fell two years later, the territories created the Federal Republic of Central America. The province of San Salvador revolted under both rulers, and

²⁵ Wikimedia Foundation. (2022, July 4). Indigo dye. Wikipedia. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigo_dye#History_of_indigo

the latter ruler being unable to stop the disintegration of the Republic, San Salvador declared its independence under the modern name El Salvador in 1841.



Figure 6: Antonio Gutiérrez y Ulloa²⁶

Post-Independence El Salvador

King Coffee and the Liberal State

The new state of El Salvador codified the political and economic supremacy of the land-owning, primarily Spanish- descended elite who had exercised local control over the region for several centuries. The legislature was formed such that the wealthy landowners would have supermajority powers, and would choose the president from its ranks. The constitution was regularly amended such that the presidential powers suited the chief executive at the given moment in history; these efforts were mostly in vain, and the unstable and fluctuating executive power had little effect on Salvadoran socioeconomic structures. “The church was not as powerful in El Salvador as in other

²⁶ English: *Drawing of Antonio Gutiérrez y Ulloa, Colonial Intendant of San Salvador (1805–1811).*, Original publication: 19th century Immediate source: <http://www.canaldelmisterio.com/el-primer-grito-de-independencia-de-centro-america-4-de-noviembre-de-1811/>, accessed November 25, 2022, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Antonio_Guti%C3%Agrez_y_Ulloa.png.

Latin American states at the time; therefore, the economic aspects of liberalism--an adherence to the principles of free-market capitalism--dominated the conduct of the state."²⁷

Coffee emerged as the new cash crop, supplanting indigo after cheaper, synthetic, more local substitutes were found in Europe. It was first introduced for domestic use in El Salvador in the early 1800s, and by the mid-late 19th century, Salvadoran monoculture farming had fully adopted coffee as its new plant. The economic and political oligarchy further consolidated under the popular name of the Fourteen Families (in reality, the number of families was larger but still limited), and to encourage the rapid growth of the single export-oriented crop over subsistence farmers, the government passed a "decree allow[ing] private individuals to acquire title to *ejido* [indigenous-owned, traditionally communal] land as long as they planted at least 25 percent of that land with certain specified crops, most notably coffee and cocoa"²⁸. Legal land seizure continued with the passage of vagrancy laws, which further allowed the wealthy landowners to strip most other Salvadorans (*campesinos*) of their land to incorporate into their coffee plantations (*fincas*). The government also invested much of its budget in agricultural transport infrastructure and exempted *fincas* from taxes and its workers from military service. The government efforts paid off: "From 1870 to 1914, an average of 58.7 percent of government revenue derived from this source." However, disparate stratification of social classes meant that Salvadoran society existed in a very fragile balance, and the government devoted considerable resources to suppressing any rebellion in the much poorer, much larger lower class. The military grew in strength during this period, and its power was mutually beneficial with the ruling, oligarchic elite.

At this time, the status quo remained relatively unchanged; *campesinos* struggled to survive and had little time to challenge the existing social order (with the exception of the pre-coffee Aquino's Rebellion). Within the upper class, coffee barons joined the ranks of the plantation owners, the two often interminglings. Immigrant merchants, while considered of lower social status than the *fincas* owners and barons, had political and socioeconomic clout pursuant to their positions and wealth. Geopolitically, the pan-Central American ethos remained strong throughout the region; while the

²⁷ El Salvador - economic crisis and repression. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/7.htm>

²⁸ El Salvador - economic crisis and repression. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/7.htm>

countries militarily clashed often, they also shared a common identity, such that between 1896 and 1898, “the Republics of Honduras, Nicaragua, and Salvador agreed to form the Greater Republic of Central America”²⁹ before dissolving.



Figure 7: Arturo Araujo³⁰

The Fall of Coffee and Political Instability

Coffee remained relatively stable for much of the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, but “The world depression of the 1930s, which precipitated a sharp fall in world coffee prices, hit hard in El Salvador”³¹. Wages were cut back as export coffee prices fell significantly, and the government first responded with limited reform to ease this situation and the popular unrest it produced. The subsequent response was brutal repression, which also meant campesino poverty worsened. In 1931, when the freest elections up to that point were held in El Salvador, Arturo Araujo was elected President. Although Araujo held some reformist sympathies, he was still a member of the landowning elite, and his first response to growing campesino unrest was force. He eventually

²⁹ U.S. Department of State. (n.d.). U.S. Department of State. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://history.state.gov/countries/el-salvador>

³⁰ Jarould, *Español: Arturo Araujo Fajardo, Presidente de La República de El Salvador (1932)*, 1928, 1928, Own work, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arturo_Araujo_Fajardo.jpg.

³¹ El Salvador - economic crisis and repression. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/7.htm>

offered to hold another election in late 1931 – this time allowing the national communist party (PCES) to run. This was a step too far for the ruling class; for the first time in the country's history, the military became directly involved in electoral politics and staged a coup.

Araujo's installed successor, "General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez[,] ... allowed the promised elections to take place only a month later than originally scheduled, and with the participation of the PCES."³² However, Martinez subsequently barred winning PCES candidates from holding office. When the long-brewing rural, campesino rebellion was about to erupt, its leaders were arrested; in the confusion, the remaining leaders still attempted to launch the insurrection. Any successes the rebels had were short-lived, and the military government was still in control within the three days after the revolt launched.

Following this failed rebellion, the regime began to enact La Matanza – a series of reprisals in which the military killed, according to most estimates, between 15,000 and 20,000 campesinos of mostly mestizo or indigenous descent: a "highly disproportionate [response] to the effects of the communist-inspired insurgency, which produced no more than thirty civilian fatalities³³".

Under Military Rule

While repression remained the main tool of the military government in El Salvador, younger officers successfully lobbied for some minor reforms to pass so as to avoid another set of violent reprisals like those in 1932: Martinez continued "a very limited land redistribution program begun under Araujo, and attempting to protect the domestic handicraft industry."³⁴ He remained in control of the presidency from 1931 to 1944; despite his violent reputation and autocratic ruling style, his tenure offered a necessary period of stability to help the economy recover. He supported the Allied cause during World War II, ingratiating the military government to the United States and other Allied countries. However, Martinez's relationship with the elite was unsteady; they distrusted his personality and disliked the export tax he levied. He was eventually ousted, and several other military leaders succeeded him and created a military junta. General Osorio left the junta and won

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

the 1950 election. He and his successor General Lemus (both elected by dubious margins) repressed radical groups but also enacted several reforms within elite-accepted bounds: they addressed “economic development, public works, the diversification of agriculture, the establishment of such programs as social security (including medical and hospital care), and improvements in sanitation and housing. Union organization was encouraged, and collective bargaining was instituted.” Lemus, however, returned to repressive methods when the economy wavered and political dissidents began to emerge; power passed back to the military-civilian junta to ensure stability. Fear of governmental Communist sympathies prompted Lieutenant Colonel Julio Adalberto Rivera and other officers to overthrow the junta, establishing a new, definitively anti-Castro military junta.



Figure 8: Jose Napoleon Duarte Fuentes³⁵

In this time, more cotton was beginning to be planted; despite its historically unstable pricing in the global market, cotton scarcity during World War II and the crop’s ability to grow in harsh environments made it an appealing choice for many planters as a substitute or supplement to coffee. However, this agricultural market diversification further compounded the woes of campesinos: “The development of cotton estates on the low-lying coastal plain and of sugarcane, grown between the

³⁵ Gary Mark Smith, *English: At a Christian Democratic Party Press Conference during the Salvadoran War (1982)*. Photo by Gary Mark Smith., 1982, 1982, www.streetphoto.com, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jose_Napoleon_Duarte.png.

coastal cotton and hilly coffee regions ... dislocated many peasants"³⁶ and the little rocky land that was left was not enough for subsistence farming.

1960s

Following the 1960 elections, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) began to grow in El Salvador, a party whose ideology fell in between the stagnant, reform-adverse ideology of the landowning elites on the right and the outright communist ideology of the left. "From the perspective of the PDC's founders, the only way to protect their gains and ensure their future and that of the middle-class sectors as a whole was to achieve representation within the governmental system. To reach this goal, they saw the need to follow a centrist path that would incorporate more Salvadorans into the political process without exerting undue pressure on the prevailing economic order."³⁷ Under the leadership of Jose Napoleon Duarte Fuentes, PDC began to grow in importance, though it still remained subordinate to the ruling conservative National Conciliation Party (PCN). Somewhat unexpectedly, PCN received support from both the landowning elites (whose interests PCN promised to protect) and the rural poor (who had inextricable ties to the military and conservative ideology). While PCN retained an absolute majority and the left-leaning party was actively suppressed, "the 1967 elections demonstrated increased voter participation and a growing acceptance of the political process as a legitimate means of popular expression."³⁸

³⁶ El Salvador - economic crisis and repression. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/7.htm>

³⁷ El Salvador - economic crisis and repression. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/7.htm>

³⁸ Ibid

Past Actions

While the entire impetus of our committee this weekend is the lack of action taken by the United Nations Security Council during the Salvadoran Civil War, we still feel it's important to provide you with context on the United Nations' past actions. The UN Secretary-General helped bring the two opposing forces together to sign the Chapultepec Peace Accord of 1992 as well as helped ensure the implementation of peace accords. Delegates should take into consideration the actions taken by the United Nations that led to the ending of the Salvadoran War. However, it is important that delegates remember this occurred ten years after the outbreak of the civil war. This perspective will help delegates look past the actions that took place and motivate them to find solutions that could have prevented the tragedy and suffering that occurred during the Salvadoran Civil War.

United Nations Secretary-General Involvement in the Peace Process

Before the United Nations got involved, the Salvadoran government and the FLMN had come together for four rounds of peace talks that never succeeded. However, in April of 1990, the two parties met in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss the process of peace negotiations with the support of UN representatives. In this initial meeting the two parties set guidelines for the continuing peace talks that include the following:

1. "End the armed conflict through political means;
2. Promote the democratization of the country;
3. Guarantee the unrestricted respect for human rights;
4. Reunify Salvadoran society"³⁹

Following a second meeting to set an agenda for the negotiations and establish the parties that would take part with the negotiations, the peace talks began. The final agreement was signed in Chapultepec, Mexico on January 16, 1992.

³⁹Guadalupe, Miranda. "Acuerdos De Paz." *Monografias.com*, 27 Dec. 2003, <https://www.monografias.com/trabajos14/acuerdo-paz/acuerdo-paz>.

In the first chapter of the agreement, there was an overhaul to the Armed Forces in El Salvador from downsizing and restraining to dissolving several branches of the Armed Forces. The following four chapters dealt with the police force, human rights, civil and political rights of citizens, and economic and social programs that aimed at redistributing land - a major driver in this conflict.⁴⁰ Additionally, the Chapultepec Peace Accords established the creation of the Truth Commission of El Salvador that was meant to investigate what led to the Salvadoran Civil War. In the conclusion of this commission, it was found out that most of the abuse was perpetuated by the government, thus recommending that reparations be made to the victims and survivors.⁴¹ Additionally, it urged that the military and government officials that were implicated in the report be swiftly dismissed. Delegates should note that the conclusion of this report does not include solutions to the original drivers of this conflict - such as land and wealth disparity in the nation, nor does it implicate other member states that gave military support to the government like the United States. Delegates should take note of both the conclusions that were and were not made by the Truth Commission of El Salvador as instructive in seeing the possible solutions from where we will begin our committee in 1980.

While some member states might feel that it is the responsibility of the Security Council to directly intervene in all conflicts that member states are party to, others believe the best course of action is simply immediate aid and then allowing the people of the affected nation to rebuild and reconstruct on their own. Each methodology has its own merits, and as the day we will push delegates to think critically about not only which options align with their country's policy, but also which solutions they create will lead to a better world in the present day.

⁴⁰ "Chapultepec Agreement | UN Peacemaker." *United Nations*, United Nations, 16 Jan. 1992, <https://peacemaker.un.org/elsalvador-chapultepec92>.

⁴¹ "Truth Commission: El Salvador." *United States Institute of Peace*, 1 July 1992, <https://www.usip.org/publications/1992/07/truth-commission-el-salvador>.

Possible Solutions

Bring in Neutral Election Officials

After experiencing multiple corrupt elections and a Coup d'Etat, a fair democratic election could be a solution to the civil war. As "Elections are a vital part of democratic processes, including political transitions, implementation of peace agreements and consolidation of democracy,"⁴² this solution could end a particularly violent time in El Salvador's history, and bring about the beginning of a new, more peaceful way of life. A specific mandate allows the Security Council to provide election assistance when a member state needs it. After providing this mandate, the "United Nations assesses the needs of the Member State to ensure that the assistance is tailored to the specific needs of the country or situation."⁴³

It is also important to understand that any "United Nations assistance should be carried out in an objective, impartial, neutral and independent manner, with due respect for sovereignty, while recognizing that the responsibility for organizing elections lies with Member States."⁴⁴ Delegates should also consider what type of election support is needed to create a neutral election experience for all citizens. The types of assistance range from technical assistance, creating a conducive environment, organizing the electoral process, certification or verification, and electoral observation, amongst other support. Delegates should not interfere any more than is necessary, so not all types of assistance should be used. This means that it is vital to explore these different support systems and reconcile them with the history and current situation in El Salvador in order to best choose a system that will be successful and conducive to creating a peaceful future.

⁴² United Nations. (n.d.). Elections | department of political and peacebuilding affairs. United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>

⁴³ United Nations. (n.d.). Elections | department of political and peacebuilding affairs. United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>

⁴⁴ United Nations. (n.d.). Elections | department of political and peacebuilding affairs. United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>

Redistribute Land

As noted in the Statement of the Problem, most Salvadorans never owned land, with two percent of the population owning 60 percent of the land⁴⁵. Also noted is the fact that many Salvadorans were left as migrants in their own country after being forced out of Honduras. If not considered, these two factors have the ability to derail any solutions that delegates come up with.

One way to fix the major issues noted above is to redistribute land from the hands of large estate owners and the government back into the hands of the lower class. Land redistribution has the ability to also increase economic success within the country, with studies showing “that small farms in developing countries tend to be more productive than larger farms.”⁴⁶ It can be used as a “response to internal and external pressures, to resolve or prevent an economic, social, or political crisis.”⁴⁷ Moreover, land redistribution can reportedly increase the per-capita consumption of beneficiary households by 25%.⁴⁸

Several factors must be taken into consideration during implementation. First, landowners would need an incentive to cede some of their lands. Additionally, the government has cut down swaths of land to flush guerilla fighters out, meaning that the land needs to be inspected to see if it has the ability to grow crops, and thus provide resources. A system will need to be established to make sure that land is distributed equally and without corruption involved, or else it may revert back to the systems in place in the 1960s. There will also need to be long-term studies and observations of the program created in order to make sure it is working. If not, there need to be fail-safes that allow for the program to be edited in order to be more effective.

⁴⁵ El Salvador - the 1970s: The road to revolt. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/el-salvador/12.htm>

⁴⁶ Mit Economics. MIT Economics. (n.d.). Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://economics.mit.edu/>

⁴⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). Land reform. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/land-reform>

⁴⁸ Keswell, M., & Carter, M. R. (2013, October 18). Poverty and land redistribution. *Journal of Development Economics*. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387813001466>

Peacekeepers

The Security Council is responsible for establishing UN peace operations to maintain international peace and security. Historically, peacekeeping has been a vital instrument in pursuing its mission. Peacekeepers have been deployed in over 70 missions⁴⁹. In this conflict, the peacekeepers could be used to support the organization of elections or promote human rights which would help mitigate the conflict.

Nevertheless, it is also important to note that peacekeepers are not able to directly interfere in the conflict, meaning that they will remain neutral in this war. They can be used to “protect civilians, actively prevent conflict, reduce violence, strengthen security and empower national authorities to assume these responsibilities.”⁵⁰ As a result, peacekeepers cannot be the only solution. While they can help lay the groundwork to create a peaceful democratic future, there need to be other measures in place to truly create a country that has economic success, a fair democracy, and policies protecting human rights.

Peacekeepers may also allow the UNSC valuable time to discover a more long-lasting solution like those mentioned in the Statement of the Problem. Delegates should particularly consider regional history with peacekeeping forces and the reception of such forces by people in the region. These conditions will vary depending on the locations and intentions of peacekeepers deployment. For example, the more recent United Nations Observer Mission In El Salvador (ONUSAL) was an observation mission,⁵¹ whereas deploying peacekeeping forces during the war would create more tension between the government and the international community, as well as between the peacekeepers and civilians and guerilla fighters.

⁴⁹ United Nations. (n.d.). What is peacekeeping? United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>

⁵⁰ United Nations. (n.d.). *What we do peacekeeping*. United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-we-do#:~:text=Peacekeepers%20protect%20civilians%2C%20actively%20prevent,that%20supports%20the%20political%20strategy.>

⁵¹ United Nations. (n.d.). United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). United Nations. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/onusal.htm>

Bloc Positions

China

There is a lack of information regarding China's involvement in the Salvadoran Civil War. While China was a communist state for the duration of the war, it is difficult to find evidence as to whether China supported either the FMLN or the Salvadoran military. Officially, China seems to have remained neutral during the conflict. However, certain developments within the member state can perhaps indicate where China's support may have lain.

In particular, China established diplomatic relations with the United States in 1979, and the Sino-Soviet split revealed perceived differences between Chinese and Soviet communism. The stage was set for China to potentially realign its interests. The late 1980s marked a new era for China, with the Open Door Policy of the late 80s encouraging the development of a market economy and encouraging the growth of a private sector. Yet, with the enormous volume of trade, they conducted with the Central American region, perhaps China would have stood behind the FMLN. One thing is for certain: China would have had a vested interest in the Salvadoran Civil War—whether that be to promote trade, cement international alliances and division, or perpetuate their form of communism.

France

Despite having once been a formidable colonial power, France's approach to international affairs is one of thoughtful discourse and measured engagement. In 1981, a few years into the Salvadoran Civil War, France—despite having established diplomatic ties with the Junta government—was one of the few nations which recognized the members of the FMLN as stakeholders in Salvadoran affairs.⁵² France's current, official stance on the crisis maintains that a resolution to the war was predicated on the involvement and cooperation of rebel forces, and its recognition of the FMLN lends the insurrectionists a certain degree of credible sovereignty. While France's stake in the Salvadoran Civil War is considerably less significant than those of other nations—for whom El

⁵² Dickey, C. (1981, August 29). *France, Mexico recognize left in El Salvador*. The Washington Post. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/08/29/france-mexico-recognize-left-in-el-salvador/64386bbb-67c2-4e34-8ea6-e6bda29e5e66/>

Salvador is yet another proxy battleground in the Cold War—the French continue to play an undeniable role in shaping the course of regional history.

United Kingdom

Officially, the United Kingdom abstained from UN resolutions about the situation in El Salvador.⁵³

However, while there is no evidence of official or unofficial operations when it came to the Salvadoran Civil War, the two countries had been linked decades prior when Britain invaded El Salvador in 1932 as part of a colonial effort.⁵⁴

The United Kingdom was a main ally of the US in the Cold War, but the UK itself was not a hegemon in the conflict; as they lacked centrality, their foreign policy relevance was usually peripheral and relegated to being supportive of the United States.⁵⁵ Both the UK and the US “feared the permanent Soviet domination of eastern Europe and the threat of Soviet-influenced communist parties coming to power in the democracies of western Europe.”⁵⁶ British domestic and foreign policy was hostile towards any form of communism; the national communist movement had swelled in numbers before the second world war, but dwindled in the face of institutional pressure during and after the war. The socialist movement branched, and one such branch formed the large institutional Labour Party; however, Labour was unpopular in the 1980s with the Conservative Party’s Margaret Thatcher holding office from 1975 to 1990. Thatcher’s government became well known for cracking down on many communist activities, such as through its union-busting efforts.⁵⁷

⁵³ House of Lords. (n.d.). *House of Lords - Hansard - UK parliament*. Parliament. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1982-03-24/debates/dfd8b95f-3a42-40bc-8f9d-704867fc3854/ElSalvadorUnResolutionOnCivilWar>

⁵⁴ Milner, M. (2020, June 10). *The invasion of El Salvador: Navy, part 14*. Legion Magazine. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://legionmagazine.com/en/2006/03/the-invasion-of-el-salvador/>

⁵⁵ *Britain in the Cold War*. StudySmarter US. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.studysmarter.us/explanations/history/modern-britain/britain-in-the-cold-war/>

⁵⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Cold War*. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>

⁵⁷ Guardian News and Media. (2013, July 31). *National Archives: Margaret Thatcher wanted to crush power of Trade Unions*. The Guardian. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/aug/01/margaret-thatcher-trade-union-reform-national-archives>

While the British government and military did not take a side, NGOs based in the country such as Oxfam and Christian Aid did provide humanitarian assistance to El Salvador. These NGOs supplied “ ‘immediate’ relief for those impacted by violence” and “ ‘survival’ relief to refugees and the internally displaced.”⁵⁸ Unfortunately, humanitarian actions were closely tied to political positions, so some NGOs limited their funding “driven by a fear of becoming ‘politically involved.’ ”⁵⁹ Politics also affected religious institutions. Christian groups expressed “that the poor have a right to make their own decisions, to organize themselves to achieve a better life” but this was interpreted as support for the communists and was subsequently criticized by the government for “overtly political ‘left-wing attitudes.’ ”⁶⁰

United States of America

By 1979, the Revolutionary Government Junta (JRG)—a Salvadoran organization helmed almost entirely by members of the Salvadoran military—had established control over El Salvador via coup, fearing that impotent leadership would allow their nation to fall to communism. The Junta’s authority, though, was far from absolute, threatened near-constantly by the presence of leftist insurrectionists and members of the resistance. That’s not to say that the Junta didn’t have its own share of powerful allies; the United States aligned itself with the military government fairly early in the war—a position established by President Jimmy Carter, and one cemented by subsequent President Ronald Reagan.

As the outbreak of civil war rocked El Salvador, the United States found itself mired in a war of its own: the Cold War, an ostensibly bloodless conflict fought in space, over the airwaves, in literature, and by proxy. The Cold War’s battleground was nothing less than the zeitgeist itself; as America struggled to establish and preserve capitalism across its various spheres of influence, President

⁵⁸ O’Sullivan, K. (2020, June 3). *Civil War in El Salvador and the origins of rights-based humanitarianism: Journal of Global History*. Cambridge Core. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-global-history/article/civil-war-in-el-salvador-and-the-origins-of-rightsbased-humanitarianism/94C9BDB4A948DC3F51D9DE21FDAEF038>

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

Reagan—who assumed the Presidency a year into the Salvadoran Civil War—chose to draw his “line in the sand against communism” in El Salvador.⁶¹

Initially, the insurrectionists’ strength didn’t lie in their capacity for warfare at all, but rather in their extensive relationships with the Salvadoran working class.⁶² These relationships—with student organizations, labor unions, and peasant groups—were frequently leveraged to bring El Salvador to a screeching halt, as thousands of people joined strikes simultaneously. Despite the comparative nonviolence of the insurrectionists’ methods, the United States elected to funnel truly staggering amounts of military aid into El Salvador in support of the Junta; more disconcertingly, the US Embassy officials were accused of aiding the Junta’s death squad in quelling dissent and silencing notable insurrectionists.⁶³ In 1980, Salvadoran rebels formed the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), a markedly more militant revolutionary group, and launched a full-scale insurrection that began in 1981 and lasted until the end of the war in 1992.

The United States’ decision to support El Salvador’s military government was—at least superficially—one made without reservation. The Junta’s assassination of Archbishop Óscar Romero—a notable critic of the regime—and massacre of mourners at his funeral, while condemned by then-President Carter, went largely unpunished.⁶⁴ A year later, members of the Salvadoran National Guard murdered four American nuns. US aid to the Junta was suspended briefly (for just over a month), then promptly renewed and increased.⁶⁵ It became rapidly apparent that the United States would forgive any crime and overlook any impropriety to prevent communism from taking hold in the region. National morale has suffered after the catastrophic defeat in Vietnam, but a widespread fear of communism is as pervasive as ever.

⁶¹ Bonner, R. (2018, January 20). *America's role in El Salvador's deterioration*. The Atlantic. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/trump-and-el-salvador/550955/>

⁶² Leiken, R. S. (1984). *Central America Anatomy of Conflict*. Pergamon Press.

⁶³ *El Salvador - human rights watch*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/e/elsalvdr/elsalv938.pdf>

⁶⁴ *'Learn from history', 31st anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero*. The National Security Archive. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB339/index.htm>

⁶⁵ Freudenheim, M., & Slavin, B. (1981, January 25). *Guerrillas regroup as Carter switches on Salvador Arms*. The New York Times. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/01/25/weekinreview/the-world-in-summary-guerrillas-regroup-as-carter-switches-on-salvador-arms.html>

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

There is a possibility that the committee goes past the date the USSR is dissolved; however, we will pretend that the USSR exists past this time for simplicity. The Soviet Union is arguably one of the major players in the Salvadoran Civil War because of their position as a battling hegemon during the Cold War.⁶⁶ The USSR was a member of the Eastern bloc and one of the founding countries of the Warsaw Pact in 1955, positioning itself against Western bloc countries like the United States.⁶⁷ At the time of the Salvadoran Civil War, the Cold War was still in full force. Like many other regions in Central America, the civil war in El Salvador “proved to be an active and tragic staging ground for Cold War proxy battles between the US and the Soviet Union.”⁶⁸ The USSR and the US were essentially ideological enemies, and they supported diametrically opposed sides of the war effort in El Salvador⁶⁹ – the US supported the Salvadoran government and the Soviet Union supported the FMLN guerilla fighters.⁷⁰

For the Soviets, supporting the FMLN was all about advancing Communist interests. Many people who weren’t part of the wealthy elite were upset because of class differences and unequal distribution of land and resources, which goes against the idea of communism.⁷¹ The FMLN was able to launch and sustain massive offensives thanks to their significant civilian support.⁷² The USSR was also inspired by successful Communist uprisings in Cuba and Nicaragua: “The success of the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution led by the Marxist Sandinista National Liberation Front (*Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional*, or FSLN) apparently served to alter the thinking of policymakers in the Soviet

⁶⁶ History.com Editors. (2017, September 1). *Soviet Union*. History.com. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.history.com/topics/russia/history-of-the-soviet-union#the-cold-war>

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ College. (n.d.). *Context of Civil War*. Wheaton College. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.wheaton.edu/Wheatonacademics/the-liberal-arts-at-wheaton-college/christ-at-the-core-liberal-arts-at-wheaton/core-book/2019-2020-core-book-the-weight-of-all-things/the-weight-of-all-things-reading-guide/context-of-civil-war/>

⁶⁹ A&E Television Networks. (2009, November 13). *United States calls situation in El Salvador a Communist plot*. History.com. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/united-states-calls-situation-in-el-salvador-a-communist-plot>

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ *Communism*. National Geographic Society. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/communism>

⁷² WP Company. (1989, November 30). *Civil War in El Salvador*. The Washington Post. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1989/11/30/civil-war-in-el-salvador/58899abb-9eb7-462f-b5f4-27d6e7464505/>

Union, leading them to endorse the strategy of 'armed struggle' long advocated by Cuba."⁷³ By analyzing these previous insurgencies, the Soviets may have predicted uprisings in El Salvador and the larger Latin American region.^{74, 75}

However, the extent of Soviet financial support for the war effort is still quite vague. Their stance is not entirely clear because a Salvadoran Communist party official reported a "distinct lack of enthusiasm and commitment he received when he went to Moscow seeking military and financial support for his insurgency."⁷⁶ It is possible that the USSR did not want to be explicitly linked to the Communist coup in El Salvador, and there is no evidence of Soviet influence on the guerrilla forces or as an external aggressor.⁷⁷ Instead, the Soviet Union employed clandestine military support through other countries. They didn't directly provide weapons and military support to guerillas, but rather used Cuba and Nicaragua as a medium and sent weapons through these countries.⁷⁸ At some point, the USSR also agreed to transport Vietnamese arms, but this was only "in principle" so it is unclear if such a deal was actually implemented.⁷⁹ Overall, "it is true that the major share of outside material aid was contributed by Soviet allies, and not from the USSR itself," indicating that the Soviets still had some level of intervention.⁸⁰

El Salvador

The Salvadoran government, by nature, was the Civil War's most involved actor. Formally recognized as the Revolutionary Government Junta between October 1979 and May 1982, the

⁷³ Pike, J. (n.d.). *Military*. El Salvador Civil War. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/elsalvador2.htm>

⁷⁴ *Soviet bloc involvement in the Salvadoran civil war - JSTOR*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/45301949.pdf>

⁷⁵ Los Angeles Times. (1991, September 3). *In El Salvador: A relic of the Cold War*. Los Angeles Times. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-09-03-me-1901-story.html>

⁷⁶ *White Paper on El Salvador - Wikimili, the free encyclopedia*. WikiMili.com. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://wikimili.com/en/White_Paper_on_El_Salvador

⁷⁷ *Soviet bloc involvement in the Salvadoran civil war - JSTOR*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/45301949.pdf>

⁷⁸ Allison, M. (2012, March 1). *El Salvador's Brutal Civil War: What we still don't know*. Opinions | Al Jazeera. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2012/3/1/el-salvadors-brutal-civil-war-what-we-still-dont-know/>

⁷⁹ *Special-Report-on-Communist-Interference-in-El-Salvador*. Modern latin america. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/>

⁸⁰ *Soviet bloc involvement in the Salvadoran civil war - JSTOR*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/45301949.pdf>

government was mainly composed of sets of military-civilian dictatorships. Some of the main figures from the Junta's three consecutive groups included Adolfo Arnaldo Majano Ramos and Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez Avendaño, among others. When the initial group of the Junta seized power of the government, the promises that they made to the Salvadoran people—particularly regarding future improvements to the general way of life—proved to be fallacious. Thus, the government's main source of opposition came to fruition around 1980: the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).⁸¹

The government-supported military served as the main catalyst for the start of the war, making their stance abundantly clear—any sympathizers of the FMLN, including civilians generally looking for left-wing social and economic reform, would be punished. Some of the main groups affected included unions and independent agriculture, and even after international organizations began to uncover the government-sanctioned atrocities, the Junta—along with its allies—staunchly denied any allegations.⁸² The Salvadoran government also benefited from the support of the US due to the ambiguity of Cold War forces and the desire to eradicate any sources of communist thinking in the US. Aid came in many forms, yet the Reagan administration prioritized military (specifically, air) support.⁸³

The most important quality of the Salvadoran government's stance on the country's Civil War was its willingness to assume a violent position in the conflict. The Salvadoran army, along with the American government, were the main proponents of the El Mozote Massacre in which almost a thousand unarmed civilians lost their lives.⁸⁴ Despite the Salvadoran government's denial of any sort of involvement, there was insurmountable evidence against this claim.⁸⁵ Hence, several conclusions can be reached regarding the Salvadoran government's view on the conflict at hand. From a political

⁸¹ Kane, M. (n.d.). *The Salvadoran Civil War*. Civil War in El Salvador. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/evans/his135/events/elsalvador80/salvador80.html>

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ *El Salvador Civil War*. Recent Central American history. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://blog.uvm.edu/sosten-centralamerica/2019/03/21/el-salvador-civil-war/>

⁸⁴ Marshall, A. (2020, October 30). *What was the Salvadoran Civil War (1979-1992)?* Boot Camp & Military Fitness Institute. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://bootcampmilitaryfitnessinstitute.com/2020/10/30/what-was-the-salvadoran-civil-war-1979-1992/>

⁸⁵ *Forces that propelled the Civil War in El Salvador*. eScholarship. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://escholarship.org/content/qt8ggo29g9/qt8ggo29g9_noSplash_ec4533a4a9ee8e2d016b5e7c92b98fef.pdf?t=qdzeup

perspective, the government is reluctant to adopt more left-wing ideologies and it relies on allies, such as the United States, for key resources. Further, the Salvadoran Civil War, from the government's perspective, is centered around protecting oligarchical interests.

Although it is a historical fact that the Salvadoran government used violent forces against civilians, no endorsement or undertaking of violence against civilians or other forms of humanitarian atrocities would be allowed at this committee.

Honduras

Over a decade before the outbreak of the Salvadoran Civil War, El Salvador found itself thrust into a brief, vicious, and unanticipated conflict with Honduras that ended as abruptly as it began. Sensationalists were quick to attribute the war to a soccer match between the two nations—a World Cup qualifier match which El Salvador won by a single point—which happened to coincide with the outbreak of the war, earning the conflict its most enduring moniker—the “Football War.”⁸⁶ The truth, however, was that the soccer match in question—and the skirmishes that occurred in its wake—merely lit a very long fuse wired to an exceptionally large powder keg.

Diplomatic relations between El Salvador and Honduras had been deteriorating for years ahead of the war, with tensions exacerbated largely by mass emigration from El Salvador into Honduras.⁸⁷ These two neighboring nations were, in most respects, startlingly similar; both were defined by rampant socioeconomic stratification and a deep-seated economic reliance on agriculture and cash crops, with millions of impoverished subsistence farmers laboring under a comparatively small landowning elite. Honduras, though, was both markedly less populous and nearly five times as massive. Salvadoran farmers, looking to “take advantage of [Honduras’] more available farmland,” diffused across the border, bleeding Honduran farmers dry and spreading their land thin.⁸⁸ In response, Honduran leadership instituted a set of policies designed to curb mass migration—policies that, while justified, primarily targeted Salvadoran farmers, and not El Salvador’s landowning elite.

⁸⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Soccer war*. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Soccer-War>

⁸⁷ Luckhurst, T. (2019, June 26). *Honduras v El Salvador: The football match that kicked off a war*. BBC News. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-48673853>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Large-scale deportations of Salvadorans, coupled with intense nationalism (and a mutual sense of hostility) on both sides, caused tensions to flare; riots and skirmishes following El Salvador's victory over Honduras in 1969's World Cup qualifier helped them boil over.

The Football War—referred to, quite fittingly, as the Hundred Hours' War—lasted just about four days, and claimed over three thousand lives. Despite its brevity, the war irrevocably altered the course of Salvadoran history, exacerbating existing institutional and infrastructural issues and setting the nation on a path headed directly toward civil war. As El Salvador finds its citizens at war with themselves, with Salvadoran national stability on the line, Honduras is uniquely positioned to bolster its regional interests, shore up the national defense, and displace El Salvador as the region's preeminent agricultural power. It's also worth noting, however, that revolution is "contagious." As El Salvador buckles under the weight of insurrections, coups, and rebellions, it's eminently possible that discontented Honduran farmers might just choose to emulate their neighbors. The Salvadoran Civil War represents both immense opportunity and immense danger for Honduras; whether Honduras emerges from this crisis as a stronger nation or one on the precipice of the total collapse remains to be seen.

Guatemala

There is a long history of relations between Guatemala and El Salvador. Like El Salvador, Guatemala's history is full of military regimes and distinct differences between a poor majority and a small landholding elite.⁸⁹ It also had a majority of the indigenous population which was highly repressed by the state.⁹⁰ However, there was more US involvement in Guatemala's history, especially during the coup against the democratic government in 1954.⁹¹ Given the influence of the United States on the existing Guatemalan regime, the government would agree with the US and support the Salvadoran government.⁹²

⁸⁹ *Central America Wars, 1980s*. Peace History. (2022, July 18). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <http://peacehistory-usfp.org/central-america-wars>

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ *Central America Wars, 1980s*. Peace History. (2022, July 18). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <http://peacehistory-usfp.org/central-america-wars>

⁹² *Dangerous liaisons: The U. S. in Guatemala*. JSTOR. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1149207>

As El Salvador's geographical neighbor and historical sibling, Guatemala felt the effects of class inequalities and political repression in El Salvador, as many wealthy Salvadoran landowners owned property across the border and began moving with their resources after the coup attempt. As described in *History of the Problem*, Guatemala was the colonial administrative center of the region, and the borders between the regions were blurry at best until independence from Spain. Guatemala and El Salvador's shared history continued with the pan-American sentiments that defined Central American political structures throughout the 19th century, further emphasizing cultural and economic exchange. When the Salvadoran Civil War persisted, some refugees crossed the Guatemalan border, though the latter's own internal conflict made the country an unfeasible final destination for many.

Guatemala had a civil war that was similar to that of El Salvador, extending from the 1960s to 1996. It is said that "during the Cold War, Guatemala and El Salvador suffered protracted civil wars between authoritarian governments and rebels aligned with the poor and Indigenous populations."⁹³ Guatemala faced similar colonial struggles, and both countries experienced war crimes committed by the state.⁹⁴ Despite this, Guatemalan guerillas were not as successful as the FMLN.⁹⁵ The humanitarian response in Guatemala was much worse than in El Salvador because the latter rejected international humanitarian law and perpetrators were not held accountable.⁹⁶

Nicaragua

The Salvadoran Civil War started on the heels of a communist revolution in Nicaragua, in which the FLSN, a communist political group, was able to oust the right-wing Somoza regime and catalyze economic and social reform. As a country in close proximity to El Salvador, with a newly established, leftist government, it is unsurprising that Nicaragua wholly supported the FMLN and any actions taken against the Salvadoran government and military. From funding anti-government groups to

⁹³ *Exclusion, Inequality, and Violence: Civil War in El Salvador and Guatemala*. View of exclusion, inequality, and violence: Civil War in El Salvador and Guatemala. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/prandium/article/view/38051/28995>

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ *The Civil Wars of Guatemala and El Salvador*. Universitypressscholarship.com. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.7591/cornell/9780801449031.001.0001/upso-9780801449031-chapter-7>

arming rebels in their fight against the right-wing government, Nicaragua continually provided the FMLN with guidance.

Nicaragua also remained stagnant in their place amongst international superpowers; with Nicaraguan revolutionaries greatly aided by the USSR and opposed by the United States, it is only natural that Nicaragua allied with the Soviets and was against the US. Finally, as part of the Central American bloc of countries, a like-minded government at the helm of El Salvador would yield tremendous political and economic benefits to a new, left-wing Nicaragua.

Niger

Having gained independence in 1960, the nascent nation of Niger did not have a real stake in Central American geopolitics. Niger was, however, ruled by a military regime that replaced an existing government after staging a coup—a junta that predates the Salvadoran JRG by half a decade.⁹⁷ For Niger, the Salvadoran Civil War—and the Security Council’s approach to resolving it—is, functionally, a litigation of Niger’s own form of government. As a fledgling country ruled by a violent government, Niger’s primary concern within this committee is establishing its legitimacy (and bolstering its sovereignty.)

Tunisia

During the early 1980s, Tunisia remained neutral regarding the Salvadoran Civil War, yet the government’s domestic issues and alliances provide insight into their perspective on the conflict. Particularly, during the beginning of the War, Tunisia was simultaneously experiencing the effects of an economic crisis brought by the country’s economic model—one where the state controlled the majority of financial operations.⁹⁸ As a result, given the United States’ ideology of championing free trade economies and the additional destabilization of the Tunisian government by the Libyan

⁹⁷ *The 1974 coup d'etat in Niger: Towards an explanation* - JSTOR. JSTOR. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/159846>

⁹⁸ *The unfinished revolution* - world bank. World Bank. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/tunisia_report/tunisia_report_the_unfinished_revolution_eng_synthesis.pdf

regime, the Department of State did not hesitate to provide aid.⁹⁹ Hence, despite the Tunisian government not having a personal stake in the Salvadoran Civil War, the United States—and sympathizers of the American cause—is where the alliance lies.

Uganda

The Ugandan government, during the same period as the Salvadoran Civil War, was fighting its own civil war. Commonly known as the Ugandan Bush War, the conflict also started around 1980 and began with a coup following a highly contested election.¹⁰⁰ As a result, the Ugandan regime was neutral in the Salvadoran conflict, yet their stance can be inferred using the alliances that the government formed during the domestic struggles. The Ugandan government received financial and military aid from large Western forces, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, while the rebels in the Ugandan Bush War received the same from communist states like the Soviet Union and Cuba. As a result, it is clear that while Uganda was generally neutral during the Salvadoran Civil War, the government did not support belligerents with a cause similar to that of the FMLN.

Philippines

There is little official record of the Philippines' involvement in the Salvadoran civil war. However, the country was a strong ally of the United States during the Cold War, having previously been a colony after it was ceded to the US by Spain in 1898.¹⁰¹ There was also strong anti-communist sentiment among the Filipino population at that time. The Philippines signed a military assistance pact with the US and granted them access to military bases.¹⁰² In return, the US provided various forms of assistance to the country and its dictatorial leader, Ferdinand Marcos.¹⁰³ Marcos held power for several decades, and like Salvadoran dictators, held fraudulent elections to fake legitimacy. His rule was further characterized by brutally suppressing any political dissidence. After forcing Marcos into

⁹⁹ U.S. Department of State. (n.d.). *Telegram From the Embassy in Tunisia to the Department of State*. U.S. Department of State. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v17p3/d209>

¹⁰⁰ Thelwell, K. (2021, May 12). *Ugandan bush war*. The Borgen Project. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://borgenproject.org/tag/ugandan-bush-war/>

¹⁰¹ Sen, R. (n.d.). *Philippines - U.S. Special Relationship: Cold War and Beyond*. Sagepub. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/>

¹⁰² Philippines history Cold War. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://histclo.com/country/oce/phl/hist/ind/phi-cold.html>

¹⁰³ Ibid

political exile in 1986, the Philippines experienced widespread debt, coup attempts, and communist insurgencies.¹⁰⁴

Historically, the Philippine islands were part of the Spanish Empire; while still a colony in the late 19th century, the Philippines was greatly inspired by the Latin American wars of independence and renewed immigration flows; the shift to a unique national identity over the disjointed Spanish and indigenous identities was driven by wealthy families of mixed ancestry, similar to the socioeconomic structures of El Salvador¹⁰⁵. Like many other former colonies of Spain, the Philippines maintains a strong Catholic identity.¹⁰⁶

Bangladesh

There is no official record of Bangladesh's involvement and stance on the Salvadoran Civil War. This is most likely due to the fact that Bangladesh, with its newly won independence in 1971, was crisscrossed by lines of political conflict. With the assassination of two presidents, alongside the imposition of martial law from 1975 to 1986, it would seem that Bangladesh was neither strong enough, nor united enough, to play an important role in a Central American civil war.

However, the political landscape of Bangladesh in the 70s and 80s provides evidence as to what side of the civil war Bangladesh would have supported. Despite gaining independence from Pakistan, Bangladeshi political power was fairly autocratic, largely relying upon military rule. Thus, Bangladesh's government was most likely in support of the Salvadoran army who also assisted in the continued survival of the Salvadoran junta regime.

Mexico

¹⁰⁴ *THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN THE PHILIPPINES: TACTICS AND TALKS*. Wayback Machine. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20200806030349/https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4d5a310e2.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ Eva-Lotta Hedman and John Sidel, eds., *Philippine Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century: Colonial Legacies, Post-Colonial Trajectories* (London: Routledge, 2000), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203992012>.

¹⁰⁶ *Religion in the Philippines*. Asia Society. (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://asiasociety.org/education/religion-philippines#:~:text=The%20Philippines%20proudly%20boasts%20to,well%20over%20100%20Protestant%20denominations>

Mexico's relationship with the Salvadoran Civil War, for the most part, was from afar. Despite the proximity to El Salvador compared to the rest of the international community, and despite the large numbers of Salvadoran refugees escaping to Mexico, the Mexican government did not state an official stance until the height of the FMLN's push. In August of 1981, both France and Mexico were involved with official recognition of Salvadoran guerilla armies, particularly sympathizers of the FMLN cause and its political wing called the Democratic Revolutionary Front.¹⁰⁷ From the perspective of the Mexican government, the left-wing political organizations leading the counter-government faction of the Salvadoran Civil War are legitimate; this view is not only anti-Junta but also anti-United States, subtly damaging the relationship with a geographic partner.

Christopher Dickey from the Washington Post writes in August 1981 that "the immediate effect of the carefully phrased declaration is to lend vital international support to the guerrilla alliance's attempts to pressure the Salvadoran government to accept a negotiated solution to the civil war, which has cost more than 22,000 lives since January 1980."¹⁰⁸ Therefore, given what has been displayed to the international stage, formerly neutral bodies such as the French-Mexican coalition made it publicly clear that despite the Salvadoran government's American military backing, the leftist forces are markedly rightful.

Ireland

Ireland did not have an official position in the conflict within El Salvador. At the time of the Cold War, Ireland had a policy of neutrality and did not align itself with NATO or the Warsaw Pact. This was complicated by relationships with Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, which was part of NATO. The neutrality policy extended to the Salvadoran Civil War, being a proxy of the larger Cold War. Ireland had its own domestic problems with the rule of the Catholic Church over the state, so it was facing its own troubles at the same time as El Salvador.¹⁰⁹ Ireland has traditionally been anti-

¹⁰⁷ Allison, M. (2012, March 1). *El Salvador's Brutal Civil War: What we still don't know*. Opinions | Al Jazeera. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2012/3/1/el-salvadors-brutal-civil-war-what-we-still-dont-know>

¹⁰⁸ Dickey, C. (1981, August 29). *France, Mexico recognize left in El Salvador*. The Washington Post. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/08/29/france-mexico-recognize-left-in-el-salvador/64386bbb-67c2-4e34-8ea6-e6bda29e5e66/>

¹⁰⁹ *Ireland's Cold War*. Boston Review. (2014, November 11). Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://bostonreview.net/articles/henry-farrell-ireland-cold-war-catholicism/>

communist, specifically in the 1950s.¹¹⁰ Like the UK, NGOs based in Ireland provided humanitarian aid to El Salvador.¹¹¹ Religious officials tried to spread awareness of human rights abuses in Ireland, and “a visit to Ireland in July 1977 by Higinio Alas, an exiled Salvadoran priest, inspired the organization to donate to programmes run by the Salvadoran Catholic Church.”¹¹²

Spain

Despite El Salvador’s deep-rooted history with Spain—from colonization to a hard-wrought independence—the Spaniards were mostly uninvolved with El Salvador’s incisive civil war. They themselves were in the midst of a political transition from dictatorship to democracy; free elections, expanded welfare, amongst other socialist policies, and the joining of both NATO and the EU peppered Spain’s history from 1979 to the early 1990s. Spain’s transition towards a more democratic nation indicates that they would most likely have supported revolutionaries within El Salvador. However, while other superpowers lent money, arms, and support to the FMLN or the Salvadoran military, Spain refrained from intertwining with the internationally backed conflict; rather, Spain unequivocally called for a peaceful resolution between all sides of the civil war, even sending ambassadors to oversee the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords.

Spanish litigation in the aftermath of war, perhaps, provides some further insight into Spain’s perception of the conflict in El Salvador. Multiple lawsuits, ranging from those against the killers of Jesuit priests and their families to those regarding a Spanish doctor who was brutally murdered, all indicate Spain’s interest in civilian safety, especially when concerning citizens of Spain located in El Salvador. While remaining impartial between the various groups involved in the Civil War, Spain’s priority uninterruptedly remained the safety and sanctity of civilian groups.

¹¹⁰ Mulqueen, J. (2019, December 5). *Another Cuba? Irish republicanism and the Cold War*. The Irish Times. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/another-cuba-irish-republicanism-and-the-cold-war-1.4103583>

¹¹¹ O’Sullivan, K. (2020, June 3). *Civil War in El Salvador and the origins of rights-based humanitarianism: Journal of Global History*. Cambridge Core. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-global-history/article/civil-war-in-el-salvador-and-the-origins-of-rights-based-humanitarianism/94C9BDB4A948DC3F51D9DE21FDAEF038>

¹¹² Ibid

East Germany

As a country that remained aligned with Soviet values for much of the duration of the Salvadoran Civil War, East Germany sided with left-wing rebel groups within El Salvador. For much of the war, East Germany provided aid to the FMLN, only ceasing their support in 1989.

However, as early as the 1960s, there was little civilian support for the oppressive social system and policies that reigned within East Germany. In fact, a mass exodus of citizens to the less repressive West Germany was the main catalyst for the Berlin Wall's establishment. Tensions grew through the second half of the 20th century, and public anger increased through the 80s. After a local election where the party in power allegedly won with 98.5% of the vote, tensions bubbled, and citizens demanded a reformation of the current regime.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, communism in East Germany officially ended in December of 1989—the same time East Germany revoked its support of the FMLN. However, the transition from communism to socialism must have led to enormous internal conflict. This, perhaps, made it difficult for East Germans to support a war overseas. East Germany's pro-revolution stance, coupled with their lasting support for the FMLN, makes it quite apparent that East Germany most likely rooted for the revolutionaries throughout the war, despite withdrawing support towards the end.

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