



# INFORMATION BULLETIN

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# NEWSLETTER

## 21st Century Political Reflection Circle

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

### **The Bukele Model in Security Is Adopted and Adapted by Costa Rica**

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As we have previously pointed out, any society that aspires to peace, stability, and economic development must start from an elementary premise: sustainable prosperity cannot exist where organized crime successfully challenges the authority of the State. Public security is not an accessory objective of governmental action; it is the prerequisite that makes order possible, and order is, in turn, the necessary condition for growth and collective well-being.



Precisely under this logic, Costa Rican President Laura Fernández appears to be acting. The recent inauguration of a new maximum-security prison—the so-called Center for High Containment against Organized Crime (CACCO)—the hardening of state policies against criminality and drug trafficking, as well as her official visit to El Salvador to see firsthand the operation of the Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT) and meet with President Nayib Bukele, evidence a clearly defined strategic orientation: to restore the full capacity of the State to enforce the Law in those spaces where crime sought to replace it.



This is not a matter of a simple mechanical copy of the Salvadoran model. Every country possesses different institutional, legal, and social realities. What Costa Rica appears to be doing is adopting the fundamental principles that have guided El Salvador's security policy and adapting them to its own national reality. The essential principle is that effective freedom cannot exist for honest citizens when criminals operate with impunity.

The Salvadoran experience has demonstrated that the recovery of security produces effects that go far beyond the reduction of crime rates. Wherever the State recovers the legitimate monopoly of force, institutions are strengthened, citizen trust increases, the climate for investment improves, and more favorable conditions are created for economic growth. Security thus ceases to be solely a police matter and becomes a structural factor of development.





Costa Rica today faces growing challenges derived from transnational drug trafficking, organized crime, and the increase in homicides. Faced with this reality, the construction of maximum-security prison infrastructure and the adoption of firmer measures against criminal organizations constitute a response that seeks to reaffirm the authority of the State and re-establish the rule of law.



Costa Rican President Laura Fernández's visit to CECOT therefore possesses significant political and symbolic value. It represents the recognition that public security has become a regional strategic priority and that the Salvadoran experience offers practical lessons that other countries consider worthy of study.

Ultimately, Costa Rica appears to have understood a fundamental political truth: where the Law does not prevail, order cannot exist; and where order does not exist, prosperity ends up being impossible. Therefore, rather than copying a foreign model, Costa Rica is adapting a universal idea: that the legitimate authority of the State constitutes the indispensable requirement to guarantee security, democracy, and development.



## Latinobarometer and Its Theory of Democracy



The 2026 Latinobarometer report presents a paradox: El Salvador obtains outstanding results in numerous citizen perception indicators related to security, state efficiency, the fight against corruption, and trust in institutions. Nevertheless, the organization labels President Nayib Bukele a dictator. Subsequently, in its posts on X, Latinobarometer invoked "the theory of democracy" to argue that, from that perspective, Bukele is a dictator.

The arguments used to question the democratic nature of a government freely elected with 85% citizen support focus on the state of exception, allegations of "arbitrary" detentions, and the purported weakening of institutional checks and balances. These indicators are presented without field validation, reproducing without further reservation the usual arguments of the political opposition, both national and international.

The essential problem appears when "the theory of democracy" becomes a rigid framework that ends up prevailing over any consideration of social reality. Democracy cannot be reduced





to a list of formal requirements—formulated and universalized after the Cold War, interpreted from a contrary political stance, and without considering the contexts in which that paradigm is intended to be applied. Constitutional guarantees, freedoms, and controls on power have their own value, just as much as security, institutional capacity, and the resolution of public problems.

Thus, Latinobarometer appears to have lost sight of the fundamental recipients of any system of government: the citizens. A serious evaluation must consider both how power is exercised, what it is exercised for, and what results it produces. Democracy is not an end in itself, but a means to contribute to the progress of individuals and societies.



## The Security We Sometimes Take for Granted



Sometimes we become so accustomed to living with greater peace of mind that we stop valuing the security we have. For many Salvadorans, going out at night, taking a walk, camping, or watching children play in the neighborhood are everyday activities. It has also become common to take out a cell phone in public places or check social media while traveling on a bus, even though there was a time when doing so could cause fear.

It is interesting to observe the reaction of some tourists visiting El Salvador. At first, they arrive with doubts and even fear because they have heard that security is a lie and mere propaganda. Some do live broadcasts or converse with local people to verify for themselves how safe it is, carrying out activities such as going out on the streets at night, and they encounter a reality different from what they expected; they are surprised. What may seem normal to us is difficult for them to imagine occurring in their own countries: security.

However, our perspective changes when we travel abroad. In some places, people advise us to be careful when going out at night, to avoid certain areas because they are dangerous, and to keep our valuables in safe places



to prevent theft. We then understand that not all countries offer the same peace of mind and that we should not assume conditions are the same everywhere.



These experiences also remind us that, years ago, in El Salvador we lived through a situation of insecurity that affected many of our daily activities. Therefore, even if some things seem normal to us today, it is worth recognizing the change and appreciating the freedom to do them with greater confidence.

Perhaps we do not always realize how much our life has changed until someone from another country is surprised to see how we live, or until we visit a country where insecurity is part of daily concerns. Security should not be something we take for granted; it is also something we must value.



## The New Arce Bridge

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Last Wednesday, President Nayib Bukele inaugurated the new facilities of the General Manuel José Arce Bridge, which links Guatemala and El Salvador by land between the towns of Pedro de Alvarado and La Hachadura, respectively. Arce founded the army on May 7, 1824, under the name Legion of Liberty of the State of El Salvador, and served as its first commanding general.

This bridge is a new structure, not a reconstruction or expansion of the previous one, which had been completed in November 1961. Its objective is to strengthen connectivity, trade, and tourism between El Salvador and Guatemala, particularly; although, since Central America is an interconnected whole, the rest of the region will also benefit from the new work.

The project included the construction of 1.4 kilometers of road access, as well as its lighting, signage, drainage, two roundabouts, pedestrian walkways, and video surveillance systems. It also includes new migration offices, waiting rooms, restrooms, and rest areas for staff.



The structure is built with post-tensioned box girder concrete and features four traffic lanes, each 3.60 meters wide. Additionally, it has no intermediate supports, a feature that allows traffic to flow without obstruction in that area.

The link between the economies of both countries is considerable: approximately 1.5 million vehicles circulate through this border annually, including 1,500 heavy transport vehicles. According to the Bank of Guatemala, total trade between both countries between 2020 and 2024 went from US\$ 2,418.6 million to US\$ 3,469.0 million. It must be added, however, that this balance is not exact because the measurements are not homogeneous: exports are valued on a FOB basis—where the seller pays to place the merchandise on transport at the point of departure, while the buyer pays for transport, import expenses, and insurance (the latter if desired)—whereas imports are valued on a CIF basis, meaning the seller pays for the merchandise, freight, and minimum insurance required by CIF rules, while the buyer pays for processing, import expenses, tariffs, and destination expenses.

On the other hand, the bridge is equally important for the exchange of people: according to the Guatemalan Migration Institute, Salvadorans represent the largest regular migratory flow so far this year at 2,163,320—a figure lower only than that of Guatemalas themselves, and superior to all other nationalities, including Americans, Mexicans, and the rest of Central Americans. (<https://view.genially.com/687114a8d06f062d3cc3f4dd>).

This does not include informal migration by populations neighboring the border limit, which occurs daily and practically without official control, as in most borders around the world. The bridge benefits local inhabitants, and it is estimated that on the Salvadoran side it will generate 230 direct jobs and 1,150 indirect jobs, while bringing various types of benefits to 43,000 local residents.

The bridge thus serves both the transit of people and of goods and services—not only between the two countries, but also as an agile communication channel for all of Central America.

Its cost is estimated at US\$32.6 million, and it is 420 meters long, making it the second-longest bridge in El Salvador, surpassed only by the Integration Bridge, which is 664 meters long and was also built during President Bukele's mandate. Its design will prevent closures when the level of the bordering Paz River rises



during the rainy season. Upon inaugurating it, President Bukele stated: "We cannot be closing the border with our largest neighbor."

## **Honduras: Politicians Above the Law — Reforms to Imprison Criminals, But Not Corrupt Politicians**

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Honduras is once again debating, for the fifth time and without positive results for the people, the scope of criminal justice. The National Congress, composed of 128 deputies from the country's three main political forces, approved reforms in September 2026 related to the penitentiary regime for individuals linked to structures declared terrorist. In October 2026, new proposed reforms to the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure were announced, aimed at hardening measures against maras and gangs.

Yet, silently, they did not propose or enact reforms with the same determination against the corrupt politicians of the tripartism, who are responsible for public administration for over forty years and for keeping the country and its population plunged in insecurity and misery.



The evidence and results of the actions of terrorist politicians are as visible as the control exercised by maras and gangs in neighborhoods and housing developments. As visible as the tattoos on the body or forehead identifying a gang member with their criminal band, it is equally evident to see the assets overnight displayed by a money launderer whose illicitly sourced resources damage the Honduran economy and displace honest merchants. It is as visible as the drug trafficker who travels escorted by more vehicles and more powerful weapons than those of the Police itself—a figure before whom, at every police checkpoint, some agents step aside with trembling and terror, because it is well known that they are a friend and protégé of the politician in power.

The results and consequences of terrorist politicians have exiled more than 2.5 million Hondurans, a diaspora whose remittances provide 30% of GDP. Meanwhile, more than 9.5 million Hondurans within national territory live in anxiety.

Honduras is submerged in the political terrorism of the tripartism, whose members protect one another. They are the root of all the evils of a noble yet brave people. And as long as they remain in power, that root will continue to sprout again and again, generation after generation, each one more invasive and voracious than the previous.

It is not enough to reform laws to imprison: one must guarantee that no one is above them.



## El Salvador: The Stairway to Development

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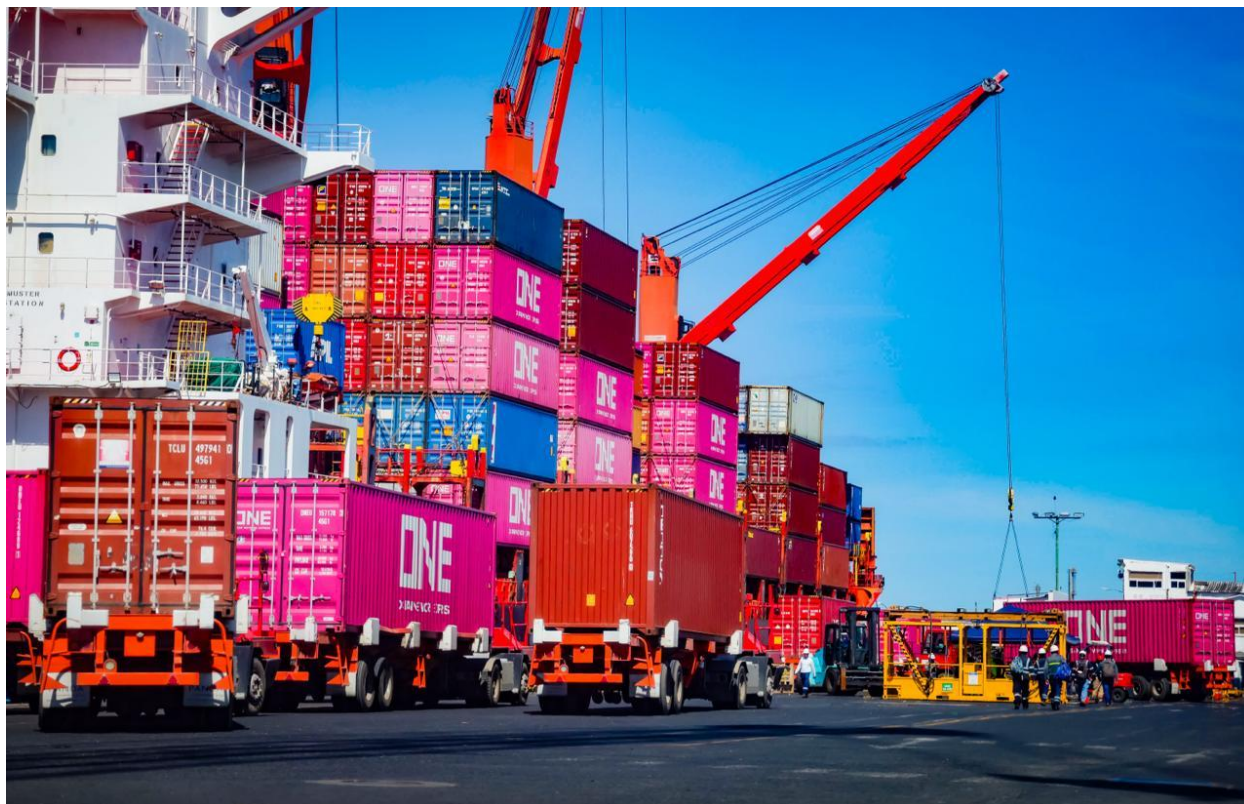


For decades, Salvadorans learned to view economic development as a distant reality reserved for other nations. Today, however, signals are beginning to emerge that invite us to imagine a different future. The recent announcement of a US\$2.9 billion investment by Cox represents much more than an extraordinary figure. It is a bet on El Salvador's potential as a destination for major energy and water infrastructure projects.

And it does not arrive in isolation.

Energía del Pacífico, with US\$1.1 billion; Yilport, with commitments totaling US\$1.6 billion; and now Cox sum up to US\$5,600 million in announced investments pointing toward fundamental capabilities for a modern economy. Reliable electricity, competitive ports, natural gas, solar energy, and water supply: these are precisely the foundations upon which nations build industries, attract companies, and generate opportunities.

What is truly exciting is beginning to visualize how these pieces could complement each other. Let us imagine an El Salvador capable of attracting new industries, becoming a regional energy hub, and offering our youth specialized jobs, better salaries, and opportunities without the need to emigrate.



That horizon no longer has to be merely a dream. Naturally, announcements must turn into executed projects and measurable results. Development demands education, technology, sustained investment, and intelligent public policies. But something important is happening: we are beginning to speak of the Salvadoran future in terms of infrastructure, productivity, and international competitiveness.

Perhaps our generation will not witness the entirety of the transformation. But we can feel pride in witnessing its first steps.

Because development does not happen overnight. It is built step by step. El Salvador has the opportunity today to begin the climb. Let us make President Bukele's words our own: Patience and confidence.

## Security Funds Are Guaranteed in the 2027 Budget



Upon the presentation of the 2027 General State Budget bill by the Ministry of Finance, a primary conclusion must remain clear to the citizenry: public security indisputably remains the priority public policy and the fundamental pillar of development in El Salvador under the administration of President Nayib Bukele.

Although the bill contemplates a financial reengineering with a projected global allocation of \$997.2 million for public security—reflecting a \$40 million reduction in the combined Security and Defense category compared to the 2026 fiscal year—this technical adjustment responds to a phase of strategic and institutional maturity. It is not a contraction of the State's coercive capacities, but rather the transition from emergency spending toward a sustainable and efficient administration of the pacified territory.

From the global security budget, 32% (\$314,596,852) will be administered by the Ministry of Defense. The design of this allocation demonstrates an absolute focus on tactical and dissuasive operativity. Proof of this is that 97% of this amount, equivalent to \$306,067,152, will be injected directly into institutional operational management. In terms of criminal phenomenology, this guarantees the uninterrupted maintenance of territorial control in urban and rural areas, the sophistication of surveillance systems, the increase in response capacity, and the social prophylaxis necessary to neutralize any attempt at expansion or reorganization of criminal structures.



Additionally, the budgetary architecture ensures the progressive equipment of military units and the strengthening of state regulation. At a technical level, greater resources will be provided to agencies responsible for the registration and strict control of firearms, ammunition, and explosives—a vital component for crime prevention. Likewise, geopolitical projection remains firm, ensuring the presence of our Armed Forces abroad.

In this budget optimization process, it is imperative to dispel any speculation regarding the human foundation supporting the state security apparatus. The State has categorically and inalienably guaranteed that there will be no economic impact on personnel. Salaries, bonuses, and all statutory benefits for National Civil Police (PNC) and Armed Forces personnel are fully guaranteed and intact for 2027. The dignification of human talent remains untouchable. Without a doubt, President Bukele has instructed the Minister of Finance that security funds continue to be a priority.

The strategic outlook for 2027 is forceful. El Salvador takes no step backward in its security policy, in the strategy of the Territorial Control Plan, and the complement of the state of exception. With police and military remunerations secured and a budgetary focus oriented toward operativity, citizen defense remains President Nayib Bukele's highest priority. The year 2027 will be a new year to consolidate the most successful strategy in the history of our Republic. As the Círculo de Reflexión Política Siglo XXI, we rejoice over this strategic decision and congratulate Mr. President Nayib Bukele because he demonstrates with evidence his broad political will for security for the population.



## Nayib Bukele and the Oracle of the Region



It is known to many, the narrative of the Lintel of Delphi in the temple of Apollo, which read the maxim: *Nosce te ipsum* (Man, know thyself)—the very place where the oracle was located and which once, according to Athenian chronicles, supposedly stated to the great philosopher Socrates that he was undoubtedly the wisest man in Greece. Whether this Greek narrative is true or not, we professors of philosophy have for decades used this fragment as a teaching method for new generations.

We have wanted to refer to this historical stance under the premise of making a comparison between that classical narrative and the reality El Salvador and the region are experiencing in political matters. The figure of President Nayib Bukele, although lacking the obvious characteristics of a born philosopher or master as such, holds a situation similar to the narrative—that is, the oracle, which today is not that of Delphi, but rather the acceptance of the vast majorities of the country and the region, who grant him the title of the most accepted and therefore the most capable for such labor.



Thus, it is necessary to realize that the comparison made is by no means equating Socratic wisdom with the Salvadoran president, but rather showing how, just like the legendary master of dialectics, President Nayib Bukele also has an oracle that grants him the title of leader of this nation and with it, of the destiny of the nation and the region. The greatest oracle one can possess is that of an entire people who desire a better quality of life and surrender it to the one who has shown them that he can fulfill that desire.



Thus, the voice of a people, which is the voice of the modern oracle, has expressed clarity about what they think of their leader, and he has the obligation to listen to their petitions and fulfill, to the extent possible, little by little, every aspect of social life that for decades was left in abandonment due to the irresponsibility in governance of the previous political parties. Therefore, the authentic formula employed and which has served as a reference for other countries in the region is undoubtedly the Lintel of the Salvadoran oracle.

*Vox populi est oraculum ducens!* The voice of the people is the guiding oracle!



## **US\$2.9 Billion Economic Investment Strengthens El Salvador's Economic Prospects**



The bet of Grupo Cox, headed by Spanish businessman Enrique Riquelme, opens new opportunities to modernize El Salvador's energy and water infrastructure.

El Salvador positions itself before a new opportunity for economic transformation following the announcement made by President Bukele of a US\$2.9 billion private investment by Grupo Cox, a Spanish multinational chaired by Enrique Riquelme. The agreement, signed with the Salvadoran government, contemplates strategic projects in energy, natural gas, electricity storage, drinking water, and sanitation. Authorities have noted that this is the largest private investment announced by President Bukele in national history.

The economic dimension of this initiative represents an amount equivalent to approximately 7% of Gross Domestic Product (Salvadoran GDP), as expressed by the president. Its execution could contribute to modernizing essential services, strengthening energy capacity, and creating favorable conditions to attract new productive investments.



Of the total announced, US 1.8 billion would be destined for natural gas infrastructure, around US 300 million for energy storage and solar energy-related projects, and more than US\$600 million for improving drinking water management and sanitation.

From a macroeconomic perspective, these investments can generate opportunities for construction companies, service providers, professionals, and Salvadoran workers. Likewise, a more diversified and efficient energy infrastructure could improve business competitiveness, reduce supply vulnerability, and favor the expansion of industrial and commercial activities.

The impact, however, will depend on the effective execution of the projects, construction timelines, job generation, and concrete benefits received by households and businesses. Contractual transparency and results evaluation will be fundamental to ensuring that this investment translates into sustainable development.

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