

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 19

Acknowledging the role of the United States in El Salvador's civil war and urging increased United States support for strengthening civil society, human rights protections, and for humanitarian and development assistance for El Salvador.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 10, 2023

Mr. KHANNA submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Acknowledging the role of the United States in El Salvador's civil war and urging increased United States support for strengthening civil society, human rights protections, and for humanitarian and development assistance for El Salvador.

Whereas January 16, 2023, marks the 31st anniversary of the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords which formally ended the 12-year Salvadoran civil war and established the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador (Truth Commission) that was charged with investigating and reporting to the Salvadoran people on

human rights crimes committed by all sides during the course of the war;

Whereas millions of Salvadorans in El Salvador and in diaspora communities throughout the United States and world continue to suffer from the multigenerational impact of the rampant destruction, violence, displacement, family separation, and trauma that the war inflicted on the country;

Whereas the United States played a significant role in the civil war through its extensive military support for the Salvadoran army, and bears a special moral responsibility to support the Salvadoran people in their continued efforts to recover from the aftermath of the war;

Whereas Salvadoran Army backed right-wing paramilitary death squads and left-wing guerrilla groups ravaged the country in a deadly spiral of political violence throughout the 1970s, with violence continuing to escalate after General Carlos Romero's seized the Presidency in a fraudulent election in 1977;

Whereas General Romero was ousted by a civil-military junta in a coup in October 1979, plunging El Salvador into a full-blown civil war;

Whereas, in March 1980, Archbishop of San Salvador and critic of the military regime Oscar Romero was assassinated under the orders of the Salvadoran military, while presiding over mass, and the next week the Salvadoran military fired at the gathering of mourners grieving his death;

Whereas, in December 1980, four American churchwomen were raped and murdered by members of the Salvadoran

National Guard, leading to President Jimmy Carter's decision to temporarily cut off military aid to El Salvador;

Whereas, in 1980, Salvadoran guerilla military groups formed the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), and announced plans for an armed insurrection, and through a series of coordinated military attacks, the FMLN seized control of numerous regions of the country and launched a full-scale attack on the Salvadoran Government on January 10, 1981;

Whereas President Reagan responded to the FMLN's attack by resuming and increasing military assistance to the Salvadoran Government, including funding for the formation of the Rapid Deployment Infantry Battalions, groups later identified by the UN-sponsored Truth Commission as "the primary agents of war crimes";

Whereas, throughout the 1980s, the war between government, guerilla, and paramilitary forces resulted in systematic human rights violations, subjecting civilians to torture, mutilation, forced disappearance, summary executions, indiscriminate bombings, and mass rape, leading to the brutal killing of more than 75,000 Salvadorans;

Whereas the Truth Commission found that more than 85 percent of the killings, kidnappings, and torture had been perpetrated by government forces, which included paramilitaries, death squads, and army units trained by the United States;

Whereas the largest single massacre of civilians in modern Latin-American history was carried out on December 11, 1981, when the Salvadoran Army's counterinsurgency battalion and other military forces occupied the village of El Mozote, and massacred approximately 1,000 civilians

over a three-day period with guns, machetes, and bayonets, with more than 45 percent of the dead under 12 years old;

Whereas the Atlacatl Battalion which executed the massacre at El Mozote had completed counterinsurgency training at the United States School of the Americas, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), and a United States military advisor was in Morazan with a commander of the Atlacatl Battalion during the massacre;

Whereas during the Reagan administration, the United States provided \$1–2 million per day in economic aid to the Salvadoran Government and significant training and equipment to the Salvadoran military, while deploying United States military personnel to accompany Salvadoran forces into battle and coordinate closely with the Salvadoran High Command on important strategic and tactical decisions;

Whereas, on November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests and faculty members of the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeon Cañas (UCA) located in San Salvador—Father Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Segundo Montes, Amando López, Juan Ramón Moreno, and Joaquín López y López—and housekeeper Julia Elba Ramos and her daughter, Celina Mariceth Ramos, were executed by members of the Salvadoran Army;

Whereas, on December 6, 1989, United States Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas Foley appointed a Special Task Force on El Salvador chaired by Representative John Joseph Moakley, to monitor the Salvadoran Government's investigation into the murders of the Jesuit

priests and two women and to investigate related human rights violations in El Salvador;

Whereas the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador concluded that members of the High Command of the Salvadoran military were responsible for ordering the murder of the Jesuits and two women and for obstructing the investigation into these crimes, findings that were later confirmed by the Truth Commission in 1993;

Whereas the international and Salvadoran outcry in response to the deaths of the six Jesuits and two women and the subsequent investigations into this crime served as a catalyst for the United Nations-mediated negotiations that led to the signing of the 1992 Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City, marking a formal ending to the civil war;

Whereas the 1992 Chapultepec Peace Accords created a foundational framework for a more open and democratic society in El Salvador, limiting the mandate of the Armed Forces to national defense, to help guard against their historic abuses in internal security matters;

Whereas throughout the course of the war and for years following the formal ending of the civil war and the failure to implement the transitional justice reform called for by the Chapultepec Peace Accords, tens of thousands of Salvadorans migrated to the United States and other countries around the world to find refuge due to dangerous living conditions in El Salvador;

Whereas the United States lacked adequate services for the resettlement of Salvadoran refugees, exacerbating poverty and violence in Salvadoran refugee communities struggling to build a new life in the United States and throughout Mexico and Central America;

Whereas the United States deported thousands of Salvadorans to El Salvador without adequately supporting the Salvadoran authorities to establish the means and institutions in place to absorb this population while protecting the safety of Salvadorans;

Whereas after deportation, some of these individuals organized into armed gangs that continue to threaten El Salvador, Central America, and North America today; and

Whereas the country of El Salvador continues to be ravaged by the aftermath of the civil war as political violence continues to threaten the daily lives of the Salvadoran people: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) urges the President of the United States to
3 formally acknowledge the involvement of the United
4 States in the Salvadoran civil war, from 1979–1992;

5 (2) condemns the atrocities committed by all
6 sides of the war against civilians and supports tran-
7 sitional justice for the victims of atrocities to access
8 truth, justice, and measures for accountability and
9 redress;

10 (3) urges the Administration to work through
11 nongovernmental entities in El Salvador to increase
12 investments in education, violence and gang preven-
13 tion and rehabilitation, human rights protection, job
14 creation and job training, and strengthening civil so-
15 ciety and the judicial system;

1 (4) applauds the Administration’s recent exten-
2 sion of Temporary Protected Status for Salvadorans
3 among other specified vulnerable populations until
4 June 30, 2024, and urges the Administration to fur-
5 ther extend their Temporary Protected Status and
6 for Congress to grant longer term protections and a
7 pathway to citizenship for Temporary Protected Sta-
8 tus beneficiaries and comprehensive immigration re-
9 form for the millions of immigrant families rooted in
10 communities across the United States;

11 (5) recognizes the extraordinary contributions
12 of the Salvadoran community in the United States;
13 and

14 (6) reaffirms the United States commitment to
15 promoting democratic governance, peace, stability,
16 human rights, and economic prosperity in El Sal-
17 vador, as well as the right of all people to enjoy the
18 benefits of democratic institutions, the rule of law,
19 and the freedom of religion, speech, press, and as-
20 sembly.

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