

**ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY,
THE ORGANIZATIONS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR,
COMMUNICATE:**

The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the SHARE Foundation, Voices on the Border and the U.S. – El Salvador Sister Cities Network are organizations established in the United States, but with decades of accompanying the Salvadoran people in their just struggles.

Therefore, on World Environment Day 2020, we express our deep concern about the dramatic environmental reality of El Salvador.

The surface and underground water sources that suffer a strong deterioration and contamination; waste that is thrown onto roads, streets, highways, into rivers and streams; pollutants discharged directly into bodies of water and urban projects that change the land without measuring the ecological consequences are among the main environmental problems.

The destruction of ecosystems deepens the vulnerability of the population. A condition that, once again, has been evidenced by the tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal that caused 27 people to die, 3 disappeared, hundreds of damaged homes and thousands of people sheltered.

In the face of this emergency, the reaction of the central government has been one of total improvisation, since the progress made in establishing a Civil Protection System was dismantled. Furthermore, during President Nayib Bukele's tenure, we have not been aware of contingency plans for hydro-meteorological phenomena, with which some of the damage could have been avoided.

We are concerned that Environmental Policy has in no way been a priority for this government during its first year in office. The destruction of ecosystems continues, as for example in the “Valle el Ángel” project, in the northern region of San Salvador, where an important aquifer recharge area is being destroyed to establish an urban complex. The inability to provide water to the population, in sufficient quantity and acceptable quality, is another example of the environmental mismanagement of this government and something that should have been foreseen to adequately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of focusing efforts to strategically address the country's environmental problems, President Bukele has dedicated himself to confronting the other branches of government. The attacks have also been directed at the media, academic institutions and civil society

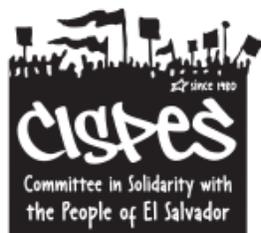
organizations. This situation is leading the country in a frank setback, in terms of democratic functioning and respect for the human rights of the population.

In these circumstances, the work of civil society organizations, particularly environmental claims, becomes more difficult and the risk for human rights defenders increases. Therefore, today more than ever, we support your demands to the Salvadoran State, in the sense of

1. Approve the General Water Law, with community participation and management.
2. Approve a Food Sovereignty Law that strengthens national food production, with gender equity and that guarantees the right to land for farmworkers.
3. Ratify the reform to article 69 of the Constitution recognizing the Human Right to Water and Food.
4. Guarantee compliance with the Metal Mining Prohibition Law.
5. Ban the use of agrochemicals and burning in sugar cane crops and stop the expansion of this monoculture.
6. Create a true environmental policy that guarantees the protection of common natural assets such as water, biodiversity, soil and air.

As U.S. based organizations, we commit to educating the public and elected officials about these critical issues. We will continue to organize opposition to U.S. government policies and corporations that undermine ecological sustainability and economic justice in El Salvador, for example, by promoting privatization or infrastructure projects that pose risk to the environment, jeopardize the health and well-being of local communities or violate national sovereignty.

San Salvador, June 5, 2020



Accompanying the Salvadoran people
in their struggle for justice and equity

