



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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El Salvador: Before and After Nayib Bukele

There is an El Salvador before and after Nayib Bukele. Social reinventionism places public security and public services as priorities of the State, breaks old paradigms, and consolidates a new direction for El Salvador.

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CORRUPTION
ABANDONMENT
OLD
PARADIGMS

SECURITY
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES
OPPORTUNITIES
A BETTER
EL SALVADOR



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“ It is not about replacing the flag, the anthem, or our history. It is about giving them consequence. ”



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NEWSLETTER

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Analysis, reflection and political debate aimed at strengthening democracy and national development.

El Salvador: Before and After Nayib Bukele



After seven years—which carry the weight of five-year terms given the scale of changes heading toward full transformations—there are many facts, data, and concepts to analyze in detail regarding the historical phase we entered in 2019. Concepts such as modernity, postmodernity, liquid society, and society in transition come to mind, but none of them alone accounts for the magnitude of what is happening in the country. This forces the social and political sciences to think in new categories, one of which is **social reinventionism**.

In El Salvador, it is not a simple refounding of what already existed, but rather inventing another "impossible" country with new parameters and socio-political paradigms that make it possible. What differentiates social reinventionism, led by Nayib Bukele, from the progressivism promoted in South America, is that it places citizen security and public services (especially education and health) as the premise, priority, and purpose of the State. Its goal is for "the public to be better than the private," thereby restoring to the population the status of real citizenship that had been stolen by previous governments.

Reinventionism, with the State as a social actor with new forms of statehood, begins to take shape when a distinction is drawn between urgent problems and important problems. Through common sense turned into extraordinary sense, urgent



problems are solved first. One cannot resolve what is important without first resolving what is urgent, as this guarantees the feasibility of any medium- and long-term national plan.

When analyzing reinventionism in its historical context, it is clear that it is *sui generis*. As a political proposal, it is built upon inherited conditions (social violence and rampant corruption) and projects itself beyond our borders thanks to Nayib's leadership. He has become a sociological singularity, in the sense that he lends his name and face to the current moment so that it may explain itself and explain everything.

It must be highlighted that reinventionism took its first steps on the battlefield of the "war of position" (of which Gramsci spoke) in 2019, when the narrative of the victimizers (prevailing until then) was replaced by the narrative of the victims. From that moment on, the country gained a new face and a new heart.

In practice, this clash of narratives led opponents of the government to establish **denialism** (a political ideology of a fascist nature that feeds the victimizer's narrative), which is nurtured by sophists ("erudite" word-spinners) who seek to make the past happen again. They play the role of the monsters that, as Gramsci also noted, emerge in the twilight between the old society that refuses to die and the new society that struggles to be born.

In their rhetoric of constant demagoguery, the sophists deny, minimize, objectify, and isolate the facts—above all, the singularity that Nayib represents and the historical distinction he has built as a leader: an extraordinarily high level of citizen approval that is unprecedented for its sustained nature. In any case, the sophists (denialism in its version of discursive phraseology opposed to popular interests) are, by their own merit, the "erudite" word-spinners and figureheads (academic and political) of the victimizers. Their objective—manifest or not—is to mend the historical break that occurred in 2019 as a result of the most important electoral rebellion in Latin America over the past fifty years. Mending means erasing and ignoring, by force of pedestrian sophistries (Stoic sophistry was respectable, though infamous), each and every one of the historical footprints being left by the process of social reinvention open since 2019.

In the 2027 elections, according to data from all polling and opinion surveys, what lies ahead is the most significant electoral endorsement (in absolute and relative terms) in all of Latin America; the consolidation of the State as a social actor; the placement of the final piece of citizenship that allows us to dream of being a developed country; and the laying of the final stone that turns changes into social transformations whose primary characteristic is that they are irreversible.

For that reason, when speaking of El Salvador, one must say that there is a country before and after Nayib Bukele, and like never before in the country's history, the "before" and "after" have never been so distinct and different from each other.



The Altered Reality of Political Opponents



While it is well known that the reality diagnosed by opponents is exaggerated when posing fallacies regarding the government of El Salvador directed by President Nayib Bukele across various societal spheres, it is he who is creating the future of this rebirth of the country. He is developing a model for a new way of doing politics with concrete actions that are transforming El Salvador's society and breaking socio-historical paradigms—granting citizens their sovereignty and a leading role in freedom, backed by a clear and forceful narrative to eradicate traditional politicization and ideologies such as bipartisanship in El Salvador.

This is the essence of why the president is criticized. It is known that opponents lost the privileges of controlling the State and managing their prosperous living in previous governments from the local, national, and international levels. Today, without those benefits, they find the drive to alter reality both nationally and internationally. However, they fail to gain political, legal, psychological, economic, social, or cultural credibility. In fact, current surveys demonstrate a desire to continue along the path El Salvador is taking under the leadership of the President of the Republic of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele.

Indeed, opponents in El Salvador are weakened and fragmented in the face of the popularity and affection the people have for President Nayib Bukele. The "same old players"—the traditional bipartisan system—lack the support of the popular masses and honest citizens. They constantly try to manipulate people into withholding support for the president; in fact, social organizations, social movements, and even trade unions support him, while only a minority



carry out public protests aimed at altering reality and claiming that problems exist in the country's democratic governance.

Opponents lack political renewal, fail to make a qualitative leap, and cannot connect with the sovereign electorate on a massive scale. Heading into the 2027 elections, it is evident that while discontent toward opponents exists, without backing and credibility they carry no political weight or influence in Salvadoran society.

Therefore, it is essential to refute claims that the current government is authoritarian, given that it was democratically elected in popular elections in 2024, where the Salvadoran people gave their full support with 84.4 percent, according to the final vote count record released by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE)—the authority in all popular elections. In that election, he obtained 2.7 million votes (with projections to increase by 2027), compared to 2019 when he obtained 53.7% of the vote. That is, support for Nayib Bukele went from 53% in 2019 to 82% in 2024, and continues to grow.

[...]. The freedom that defends us, [...].

Allies or Adversaries



In politics, when alliances are defined, they are always made on the basis of a specific vision or interests. Nor are these alliances permanent, since political dynamics are constantly changing and the greatest commitment is to always serve the population. Interests take precedence over sympathies or friendship, as alliances are formed circumstantially and



shift according to context and dynamics. The only true ideal must be based on a shared vision and loyalty, or a unified plan of common development for a society.

Power does not recognize friends. In the spheres of power, there is a brotherhood that breaks depending on perceived benefits; there are hugs in political formations, but not at the summit of power. This means one must exercise great caution when defining an ally in politics; it can be complicated, or it often happens that yesterday's adversaries become today's allies.

The world sold to you by political adversaries consists at times of lies rehearsed daily. They sell the idea of a social justice that will prevail; however, those who dictate the rules are not the kindhearted, but the best strategists who know how to play the social game—where the cunning of the strong triumphs. If they know what you fear, they use terror against your mind. Sometimes an ally becomes a spy, people who embrace you only to measure the knife that will pierce your back when they turn into adversaries.

They exercise the art of speaking much while saying nothing. Remain impassive and master silence so that no one controls you. Power makes no noise; it attacks silently and with a smile. Do not commit your own strategic suicide; remember that while the lion is fierce, it is incapable of recognizing traps. Defining a political ally in times of peace or war suggests different dimensions; however, when seeking allies among political parties, they should be identified by their vision for the country or a national project where uniting political forces is necessary for development.

It is said that in politics there are no friends or enemies, only allies and adversaries—and even these are circumstantial in nature.

Alea iacta est

Political Opponents Speak Much About What They Reject, But Rarely About What They Propose





In politics, there are electoral defeats and there are historical defeats. The former can be reversed; the latter are the result of a prolonged process of decay that ultimately strips an organization of content, leadership, and purpose. That is precisely the state in which traditional parties in El Salvador find themselves today.

Their main problem is not the absence of a competitive candidate. It is something much deeper: the absence of authentic leadership. For years they stopped training political cadres, stopped building strategic thought, and stopped producing leaders capable of interpreting the national reality. What they display today are not leaders, but administrators of an endless crisis.

The precariousness of these parties is evident in every action. They lack a defined ideological direction: one day they attempt to present themselves as renewing forces, and the next they defend the very same stances that led to public rejection. They lack clarity on who they are, what they represent, or where they intend to lead the country. They have lost their political footing, and with it, their credibility.

Even more serious is the alarming lack of maturity and seriousness with which they approach national challenges. While El Salvador debates momentous issues related to security, economic growth, competitiveness, education, health, technology, and infrastructure, the opposition appears trapped in superficial discussions, sterile confrontations, and short-term electoral calculations. They speak much about what they reject, but rarely about what they propose.

When they do attempt to formulate proposals, the void becomes even more obvious. They fail to present comprehensive plans, verifiable goals, or credible roadmaps. They do not explain how they would fund their initiatives, execute their projects, or resolve the structural problems they were incapable of addressing during their decades in government. Criticism replaces proposals; slogans replace vision.

The leadership crisis is so profound that no figure manages to generate enthusiasm, trust, or hope. There is no leader capable of uniting wills, building consensus, or projecting a national vision that connects with the aspirations of the majority. Their leadership appears fragmented, disoriented, and in many cases, more concerned with disputing internal spaces than offering solutions to the country.

For this reason, the February 2027 elections appear defined long before the formal start of the campaign. Not simply because they face a strong adversary, but because they arrive weakened by their own contradictions, their inability to renew themselves, and the total absence of a convincing national project.

The reality is stark: the parties that once dominated Salvadoran politics now survive as rudderless structures without direction, leadership, or proposals. When an organization simultaneously loses identity, credibility, and the capacity to



inspire, it ceases to compete for the future and begins simply administering its own irrelevance. For them, political time seems to have run out. *Alea iacta est...*

El Salvador: Changes and Transformations 205 Years After Independence



205 years mark a historical rupture for our country, now consolidated as a republic. Over this same span of time, a series of changes and transformations have taken place. It must be taken into account that the establishment of what we know as a republic occurred in 1841—understood as a political organization in which state power does not belong to a single person or family, but is exercised on behalf of the citizenry through free and democratic elections. Thus, Juan Lindo assumed office in that year, taking command of the republic as such following the dissolution of the Federal Republic of Central America. Later, in 1842, Juan José Guzmán was elected, governing from 1842 to 1844.

205 years have passed, and El Salvador has undergone many changes and transformations: ranging from dictatorships like that of Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, massacres such as that of the indigenous population in 1932, coups d'état (the last occurring in 1979), and the armed conflict from 1980 to 1992, to reaching the final link of hopelessness when ARENA and the FMLN managed the Executive at their whim, paid political favors to deputies, and brokered false illusions of a peaceful environment through dark negotiations with gangs, who became their partners in power. This continued until 2019, when the population took matters into their own hands and elected the current President, Nayib



— SIGLO XXI —

Bukele. That marked the beginning of a process of refounding the Republic of El Salvador with a primary and secondary legal framework in constant transformation, allowing the current government to be assertive in all public policies that have brought peace and prosperity to our population—205 years later.

Independence: From the Flag to the Result



Every September 15, Salvadorans celebrate our Independence with flags, anthems, parades, and historical memory. These are important symbols of our identity. But 205 years later, perhaps we should also ask ourselves another question: how does independence translate into the daily life of the citizen?

Los Toles, in Ahuachapán, offers an interesting case to reflect upon.

On September 15, 2025, images showed children parading down a dirt and mud road. A promise was made there. One year later, in the same place and once again during the Independence celebration, concrete results could be observed: a paved road and a new school.

The sequence matters: need, promise, execution, and result.

A promise is not a result. Neither is a budget, an administrative order, or a cornerstone. A result appears when what was announced can finally be used by the citizen.



However, Los Toles poses an even greater challenge. Following the road and the school come connectivity, computers, and the announced possibility of incorporating artificial intelligence as an educational tool. Development then begins to connect physical infrastructure, education, technology, and human capital.

That alone does not automatically guarantee better outcomes either. A new school creates conditions; the real test will be verifying, over time, whether those children learn more, complete their studies, and find better opportunities.

Perhaps there lies a contemporary way of understanding Independence.

It is not about replacing the flag, the anthem, or our history. It is about giving them consequence.

Because political "independence" was won more than two centuries ago. The ongoing challenge is converting it into the capacity for each generation of Salvadorans to live, learn, produce, and build a better future.

When the Crisis Is the Same, But the Result Is Not

An international crisis can affect several countries simultaneously. However, that does not mean all must experience the same outcome. The recent fuel crisis offers an interesting case. Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador are exposed to the same international oil market. No Central American government controls global crude prices or the geopolitical disruptions that can alter them. Yet, between that international price and what a family ultimately pays, there are national decisions: taxes, subsidies, regulation, inventories, logistics, fiscal policy, and especially response time.



Photo: AFP / Diario El Salvador



Therefore, in the face of an external crisis, the question should not be limited to who caused it. We must also ask: who was better prepared when it arrived?

The comparison is particularly interesting because El Salvador is a small economy. This can provide administrative and logistical advantages, but it also implies a smaller market, fewer absolute fiscal resources, and less capacity to absorb certain losses. Size alone does not explain results.

Here emerges a concept far more important than gasoline: **state capacity**.

A State develops capacity when it learns to anticipate, plan, prioritize, execute, measure, correct, and sustain public policies. A policy should not be evaluated solely by how much money it announces or the intentions of those who design it, but by the results the citizen ultimately experiences.

This reflection goes beyond fuels. For decades, Central American nations have explained many of our problems by pointing to poverty, the size of our economies, and external circumstances. These are real constraints, but not necessarily a doom sentence.

A country does not begin to develop when all its problems disappear. It begins when it develops the capacity to solve them.

Perhaps, then, a nation's most important resource is not how much it has, but what it learns to do with what it has.

Fear of the Future in Education



Given the increasingly widespread use of technology and, in particular, artificial intelligence in education, some have gone so far as to publicly propose a return to paper and pencil over computers. The approach is as paradoxical as telling a doctor that, due to the side effects of antibiotics, they should return to bloodletting and compresses to treat an infection.

That a tool carries risks, limitations, or can be misused does not mean it should be discarded in favor of returning to something less effective. Humanity learned long ago that progress does not consist of abandoning a new tool whenever adverse effects appear, but in learning to use it correctly, establishing controls, and developing better alternatives. The same applies to educational technology. Artificial intelligence can generate problems and inappropriate uses that must be discussed and regulated. But jumping from there to conclude that the solution is a return to paper and pencil is a leap that fails under basic analysis.

The history of education is full of such fears. In their time, there were those who wanted to ban scientific calculators because they would supposedly atrophy mathematical reasoning. Today it is difficult to seriously argue that returning to logarithm tables would have been a better strategy. The debate is not between "technology yes" and "technology no."

The key question is how to integrate new tools into learning to develop the skills students will need in the world they are destined to live in. For that, updates and a forward-looking vision are indispensable.



Learning New Skills in the Digital Era



Sometimes we think that learning something new is difficult, that we need to pay for a course, or that certain skills can only be acquired by trained individuals. There is also the time factor, because often we do not have enough time left to learn something new and prefer to use those moments for other daily activities. However, technology has changed this reality.

Currently, we have access to videos, tutorials, courses, and various tools that allow us to learn from anywhere and, often, at our own pace. Nevertheless, we can also encounter courses that only provide very basic knowledge or platforms that require payment to access certain content.

Platforms like Platzi are also part of these new learning opportunities. They not only allow us to learn and use tools to create presentations, but also offer courses and certifications that can help us prove we have acquired specific knowledge. This can be useful even for learning basic computer skills or applications that seem simple but not everyone knows how to use.

This is important because, when looking for a job opportunity, saying we know how to do something is not enough. Having a course or certification can back up that knowledge and demonstrate that we have dedicated time to developing a new skill. It can be something as simple as learning to use a digital tool, improving our presentations, or acquiring knowledge we did not previously have.



Furthermore, these opportunities can strengthen our resume. A person can be studying for a degree while simultaneously learning about technology, design, communication, presentations, digital tools, or other topics that complement their professional training. They can even learn a new language. That knowledge can be acquired during free time, rather than spending all that time solely on social media or consuming entertainment content. It is not about setting entertainment aside entirely, but also about using part of our time to learn something that could make our lives easier in the future.

These opportunities are not limited exclusively to people who already possess certain knowledge. They are available to anyone who wants to learn, from a young person to an adult. Technology can become a tool that simplifies certain daily activities while allowing people to continue developing.

The important thing is that learning today no longer depends solely on being inside a classroom. Technology provides us with tools to continue educating ourselves, acquiring new skills, and preparing for emerging opportunities. For Salvadorans, having access to these types of resources represents a possibility to keep learning and to build new capabilities that can be useful both in studies and in the workforce.

Incompatibility Is Not About Political Ideologies



The Count of Lautréamont used to say: *"True pain is incompatible with hope. No matter how great that pain may be, hope still rises a hundred cubits above it."* This maxim makes clear that no pain can serve as the foundation for hope. For that reason, it is impossible and incompatible to have hope in political parties and individuals who, in the past, were directly or indirectly complicit in the people's pain.

How can the opposition be believed when they were in the front row—or at the very least part of the institutions—that permitted and created great pain, despair, suffering, and disillusionment for Salvadorans? Their discourse is entirely incompatible with their actual past actions, and one cannot believe or accept their critiques of the current way of governing given the atrocities committed in their time.



In a similar vein, as the distinguished Tony Judt expressed: *"The lack of trust is clearly incompatible with the smooth functioning of a society."* What the master stated is precisely why the dissonant voices of the opposition should not be heeded—not simply because they are the opposition, but because they lack the moral standing to demand or criticize the work accomplished, to say nothing of the great progress achieved.

Likewise, the ideology displayed by traditional parties has served only to divide rather than improve the lives of the people. For this reason, it is no longer a matter of political ideologies, but of decisions that improve lives—without empty words, without bureaucracy, just willpower and action. That is what true politics is about: working with a national vision like the current project, rather than for petty individual interests.

Therefore, it is necessary that the Salvadoran people do not forget those who dragged them into an unworthy lifestyle defined by fear, shame, and hunger. Anyone who has not understood that there is now pride in calling oneself Salvadoran—something that did not happen under previous governments—misses the point. Hence the topic presented: it is incompatible to accept once again those who have brought so much pain and mourning to our beloved homeland.

Reclaiming the Concept of *Mara*

Upon reaching the door, we would shout out to mom:

— *I'll be right back, Ma.*

— *Who are you going with?*

— *With the mara.*

That was adolescence in the sixties. The *mara* meant your group of friends.

In the Santa Ana of those days, with the *mara* we climbed the volcano a dozen times, stayed up late studying at Anita Alvarado Park, and nothing bad ever happened to us.



When we went abroad, people identified us as Salvadorans by referring to us as "la mara." It was practically a national badge of identity, like *pupusas* or *atol de elote*.

At what point did *mara* become a bad word? Obviously, when emigrated criminals adopted the surname of their group after the word "mara": *Salvatrucha*, *Dieciocho*, etc.



How do we restore a term that for decades identified us in a healthy way? Let us look at some international cases.

A few years ago, the government of Turkey promoted the use of *Türkiye* to distance itself from derogatory meanings in English, where "turkey" refers to the bird or a commercial failure.

In Latin America, people have managed to turn pejorative terms into proud identities: the pejorative "chicano," applied in the American Southwest to poor and uneducated Mexican migrants, was transformed into a symbol of pride by the Chicano Movement. Or "chilango," which Mexicans used for inhabitants of their capital—labeling them arrogant or criminal—was proudly adopted by capital city residents to describe their developed urban culture.

"Cabecita negra"—a classist and racist term used by Buenos Aires residents for migrants from the interior—was embraced by workers and popular sectors as an identity against the elites. "Lunfardo" in Argentina and Uruguay was a pejorative term for criminals, but later came to describe the popular slang of tango and Rioplatense speech, losing its criminal connotation.

"Guache" in the Colombian Andes was used by urban elites to describe vulgar people. Cultural groups in Boyacá and Cundinamarca reclaimed the term as a Muisca indigenous legacy, referring to a brave warrior. Likewise, despite not originating as a derogatory term, the demonym "paisa" became stigmatized at the end of the last century through association with drug trafficking. With Medellín's transformation through innovation, public transit, and tourism, "paisa culture" is now identified with innovation, drive, and entrepreneurship.

"Cholos" was used in Andean countries to discriminate against indigenous or mixed-race people migrating to cities. Recently, women revalued the term, transforming it with the elegance of their skirts (*polleras*) and social and economic empowerment.

The key to change lies in the community redefining the stigmatizing word through politics, art, fashion, or literature—ensuring that positive usage prevails as a symbol of resilience and community pride over the pejorative term.

It is time to rehabilitate the term *mara*, not only through advertising campaigns, but through the real transformation El Salvador has experienced: the freedom of movement achieved, and the push toward education, culture, and health.



Independence Day Year 205: A March of Giants with an Ovation from the People



The asphalt of Manuel Enrique Araujo Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue did not merely bear the march of parade formations this September 15, 2026; it vibrated under an energy that for decades seemed like a utopia. It was not the formal echo of just another civic holiday, nor the rigid formality of those attending out of calendar obligation or because they had nothing else to do on a day off in El Salvador. What unfolded on the streets of San Salvador was a civic pact sealed with applause, blue and white flags waving in the wind, and strained voices shouting a single word: *thank you*.

Historically, independence parades in our country have carried ambiguous symbolism, often overshadowed by eras of mistrust and insurmountable distance between the average citizen and the uniforms of security institutions. But this 2026 confirmed that the rift was left years behind. As the blocks passed for each institution—first the Armed Forces, followed by the second block of the National Civil Police—the dominant sound was not the rolling of drums nor the roar of engines, but a deafening, spontaneous, and deeply human ovation.





That applause was not born out of nowhere. It is the living testimony of a society that breathed a sigh of relief after shaking off decades of daily terror and extortion. For years, crossing the wrong street or living on the wrong alleyway was equivalent to a sentence; in the middle of 2026, the average citizen does not fear seeing a patrol car arrive—they seek it out, greet it, and respect it. The pacification achieved through the execution of the Territorial Control Plan ceased to be a figure in official reports and became a tangible fact in every neighborhood, community, bus stop, and reclaimed park. Therefore, seeing military and police personnel march did not represent a display of force, but rather the living presence of a protective shield.

The emotion reached a peak with the entry of the contingent of students from the "Commissioner General Mauricio Antonio Arriaza Chicas" National Public Security Academy—young men and women, future police officers. The uniformed youth currently training in the academy's classrooms did not only march with flawless technique; they paraded bearing on their shoulders the ethical commitment to keep alive the flame of a peace that cost so much to conquer. As their banner advanced, the audience's applause multiplied into a genuine tribute to those who have made the decision to serve and protect the population, and to the new generations who swear to defend their own with tireless vocation.

Those who witnessed the parade route this September 15 bore witness to a sociological phenomenon that no critic can ignore: the total reconciliation of the people with their security forces. Children sitting on their fathers' shoulders extended their hands to high-five special forces officers; grandmothers shed discreet tears while blessing the cadets as they passed by. It is the response of a nation that can distinguish with absolute clarity between the tyranny of crime that suffocated it for generations and the legitimate authority that restored the fundamental right to walk without fear.

Celebrating independence in 2026 no longer consists of reciting a 19th-century founding father while living as a prisoner in one's own neighborhood. Real independence—the kind that transforms a worker's table and a children's playground—is the freedom to travel, build a business, dream, and return home safely every night. That sovereignty over everyday life is what the Territorial Control Plan conquered, and for that, the crowd applauded without reservation.

As the echoes of the march faded and the crowd dispersed, an unmistakable message remained floating in the air: the Salvadoran people have a memory. They know who descended into the most dangerous ravines, who spent whole nights awake guarding forgotten street corners, and who restored calm to their homes.





The resounding ovation of September 15 was not merely an outburst of celebration; it was the democratic and popular ratification that El Salvador has already chosen its destination: order, justice, and a peace that will never be negotiated again—led by President Bukele and his security cabinet, who have established law and order. Until next September 15.

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