



INFORMATION BULLETIN

— 21ST CENTURY —

A publication of the 21st Century Circle of Political Reflection

San Salvador, El Salvador, Central America.

No. 59 | October 26–November 1, 2026

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Haiti and Bukele's leadership: the awakening of the Shield of the Americas

The crisis involving four Salvadoran aviation technicians brings the protection of compatriots, Bukele's leadership and El Salvador's role in hemispheric security to the forefront.

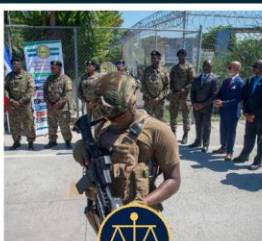
PAGES 1–2



Haiti: Bukele's leadership and El Salvador's international standing

Protecting four lives and turning an effective response into diplomatic trust and cooperation.

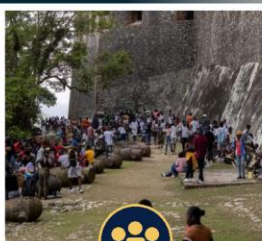
PAGES 3–7



Haiti: Where the State is absent, President Bukele will bring the State

Restoring State authority as a condition for peace, law and order, and freedom.

PAGES 7–9



Haiti: multilateral failure and inaction

The limits of international aid and the need for action capable of protecting lives.

PAGES 9–10



Military personnel missing in Haiti El Salvador does not abandon its own

The State's response seeks to bring the four Salvadoran aviation technicians home safe and sound.

PAGES 10–12



El Salvador settling historical debts

Public education as an investment to settle debts to citizens and democracy.

PAGES 12–15



Development requires sacrifice

Effort, adjustments and generational responsibility to build better living conditions.

PAGES 15–17

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



What led the Honduran elite to become involved in drug trafficking?

PAGES 17–24



Honduras governed by pamphlets

PAGES 24–26



A voice that cannot speak: our pets

PAGES 26–28

“

The immediate priority has four names and four lives.

Haiti: leadership and international standing



Members of the 21st Century Circle of Political Reflection of El Salvador

Juan Contreras • Oscar Martínez Peñate • Nelson Flores • Mélida Villatoro • Aldo Álvarez
René Martínez Pineda • Mauricio Rodríguez • Rafael Góchez • José Valdez • Christian Colón





NEWSLETTER

21st Century Political Reflection Circle

San Salvador, El Salvador • N°59 • October 26 to November 1, 2026

info@crpsigloxxi.org | <https://crpsigloxxi.org/newsletters>

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

Haiti and Bukele's Leadership: The Awakening of the Shield of the Americas



The ambush against four Salvadoran flight mechanics in Croix-des-Bouquets has ceased to be a military contingency and has become the stellar stage where Nayib Bukele redefines hemispheric geopolitics. Faced with the chronic vacuum left by two decades of inaction by the UN, the OAS, and the failure of foreign contingents devoid of doctrine, the Salvadoran president has broken regional inertia with a stroke of authority: a direct ultimatum, the deployment of elite forces, and an unnegotiable resolution to protect his own.



Today, Bukele capitalizes on unprecedented political capital. His strategic alignment with Washington and Donald Trump's pragmatic backing consolidate San Salvador as the continent's sole interlocutor with legitimacy and proven methods against transnational organized crime. While neighboring leaderships opt for passive containment and forum speeches, Bukele projects real power and *de facto* activates what could be the first great mission of the Shield of the Americas, demonstrating that Caribbean security is not resolved with press releases, but with vertical leadership and tactical superiority.



For Haiti's Transitional Council, this conjuncture represents a historic and unrepeatable opportunity. Clinging to exhausted multilateral missions only guarantees prolonging anarchy. The alternative is to align with the Bukele Model: articulate a joint offensive, dismantle the gangs, and apply to their kingpins the absolute isolation regime that proved successful within the Salvadoran penitentiary model.

From a strategic and economic perspective, power vacuums are not tolerated; they are occupied. Nayib Bukele not only fills that vacuum, but assumes the moral and operational command of the region. El Salvador no longer asks for permission on the international board: it leads, executes, and sets the standard for hemispheric stability.

Haiti: Bukele's Leadership and the International Projection of El Salvador



For the families of the four Salvadorans detained in Haiti, what truly matters is that they return alive. That priority must guide any assessment of events. Surrounding it, however, unfolds a situation whose implications reach the credibility of the Salvadoran State, the leadership of President Nayib Bukele, and the place our country could occupy on the international scene.

On October 21, Bukele announced an operation to rescue the four Salvadoran aviation technicians who, as he explained, were participating in medical evacuation tasks within an international mission. They had disappeared following the October 18 attack against the vehicle in which they were traveling. Their recovery constitutes a concrete test of state response to a crisis beyond our borders.

Observing these events solely through the exchange of threats or the videos circulating on social media leaves out a good part of their significance. A crisis of this nature demands political decisions, diplomatic coordination, resources, and institutional capacity. It also forces the assumption of responsibilities for the outcomes.



That is where Bukele's leadership gains relevance. By ordering the operation and publicly establishing the return of compatriots as the objective, the president links his authority to a verifiable commitment. The firmness of that decision must express itself in the capacity to conduct the necessary efforts to protect their lives, collaborate with allies, and respond to a complex environment.

Imagine what their safe return would represent. For the Salvadoran population, it would reinforce confidence in a State willing to act when its citizens are in danger abroad. For the countries participating in the mission, it could provide evidence that El Salvador is a partner capable of assuming responsibilities and contributing under pressure. For Bukele, it would add an international dimension to his leadership in security matters.

That dimension already has a concrete diplomatic space. At the Security Council session dedicated to Haiti, representatives from various countries expressed solidarity with El Salvador. The United States manifested its support for the recovery of the Salvadorans, while our representation highlighted coordination with international contingents. The crisis is being observed within the main United Nations organ charged with international peace and security.

This allows us to retrieve a precedent that deserves attention. In June 2019, at the beginning of Bukele's presidency, El Salvador presented its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2020–2021 period. It was not elected; the post went to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. That nomination left on record an early aspiration to participate in international decision-making spaces.

There is, furthermore, a substantive connection between that aspiration and the contribution to collective security. Article 23 of the United Nations Charter establishes that, when electing non-permanent members, special attention must be paid to their contributions to international peace and security, along with equitable geographical distribution. Responsible and effective participation can, therefore, strengthen a country's credentials to aspire to that space.



If El Salvador were to promote a new candidacy, recognized performance in Haiti could form part of its arguments. Securing the seat would demand building support: the election requires a two-thirds majority of members present and voting in the General Assembly. Field performance would have to be accompanied by sustained relations with Latin America, the Caribbean, and other regions.

The geopolitical opportunity consists precisely in converting demonstrated capacity into diplomatic trust. For a small country, being considered useful and reliable in a matter of international importance can expand its access to conversations, alliances, and decisions that affect its interests. El Salvador could gain greater weight in the regional security agenda and project that experience toward multilateral debates.

That recognition could also contribute to national development, through an indirect relationship worth understanding. Closer cooperation can facilitate specialized training, technological exchange, and institutional



strengthening. Diplomacy with better relations can open conversations regarding trade, education, and investment. For those possibilities to produce benefits, concrete agreements, follow-up, and execution capacity within the country would be necessary.

Let us think of a simple chain: working effectively with other States can generate trust; that trust can expand cooperation; and well-oriented cooperation can strengthen national capabilities. Economic value appears when those capabilities translate into better services, knowledge, and opportunities for Salvadorans. International visibility offers a door that must later be known how to leverage.

Therefore, success must be evaluated in depth. Recovering the four compatriots would be a human and operational result of enormous importance. Consolidating an international reputation would demand, furthermore, protecting the civilian population, respecting Haitian sovereignty, and acting in coordination with its authorities and the multinational force. The manner of achieving the objective will also determine how it is perceived.

Haiti has its own history, institutions, and complexities. A successful rescue would have a specific scope; the stabilization of the country requires a much broader and sustained effort. Recognizing that difference allows us to seriously value what El Salvador could contribute and avoids attributing to a single operation results that still must be constructed.

Nayib Bukele's leadership faces here the possibility of demonstrating that political determination can be sustained through institutional capacity and international cooperation. If the compatriots return safely and Salvadoran action obtains recognition for its efficacy and responsibility, the country would have a new argument to make itself heard.

The immediate priority has four names and four lives. The subsequent horizon would be to convert an effective response into lasting trust and that trust into opportunities for El Salvador. Therein might be found the transcendence of this episode: in the capacity of a small country to assume responsibilities that expand its influence and contribute to the well-being of its people.



Haiti: In a Non-Existent State, President Bukele Will Bring the State

As we have maintained on multiple occasions, no possible society exists where effective power is not exercised by the State. Peace, security, freedom, and economic development are not spontaneous phenomena. They are the direct consequence of the existence of institutions capable of imposing the rule of law over those who seek to replace it through violence. Wherever the Law disappears, brute force inevitably emerges. Wherever the State retreats, criminal organizations advance.



Precisely that seems to be the tragedy Haiti is living today.

The recent ambush and kidnapping of Salvadoran military personnel deployed in Haitian territory as part of an international mission backed by the United Nations constitutes much more than a simple security incident. It represents the most evident manifestation of a much deeper political and institutional phenomenon: the practical non-existence of the Haitian State across broad zones of its territory. The Salvadoran personnel formed part of a multinational force destined to combat criminal organizations that maintain extensive areas of the country under their control and openly challenge legitimate authorities.



What has occurred in Haiti inevitably recalls the El Salvador we knew for decades. A country where gangs came to exercise territorial control, impose their own rules, collect extortion, determine who could enter or leave certain communities, and permanently challenge state authority. In practical terms, that constituted a grave degradation of the Rule of Law and a dangerous advance toward conditions characteristic of a failed state.

The difference is that El Salvador decided to reverse that situation. The recovery of the legitimate monopoly of force by the State made it possible to restore the Law, recover territories, return security to millions of citizens, and re-establish minimum conditions for social coexistence and economic development.

For that reason, the ultimatum launched by President Nayib Bukele to the captors of the Salvadoran military personnel possesses a dimension that transcends the rescue itself. Bukele has demanded the immediate and unharmed release of the hostages and has warned that, should this not occur, military operations will intensify significantly. He even reminded Haitian criminal groups that "We have already finished off the gangs in El Salvador, and we can finish yours off too."

The underlying issue is evident. When a State leaves power vacuums, someone occupies them. In Haiti, it has been the gangs. In El Salvador, before the transformation of recent years, it was them too. The difference lies in the fact that El Salvador decided to rebuild state authority; Haiti still struggles to recover it.

Therefore, the potential Salvadoran intervention to rescue its compatriots contains a profound political symbolism: in those places where the State has practically disappeared, someone must re-establish the Law. Because a truth remains universal and immutable: where the Law does not prevail, order cannot exist, and where order does not exist, freedom, democracy, and prosperity end up being impossible. In a non-existent State, President Bukele seems to have decided to bring precisely what Haiti needs most: the State.



Haiti: Multilateral Failure and Inaction



This week it became known that four Salvadoran military personnel, members of the international mission deployed in Haiti by the UN, were kidnapped by criminal structures exercising territorial control in said country. This grave incident brings to light the profound institutional decomposition of a practically disintegrated State and exposes the severe limits of international aid when a firm and strategic decision to resolve essential problems is absent. For the country, the event has a direct implication: its military personnel are exposed to grave risks in a scenario where international organizations have failed to restore order or guarantee minimum security conditions.

The sad Haitian scenario constitutes a reminder of what happens when the State loses the monopoly of force and remains prostrate before corruption and inefficiency. Recent Salvadoran experience offers, instead, a significant contrast: the recovery of territorial control against gangs has required the strategic alignment of institutions and a frontal political decision, as evidenced by the results obtained, backed both by objective data and overwhelming citizen approval.

The case of Haiti is especially alarming due to the inaction of multilateral organizations such as the OAS and the UN, as well as the practical disinterest of international powers toward a country abandoned to the law of



the jungle. The dispatch of international goodwill missions, lacking effective strategies and a firm decision to combat crime, contributes to maintaining the Caribbean nation in persistent collapse.

It is imperative that the international community assume a firm and comprehensive commitment to dismantle these criminal structures and rescue the Haitian people from their prostration. El Salvador, which knows firsthand the cost of living under criminal domination, has additional reasons to demand that international cooperation translate into actions capable of protecting lives and restoring order.

Missing Military Personnel in Haiti: El Salvador Does Not Abandon Its Own



During the week just ending, the disappearance of four Salvadoran military personnel stationed in Haiti captured the attention of the local and international community. They were operating under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2793, which transformed the former Multinational Security Support Mission into a new one denominated the Gang Repression Force—this due to the exponential growth of gangs in the Caribbean country. It must be noted that the four military personnel belong to the Salvadoran Air Force in the capacity of flight technicians; it is known they went to provision themselves with food products and it was there that they were ambushed by Haitian gang terrorists, after which communication with them was lost.



Faced with such a situation, President Nayib Bukele did not spare resources to ensure our Salvadoran brothers return home safe and sound.

El Salvador is now recognized for its bravery and determination—an example to the world when it comes to eradicating delinquency, where a small country is recognized executing large operations. Evidently, sectors exist that oppose our country doing everything to recover our Salvadoran brothers. What must be recognized, however, is that a country like El Salvador—and above all, counting on a president who has repeatedly shown that his fundamental interest is the Salvadoran citizen, and consistent with his form of government—has not abandoned our currently missing military personnel to their fate.

The president has already sent his warning to the Haitian gangs, accompanied by a military offensive that portends an unflattering end for those who have subjected the Haitian people—a country with an economic contraction of -2% of GDP and an unemployment rate of 85%.



El Salvador Paying Off Historical Debts



The historic budget allocated to the education portfolio for the year 2027 is unquestionably the point of no return in the social transformation of the country being led by President Nayib Bukele. In El Salvador, as a product of decades and decades of corruption and the abandonment of the people, practically everything related to social development for the people's benefit is a historical debt, meaning the president inherited a country with multiple debts, all of them historical.

However, looking toward the future as a fulfilled promise, the most important historical debt being paid off in our country is that of public education, as this settles many other debts. In administrations prior to Nayib Bukele, public education was not only ridiculed in the budgets assigned to it, but also abandoned in terms of educational reforms, and school infrastructure was a version of prisons.

In that sense, committing to public education with a genuinely significant budget, both quantitatively and qualitatively (8.1% of GDP and more than 25% of the general budget), is also paying off the historical debt



with political culture, inasmuch as the school is what forges professionally competent citizens with noble social values and fully committed to the country's well-being.

In the broadest and most symbolic sociological sense, paying off the debt to public education (which is only questioned by the most obtuse opponents and their commissioned sophists) is paying off the historical debt to democracy, since the latter does not exist—or is artificial—in a country where its population has a very low schooling rate and nonexistent educational quality. This is because democratic exercise, in all its nuances, presupposes that it is done with informed awareness, and that is largely the result of high levels of schooling.

In that sense, paying off the historical debt to democracy—which is the horizon of all social transformations championed by Nayib Bukele—refers to the continuous process whereby, breaking old political paradigms, the State constitutes itself as a *de facto* social actor seeking to resolve at the root the profound deficiencies, shortages, social inequalities, and unfulfilled promises accumulated throughout decades of previous governments whose officials only sought to resolve the low balance of their savings accounts.

In El Salvador, the ideal benchmark of what it implies to reinvent a country and reinvent political leadership beyond the political, paying off the historical debt to democracy demands at least three sociological and political dimensions:

1. Rebuilding the concept of "democracy" in the image and likeness of the people and the time in which we live. Out of cognitive indolence, classical sociology and politics approached the topic of democracy from a strictly bureaucratic perspective (periodic elections, false separation of powers, governability as institutionalized dark negotiations). However, critical sociology posits that democracy has a formal edge, but this alone is not capable of sustaining itself if the country lives under conditions of generalized violence, lack of opportunities, legitimized impunity, and corruption as a social benefit for politicians. In that sense, paying off the historical debt to democracy, just as President Nayib Bukele is doing, implies building a real and substantive democracy where political rights expand to the diaspora and, above all, truly translate into material-spiritual well-being and a dignity starting from the premise that the public must be better than the private, as that is what guarantees the quality of citizens.
2. Investing significantly (quantitatively and qualitatively) in education (a strategic and foundational pillar), security, health, and sociocultural rights. Along this line, sociology (a social science made visible during Nayib Bukele's administrations) posits that public services like those mentioned are not



reduced to pushing welfarist public policies (almost always piddling), but are preconditions for the concrete exercise of democracy. Thus, by substantively investing in public education, not only is the historical debt to it being paid off, but the historical debt to democracy is also settled, under the understanding that an educated, secure citizen with fully covered basic needs is free to participate in the political destiny of the country.

3. Breaking with the perverse practices of the past and opening new paradigms of life. In the country, popular dissatisfaction, disillusionment, and disenchantment with the type of democracy that was had and suffered weakened the legitimacy and institutionality of the Salvadoran political system. Thus, paying off historical and structural debts (adding to those mentioned earlier the elimination of dubious financings—political debt—of parties, the sustained provision of basic quality infrastructure, and the recovery of territorial control) represents the genuine framework of citizen trust in the capacity and pertinence of the State to transform reality—an action that is only possible if one possesses leadership of the magnitude of Nayib Bukele's.



Development Implies Sacrifice



El Salvador is undergoing a unique and complex process that entails ups and downs; this reality must by no means be viewed as a flaw in the decisions being taken. On the contrary, one must understand that every vision and action to improve a nation entails certain sacrifices—what the Salvadoran president termed at the beginning of his second mandate as "bitter medicine." That is, a space of sacrifice to establish the bases for a better way of life.

Master Bernardo Stamateas once expressed: "If you look at my success, look also at my sacrifice." One cannot pretend to achieve great things without a minimum of effort or sacrifice, and when dealing with a country, all the more reason. We have all experienced the storm before the calm, the pain before the peace, the chaos before the order, and so on; in the exact same manner, when it comes to moving a nation forward, there must be the sacrifice of a generation to leave better conditions for those to come.





This stated beforehand allows us to establish an inevitable truth: the pain and unpleasantness of the treatment and the medicine are necessary to achieve the patient's health (making a medical allegory). In the same fashion, it is necessary to feel social and economic difficulties, among others, when making the adjustments required for the growth and development of a nation. There is no other path to social development than that of laying foundations that are almost never seen once the building is raised.

Thus, let us not enter into despair when there are difficult aspects to face in our society. On the contrary, let us feel part of the state column being erected as an example of a republic for the region. Surely great successes, achievements, and improvements will come in all areas of the social life of our great country, but this moment of adjustments and sacrifices is necessary in pursuit of our children and grandchildren, who will undoubtedly live in a country that those of us who are now adults only dreamed of.

Let us have the courage and joy of being the generation of the foundation, of offering our effort for those who come, and of living in accordance with what Master Giorgio Cantarini expressed: "That is the sacrifice my father made. The gift he had for me."

What Led the Honduran Elite to Link Itself to Drug Trafficking?



The second edition of the book *"Tierra de Narcos"* (Grijalbo publishing house), by Honduran journalist Óscar Estrada, includes a new chapter bearing the title of this article. Due to its importance, the relevant points of said chapter are summarized below, with slight additions of our own.

It begins by noting that, after the disintegration of the Central American Federation, it was evident that the country lacked the economic conditions to face the challenges of a modern State. However, the urgency to prevent the uprising of the oppressed rushed the Creole elites to separate first from Spain—they state it in Article 1 of the Act of Independence!—and later from Mexico.

Unlike other colonies on the continent, considerable capital accumulations did not occur in Central America, and capitalism barely reached these lands until the last quarter of the 19th century. The only resource was land, the native labor force, and minerals, if present in a given area.

In the case of Honduras, reform efforts occurred to create an enclave economy (1876–1883), marking from then on the fracture in the ruling elite that has evolved to our present day. Between 1876 and 1926, the conflict occurred between those linked to transnational capital (mining and bananas) against those focused on monoculture (coffee, tobacco, indigo, sarsaparilla, and cattle herds).



The fracture occurred with the entry of banana capital at the end of the 19th century, deepening during the 20th century with the development of urban centers on the north coast in the first half of that century. A bourgeois class then emerged, formed mainly by Palestinian migrants and some nationals who—unlike the elite—focused on trade for banana workers, allying with the modern fraction arising from the liberal reform, with an interest in commerce rather than land.

The depression of the early 20th century and the consequences of World War II contributed to consolidating the traditional elite, giving rise to what the author calls *pax cachureca*, marked by the heavy hand of dictator Tiburcio Carías Andino (1933–1949), which allowed the country to isolate itself from the world. The hegemonic class fraction previously linked to transnational mining and banana capital was then displaced when the United States reoriented its resources to recover its economy and for the war effort.

The *pax cachureca* ended when Juan Manuel Gálvez (1949–1954) assumed the presidency, as the United States shifted toward a more expansive policy. Gálvez and Julio Lozano Díaz (1954–1956) were former employees of the banana companies. By then, the first national financial system was forged (Central Bank of Honduras and National Development Bank, today BANADESA), allowing the country to enter—50 years late—into the logic of 20th-century capitalism.

Pressure from the banana companies and the new role of the United States prompted the exit of Carías and the rise of the alleged reformist sector of the National Party. The same occurred in the Liberal Party, with struggles between the modern sector, led by Ramón Villeda, and the traditional vision of Modesto Rodas.

The author emphasizes that there are no boundaries between the traditional and modernist factions of both traditional parties, nor even within emerging political forces like the Libre Party, which self-identifies as left-wing.

Another key actor was the military, whose power lasted eighteen years, openly allying with the reformist sector of the National Party. For this reason, one of its leaders—Ricardo Zúñiga Agustínus—served as vice president in every military government until the return to democracy in 1982. Throughout all those governments, the businesses of the modern elite and U.S. transnational companies were favored.

Between 1962 and 1982, the capital that would help shape modest Honduran industrialization was also established, thanks to its alliance with the military. The author cites Miguel Facussé Barjum, whose fortune he



attributes to the bankruptcy of the National Investment Corporation (CONADI), which had been created to develop national industry.

In the early 1980s, the ruling leadership was two-headed: on one hand, the government of Roberto Suazo Córdova (1982–1986), who belonged to the traditional faction—and was heir to Rodas Alvarado—and on the other, the Association for the Progress of Honduras (APROH), a "parallel State" sponsored by the U.S. Embassy with a marked anti-communist line that defended a modern vision of economic development.

Following the electoral triumph of Rafael Leonardo Callejas in 1989, the tendency to favor the modern elite over the traditional one became evident, backed by the neoliberal winds of Reagan and Bush Sr., which assisted maquila exporters, financial capital, and the agro-export sector.

The traditional faction of the elite, marginalized from economic development, sought new ways to accumulate wealth and power. It was at this juncture that drug trafficking entered to support economic and political capital.

During that era, most shipments traveled via Caribbean sea and air routes. Trafficking through Honduras at that time was simple contraband controlled by military officers who collected bribes (*coima*) to let it pass.

Mario and Mary Ferrari—murdered by the military in 1977—and Ramón Matta Ballesteros acted as liaisons between the Medellín and Guadalajara cartels, while the country remained merely a secondary drug route.

Colombian and Mexican drug traffickers established relationships with the military during the governments of Generals López, Melgar, and Paz, but the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in 1979 and the rise of Reagan changed the rules of the game. By 1980, Washington's geostrategic interests had shifted: defeating the Sandinistas was more urgent for them than preventing drug trafficking into the United States. To this must be

added the restrictions the U.S. Congress imposed on the White House regarding armed interventions or supporting foreign armed groups without authorization following the defeat in Vietnam.



Therefore, Reagan resorted to funds from arms sales to Iran (in what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal) and resources from drug trafficking in Mexico and Central America. Matta Ballesteros's planes flew from Honduras loaded with Colombian cocaine, unloaded in the United States, and reloaded with weapons purchased with profits from arms sales to Iran—then at war with Iraq—to fly back to Honduras carrying arms for the Contras. The 1987 appearance of Colonel Oliver North before the House Select Committee and the Senate Select Committee to report on these events remains memorable.

During the 1980s, the CIA controlled Honduran territory. Its relationship with South American and Mexican cartels became evident in 1985 with the murder in Mexico of DEA agent Enrique Camarena, who—according to declassified U.S. government testimony—discovered a training center for Contras in Mexico sponsored by the Guadalajara cartel.

Meanwhile, the Honduran military profited from Reagan's war in Nicaragua: the unchecked flow of dollars enriched high-ranking commanders, who cared little about the Cold War or the war against Colombian and Mexican narcos.

During the military dictatorship (1963–1982), the armed forces allied with the National Party and the modern faction of the elite. This elite fracture was not as clear within the Armed Forces, especially regarding agrarian



reform—one of the flagship projects of the modern faction—which was dismantled by the government of Melgar Castro, who governed in alliance with traditional sectors of the rural elite. The Los Horcones massacre (1975) was significant in ending agrarian reform, occurring on the farm of Manuel Zelaya Ordóñez, father and father-in-law—respectively—of former presidents Manuel Zelaya (2006–2009) and Xiomara Castro (2022–2026), both claiming left-wing affiliation.

Following the neoliberal reforms of Rafael Callejas (1990–1994), Hurricane Mitch caused devastation in 1998, ending the traditional faction's ability to accumulate capital to compete politically against the modern faction for control of the State. The modern faction was not particularly affected in its capital, given that its wealth rested on urban industries (maquila, financial sector, commerce, telecommunications, etc.), which were actually favored during Callejas's economic restructuring.

To this must be added that international cooperation adopted popular demands requiring electoral reforms following the 1985 constitutional crisis, when the two factions of the Liberal elite (traditional Suazo-Cordovists/Rodists versus the modernism of Azconists/Rosenthalists) clashed over their turn in that year's general elections. In 2001, the United States and the European Union—through the UNDP—promoted electoral reforms that appeared to be the solution to the lack of democratic representation.

For their part, drug traffickers—previously dependent on warlords in exchange for a fraction of the profits—no longer needed agreements with politicians to access power, as they could *be* power through the traditional faction, which they achieved in the 2001 elections with Pepe Lobo's arrival at the presidency of Congress.

Honduras's leaders since 2006 have been distant from the power centers of the modern faction: Manuel Zelaya and Pepe Lobo, both from Olancho; Juan Orlando Hernández, from Lempira—with the brief tenure of Micheletti, from Yoro—and Xiomara Castro, again from Olancho.

Since 2006, allegations were frequent in the press—controlled by the modern faction—linking President Manuel Zelaya to drug trafficking. He prevailed over his party's modern Liberal faction by partially financing his campaign with funds from drug trafficker Héctor Emilio Fernández Rosa, known as "Don H," who stated in New York courts that he financed him with two million dollars.

In those elections, he competed against Porfirio Lobo, linked to the Rivera Maradiaga family, heirs to the Aníbal Echeverría Ramos cartel. According to the author, this would have been anecdotal had the modern



fraction of the elite not committed the error of fostering a coup d'état against Zelaya in 2009, and here a brief parenthesis is warranted.

Drug trafficking requires agreements with whoever controls territory, whether military or Contras (in the 1980s) or civilians (since the 1990s). Plan Colombia pushed them to seek new routes through Mexico and Central America, while the Mérida Initiative moved Mexican cartels into Central America.

In modern democracies, whoever possesses campaign capital controls State structures. The modern Honduran elite—through its relationship with transnational capital and the United States—accumulated power, favoring its interests through State structures. The 2008 financial crisis prevented the modern faction from accessing capital from international banks, while Chavism capital—due to high oil prices at the time—favored the traditional faction of the elite.

The alteration of the balance between factions created conditions for the alliance between the traditional faction and drug trafficking, an alliance that still persists.

Analyzing the sectors that supported the 2009 coup d'état reveals the main representatives of the modern elite faction of both traditional parties (Liberal and National), as well as private enterprise and civil society groups.

At the same time, the traditional elite, previously adverse to popular sectors, allied with those social categories most affected by neoliberal policies. Drug trafficking, once again, favored the alliance with whoever exercised territory control in practice.

Juan Orlando Hernández, representing the traditional faction—like the two previous presidents—accessed the presidency in 2014 with financial help from drug trafficking, as previously indicated. With him, one sees how the traditional faction of the elite positioned itself in control of State resources, establishing legislative changes to guarantee the





necessary hegemony to face the modern faction politically and economically, which was politically weakened after the 2009 coup d'état.

This does not mean that either the traditional or modern faction takes measures in favor of the dispossessed classes. Both fight for access to State resources for their respective class factions, and drug trafficking—in that sense—is an available resource in that confrontation.

Reaching this point of friction among Honduran elites has taken 140 years, and it will not end soon. But only by understanding the underlying economic reasons can Hondurans determine what actions to take as a country to cease being a land of narcos.



Honduras Governed with Pamphlets



Honduras drifts without direction. Corruption remains merely under "suspicion," despite numerous pieces of evidence presented; corrupt politicians enjoy the privilege of defending themselves in freedom, whereas when an average citizen is accused, an operation deploying full military gear is mounted to capture them, parade them nationally, and then send them to a cell where nothing is ever heard of them again.

Meanwhile, insecurity continues to strike the population without mercy or respite, the health system crumbles, national and foreign investment retreats, and thousands of Hondurans are displaced daily. In this landscape, the three Branches of State, directed by the tripartisanship, are occupied with protecting their past and advancing their party-political agendas with an eye toward the 2029 elections, while many are already openly campaigning in violation of electoral law.

In 2025, Hondurans elected a new composition of the National Congress, with more than 70% new deputies. However, under the blanket and directives of tripartisanship, nine months into their tenure, many have become



more of the same: collecting their salaries and privileges on time while citizens struggle to secure one meal a day.

President Nasry Asfura travels primarily to Europe and the Middle East with the same old promise: "to attract multimillion-dollar investments." "Meetings," "business rapprochements," and "extraordinary opportunities" are announced, but nine months into his administration, all Hondurans have received are photos and pamphlets on social media—while on Honduran territory, there is total crisis.

Wagner Vallecillo, President of the Supreme Court of Justice, and his 15 magistrate partners have distinguished themselves by dismissing charges or granting the right to defend themselves in freedom to all the pawns, partners, narcos, money launderers, gang members, militants, sympathizers, activists, and politicians of the tripartisanship. For the rest of the population, all that remains is to be part of a judicial backlog exceeding 90%.

What a somber, terrifying, yet real landscape!

This scenario repeats every four years in Honduras. For the rulers of the three Branches of State, protecting their past is evidently more important. Congress should have begun by passing laws that dismantle corruption structures; President Asfura had the opportunity to empower Honduras in its market par excellence and strategic ally: the United States.

The President of the Court, Wagner, should have executed justice against the corrupt, because until that is resolved, Honduras will hardly receive foreign or national investments that generate resources in citizens' pockets, improve their quality of life, and reduce insecurity. The Government must become merely an arbiter, stripping party politicians of interference in citizens' lives.

A country is not governed with announcements, trips, or promises repeated from one administration to another. It is governed by solving root problems, confronting corruption without protecting allies, and placing the citizen above party interests.

Honduras is adrift, and its citizens continue to pay the consequences of reaching no port.

A Voice That Cannot Speak: Our Pets



Sometimes, we think that those who do not speak or remain silent have no voice, that they do not feel, or that they are incapable of expressing what happens to them because they are different from us. We often forget that there are also beings who depend on us and who need care, protection, and affection.

In this case, we are talking about our pets. For some, they are just another family member, even like a child; for others, they possibly represent merely a nuisance or a responsibility they do not wish to assume.

But there is something we must not forget: they also feel, suffer, and build bonds with those around them. Their loyalty is often demonstrated without words, accompanying us at different moments of our lives. Sometimes, it is enough to arrive home and see how they approach to greet us, how they seek our company, or how they remain by our side when we are not going through a good time. These are small details that remind us that a form of affection exists that needs no words.

However, not all pets have the same luck. While some grow up in homes where they receive attention and affection, others suffer abandonment, beatings, hunger, or remain tied up without the conditions necessary to live with dignity. At times, we even witness these situations and prefer to ignore them, as if it were not a problem that concerns us.

In El Salvador, the Special Law for Animal Protection and Welfare exists, seeking to protect animals and promote dignified treatment toward them. This law contemplates measures against abuse and establishes responsibilities for those



who have animals under their care. Its existence is important because it reminds us that animal welfare should not depend solely on individual will, but that a responsibility exists that we must fulfill.

Beyond what the law establishes, we must reflect on how we treat these beings who, on many occasions, seek only a home, food, and a little affection. It is not a matter of everyone having pets, but of understanding that if we decide to have one, we must assume the commitment it represents.

Because a pet should not be viewed as an object we can dispose of when it ceases to be convenient. It is a life that depends, to a large extent, on our decisions and the responsibility we assume upon bringing it into our home. Before adopting or buying an animal, we must also consider whether we possess the time, resources, and willingness to care for it throughout its entire life.

From our daily coexistence, we can begin to change this reality by teaching the youngest to respect animals, avoiding normalizing abuse, and understanding that having less capacity to defend oneself does not mean having less value. We can also act when we become aware of an abandonment or cruelty situation, seeking proper channels to report it.

In the end, they cannot defend themselves with words or explain what they feel, but that does not mean their suffering does not matter. Perhaps we will never fully comprehend the way they perceive the world, but we can make the effort to treat them with respect and responsibility.

Because a society also demonstrates its values in how it treats those who have no voice to demand their rights.

Members of the Political Reflection Circle of El Salvador 21st Century

Juan Contreras • Oscar Martínez Peñate • Nelson Flores • Mélida Villatoro • Aldo Álvarez • René Martínez •
Mauricio Rodríguez • Rafael Góchez • Jose Valdéz • Christian Colón

