

Statement within the Context of the Commemoration of the 33rd Anniversary of the Peace Accords in El Salvador

As Salvadoran diaspora in the Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia area, international solidarity community, and allied organizations:

Today, Sunday January 12, 2025, we are in front of the Embassy of El Salvador in Washington D.C. to commemorate 33 years since the signing of the Peace Accords and honor the sacrifices of those who fought to achieve peace and put an end to decades of military dictatorships in El Salvador. We are also here to denounce the serious setbacks to the progress obtained and enshrined in the agreements that were signed on January 16, 1992. We send greetings to the Popular Rebellion and Resistance Bloc and to the different organizations that took to the streets of San Salvador today to resist and say "NO!" to the attempts of the Bukele clan to erase the historical memory of struggle by the Salvadoran people.

As a diaspora and international community, we join them in denouncing Bukele, who in December 2020 described the Peace Accords as a farce. A year later on the 30th anniversary of the agreements, Bukele and his legislative deputies approved a decree to annul the national commemoration of this historic date. We are here to proclaim that our memory, our historical struggle, and our martyrs are not a farce.

We know our history well and we know that the Peace Accords mark the end of decades of repression. The agreements dismantled the military institutions used to repress the population by reducing the size of the armed force and transferring the responsibility of public security to the National Civil Police (PNC). Created through the peace process, the PNC has an obligation to respect due process and human rights. Institutions such as the judicial system were reformed and institutions such as the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office were created to lay the foundations for a more democratic society without military dictatorships. Achievements that today have regressed under the Bukele government.

But no matter how much they try to erase our history, we know of the repression and massacres that occurred since the military dictatorship of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in the 1930s and 40s, and the military dictatorships that followed thereafter. We also know the history of organization and struggle of the people in those decades that culminated in an armed struggle to change the system and guarantee the minimum rights that were denied to them by the oligarchies. These same oligarchies were supported by the United States, who sent an average of \$1 million dollars per day for twelve years to the Armed Forces of El Salvador under the excuse of stopping the advance of "communism."

The attempt to erase our historical memory is part of Bukele's propaganda to prevent the population from recognizing that his policies have resulted in the same conditions that existed before the signing of the Peace Accords, conditions that finally led to armed conflict. Since the Peace Agreements exist to protect the population from these conditions, Bukele has chosen

to attack them to dismantle these acquired rights. Today, the Bukele regime sells to the world the false image of a “changed El Salvador” as a paradise.

However, instead of investing in the Salvadoran population, the Bukele regime is betting on deadly projects such as metal mining, reducing social spending in the federal budget - slashing funding to agriculture, education and health for example) - massively and illegally firing tens of thousands of employees (from public offices and other institutions), and implementing a State of Exception that criminalizes poverty while making under-the-table agreements with criminal organizations.

Like the military dictators who preceded him, Bukele and his clan have complete control over the judicial system, the police, and the prosecutor's office and use their submission to threaten and persecute people and communities that organize to denounce and fight against his regime's politics of death and misery. We see this in the military that are deployed under the excuse of “fighting gangs,” but are actually used to intimidate historic communities that have fought for a dignified and fair life for the people, such as Santa Marta, San Isidro, Cinquera and other communities in Cabañas and in Chalatenango.

We also see it in the arrests and political imprisonment of historic leaders such as Atilio Montalvo, a negotiator of the Peace Accords, Jose Santos Melara, leader of historical veterans' organizations, and other leaders of the National Alliance for Peace in El Salvador. We denounce the Bukele regime's violation of the Peace Accords in the arrest of water defenders of Santa Marta who are former FMLN combatants that, after denouncing the government's attempts to reverse the anti-mining law, were arrested for accusations which are not only false, but also violate the Peace Accords and the Law of National Reconciliation.

Therefore, as a Salvadoran diaspora and allied organizations, we come together to demand:

Stop the mining!
Stop political persecution!
Stop arbitrary firings!
Stop the criminalization of poverty!
End the State of Exception regime!
Freedom to political prisoners!
Long live the Salvadoran popular struggle!
Long live the organized and combative people!
Long live the Block of Resistance and Popular Rebellion!

Washington D.C., January 12, 2025