

CISPES decries former Ambassador's speculation that U.S. could respond to ousting of Supreme Court magistrates and Attorney General in El Salvador by retaliating against immigrants and their families

Washington, DC: The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) expresses our opposition to insinuations made to the Salvadoran press by former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Mari Carmen Aponte, that the United States government could block the remittances Salvadorans in the U.S. send to their families in El Salvador, suspend Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or increase restrictions on migration from El Salvador as possible responses to the Legislative Assembly's unlawful actions on May 1 to replace five justices from the Supreme Court's constitutional chamber and the Attorney General.

Several major news outlets in El Salvador [circulated Ambassador Aponte's alarmist comments](#), which were made during a television interview on May 10 on Salvadoran news channel TCS, causing widespread fear and anxiety, including, and perhaps intentionally so, among Salvadorans living in the United States. To spread what Aponte herself described as "rumors" and possibilities being "explored" or "discussed" in Congress without any evidence, was irresponsible.

While the rise in political violence and systematic attacks against democracy coming from the Bukele administration and legislators from his New Ideas party merit strong international condemnation, using the legal status and livelihoods of Salvadoran families who have been torn apart by decades of forced migration as political bargaining chips is inhumane and unacceptable.

As an organization based in the United States and headquartered in Washington, DC, we have heard no discussion or suggestion of blocking remittances, or of suspending TPS by either the Biden Administration or Congress. In multiple statements that have been issued by members of the Biden Administration, including Vice-President Harris or Special Envoy Zúñiga in his recent visit, and by Congressional leaders, including of both the House and Senate Foreign Relations committees to denounce Bukele's party's unconstitutional actions, no such actions targeting immigrants, or their families, have been suggested.

It is worth noting that remittances are private transactions and, barring certain circumstances, outside the purview of the United States government. According to a [2019 report by the Congressional Research Service](#), "The U.S. government only restricts remittances on countries, individuals, or companies that are subject to U.S. sanctions and embargoes." This is not currently the case with El Salvador.

Regarding the TPS designation for El Salvador that was previously terminated by President Trump, the Biden Administration is currently responding to a court of appeals ruling challenging Trump's decision. CISPES hopes and expects that Biden will live up to his [campaign promise to "protect TPS holders"](#) in this case, as he did when including a pathway to citizenship for TPS holders in his proposed immigration legislation. The

House of Representatives recently approved a bill to grant permanent residency for many TPS holders and parallel legislation is currently being considered in the Senate, demonstrating overarching support for TPS, including for El Salvador, across the Democratic majority in Congress and in the White House, in contrast to what the former Ambassador suggested.

We lament that this is not the first time that U.S. political actors have manipulated Salvadoran immigrants, including TPS holders, for political purposes as part of a strategy to control through fear. Republican politicians made similar pronouncements ahead of El Salvador's 2004 presidential elections, publicizing these false statements in major news outlets in El Salvador to pressure Salvadorans to vote a certain way. Such actions were wrong then and they are wrong now, regardless of who says them.

We wish to express that if any such actions were pursued by Congress or the Biden administration, we would organize strong opposition to them. The Salvadoran community should not be punished for the dangerous actions of President Bukele and his allies.

Instead, we are calling for the United States to end its complicity in Bukele's power grab and in the ongoing perpetration of human rights abuses in El Salvador by ending its long-standing cooperation with, and training and arming of Salvadoran security forces. The United States must also stop driving, alongside Bukele, an economic agenda that harms the environment and the lives and livelihoods of working people and of marginalized and impoverished communities. We echo the denunciations from progressive social movements and the organized working class in El Salvador against increasing military and police repression against criminalized communities and against those who oppose Bukele.

###

Media contact: Yesenia Portillo, +1-202-521-2510 ext. 202, yesenia@cispes.org