

# The State of El Salvador: Human Rights and Violence in the Post War Era

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## Research Question

Although there has been a decrease in state repression, why do people still fear for their lives as they did during the war and what role does the government play in preserving or ignoring Salvadorans safety?

## Research Design

### Mixed method approach

- Interviews in El Salvador
- Scholarly Sources
- Data from the UN, Amnesty International, and US Department of State

### Independent Variable:

Democracy

### Dependent Variables:

Protection of Human Rights and Levels of Violence

### Levels of Analysis

- System
- State
- Individual

## Abstract

During the Salvadoran Civil War (1979-1992), the government of El Salvador knowingly used forms of political violence such as disappearances and torture against the political opposition and other innocent civilians, including women and children. With the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, El Salvador has since transitioned from an authoritarian regime to a democracy. This project focuses on how the change in regime type influenced the level of repression and respect for human rights in El Salvador. The research analyzes two conflict resolution mechanisms, the Peace Accords and Truth Commission, and the implementation of democratic practices such as elections to understand how these mechanisms influenced the respect and protection of Salvadoran's physical security rights. The research shows that despite the introduction of democracy, violence remains prevalent in the form of criminal activity and people continue to fear for their personal security as they did during the war.

## Conclusions

- It is essential that Salvadoran governmental institutions adopt and abide by democratic values and practices to respond to the heightened levels of violence
- Amnesty Law leaves the legacy of impunity unchallenged and prevents justice for victims of the war
- Economic injustice continues to marginalize many Salvadorans, as the Accords did not address the need for economic peace
- The physical integrity rights of Salvadorans remains threatened as it did during the war, as violence has shifted from political violence to criminal violence

## Data Analysis

### System Level

- Global Arms Trade
  - Increased Accessibility and Reliance
- Culture of Violence
- Neoliberal Economic Policies
  - Implication of Structural Adjustment Programs on Human Rights

### State Level

- Governmental Policies, Programs, and Reforms
  - Peace Accords
  - Truth Commission
  - Electoral Reforms
- Political Culture
  - Normalization of Violence
  - Impunity
  - Human Rights
- Organizational and Institutional Culture of the Police and Military
  - Mano Dura Policy

### Individual Level

- Perception Gap
  - inequalities in education and healthcare
- Marginalization of Women
  - Political Representation
  - Violence Against Women
  - Working Conditions

**"I will not tire of declaring that if we truly want an effective end to violence, we must eliminate the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, the exclusion of citizens from the management of the country, repression" (Monseñor Oscar Romero)**