



Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas



University Institute
for Public Opinion



AP Photo – Salvador Meléndez

THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN PUBLIC SECURITY IN EL SALVADOR

Assessing the Limitation of the Role of the
Armed Forces in Public Security Activities

OCTOBER 2020 | SERIES 1



Central America
Monitor

University Institute for Public Opinion
José Simeón Cañas Central American University

Research Coordinator
Laura Andrade

Primary Researcher
Laura Andrade

Research Assistant
Catherine Márquez

Editing
Carmen Guevara

Cover: AP Photo – Salvador Meléndez
First edition: October 2020

San Salvador, El Salvador
October 2020 | Series 1

The researcher and WOLA are exclusively responsible for the opinions expressed in this document, which do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the sponsors of this publication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
KEY FINDINGS	6
THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN PUBLIC SECURITY IN EL SALVADOR: ASSESSING THE LIMITATION OF THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES	8
Organization of the Salvadoran Armed Forces	8
Military Personnel	10
Military Operations	11
Budget of the Armed Forces	11
THE ARMED FORCES' INTERVENTION IN PUBLIC SECURITY	14
PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE ARMED FORCES	29
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES	31
ANNEXES	36
NOTES	37

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the problem of insecurity and impunity has deeply affected the people of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, making this region (known as the Northern Triangle of Central America) one of the most violent in the world. High levels of violence, corruption, and impunity have eroded the capacity of the states to develop accessible and efficient institutions, and address the needs of their populations.

The absence of effective responses has weakened citizens' confidence in state institutions, leading to an alarming number of people who have been internally displaced or forced to migrate to other countries to escape the violence and lack of economic opportunities.

Against this backdrop, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), the University Institute for Public Opinion (Iudop) of the José Simeón Cañas Central American University (UCA) of El Salvador, the University Institute on Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS) of Honduras, and the Myrna Mack Foundation (FMM) of Guatemala have developed a tool for monitoring and evaluating the policies and strategies currently being implemented in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to reduce insecurity and violence, strengthen the rule of law, improve transparency and accountability, protect human rights, and fight corruption. This initiative has been made possible thanks to the support of the Latin America Division of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Tinker Foundation, the Seattle International Foundation (SIF), and the Moriah Fund.

THE CENTRAL AMERICA MONITOR

The Central America Monitor is based on the premise that accurate, objective, and complete data and information are necessary to reduce the high levels of violence and insecurity, and establish rule of law and governance in a democratic state. This will allow efforts to move beyond abstract discussions of reform to specific measures of change.

The Monitor is based on a series of more than 100 quantitative and qualitative indicators that allow a more profound level of analysis of the successes or setbacks made in eight key areas in each of the three countries.¹ More than a comprehensive list, the indicators seek to identify a way to examine and assess the level of progress of the three countries in strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions. The indicators seek to identify the main challenges in each of the selected areas and examine how institutions are (or are not) being strengthened over time. The Monitor uses information from different sources, including official documents and statistics, surveys, interviews, information from emblematic cases, and analysis of existing laws and regulations.

The indicators were developed over several months in a process that included an extensive review of international standards and consultation with experts. The eight areas analyzed by the Monitor include:

1. Strengthening the capacity of the justice system;
2. Cooperation with anti-impunity commissions;
3. Combatting corruption;
4. Tackling violence and organized crime;

5. Strengthening civilian police forces;
- 6. Limiting the role of the armed forces in public security activities;**
7. Protecting human rights;
8. Improving transparency.

The Monitor reports are published by area and by country. The first series of reports will serve as the baseline for subsequent analysis, which will be updated annually. Each annual series of reports will be analyzed in comparison with reports from the previous year. This allows researchers, civil society organizations, and other actors to assess the level of progress in strengthening the rule of law and reducing insecurity.

The first round of Monitor reports will primarily focus on data sets from an approximate 4-year time period, 2014 to 2017, in order to provide a snapshot of Central America's institutions.

The Monitor will serve as a tool for searchable, easy-to-comprehend data, delineating trends, progress, patterns, and gaps within and between the three countries of the Northern Triangle. The data, graphics, charts, and reports will be available on the Monitor's website.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH FOR THIS REPORT

The quantitative data in this report was obtained via the bibliographic review of official reports, institutional annals, and relevant information available on the official transparency web pages of the Ministry of National Defense (*Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional, MDN*), the Salvadoran government, Ministry of Finance, and the library of the *Diario Oficial*.

In addition, requests for statistical information were made via the Public Information Access Law (*Ley de Acceso a la Información Pública, LAIP*) of El Salvador, which establishes a specific process by which government agencies must receive information requests and respond within a set timeframe.

This report primarily analyzes statistical data provided by the MDN, the Office of the Public Defender for Human Rights (*Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, PDDH*), and the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic (*Fiscalía General de la República, FGR*). Researchers also analyzed information published by the Latin America Security and Defense Network (*Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina, RESDAL*).

KEY FINDINGS

- Between 2014 and 2017, the Salvadoran government used the regulatory powers of the executive branch to design a legal framework to ensure the continued involvement of military personnel in public security. This involvement went beyond conducting joint patrols with the police: the executive orders gave the military the power to plan operations and control the perimeter of prisons and schools.
- It was not possible to obtain data on the number of military personnel during this period because the Ministry of National Defense refused to provide this information, categorizing it as classified because it has a direct bearing on the Ministry's legal interests against threats to national sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Official data from El Salvador's Ministry of National Defense (*Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional, MDN*) shows that the number of military personnel assigned to public security tasks rose from 7,900 in 2014 to 13,827 in 2017, a 75% increase. Meanwhile, data collected by the Monitor shows that the police force shrank by 7.2% over the same time period.
- Military participation has not been limited to public security. Between 2014 and 2017, troops were also assigned to guard the perimeter of prisons and schools.
- According to official information from the MDN, military personnel was assigned to public security tasks in nearly 20% of the country's municipalities.
- From 2014 to 2017, the MDN's budget dropped by just 5.4%, maintaining a budget of more than \$140 million. The data also shows that during the same period, the MDN spent \$49.1 million more than originally allocated.
- More resources were allocated to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (*Ministerio de Justicia y Seguridad Pública, MJSP*), the National Civilian Police (*Policía Nacional Civil, PNC*), and the Supreme Court of Justice (*Corte Suprema de Justicia, CSJ*) than to the MDN. However, the funding for the MDN was \$360 million more than that of the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic (*Fiscalía General de la República, FGR*).
- According to public opinion surveys conducted by the University Institute for Public Opinion (*Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública, Iudop*), public perception of the military is generally quite favorable, and registers higher confidence than the police force. Between 2014 and 2016, some 44.4 percent to 45.9 percent of Salvadorans surveyed reported having some or a lot of confidence in the Armed Forces. However, in 2017, public confidence reduced by approximately 5 percentage points.

- There are significant limitations hindering interagency supervision of the military's involvement in public security tasks, since such supervision would require that the Armed Forces submit to a civilian oversight authority. Furthermore, the legislation that allows the Armed Forces' participation in public security activities also grants it autonomy by focusing on expanding the scope of the Armed Forces' role, but not on police oversight of its performance on public security activities nor on prevention of abuses.

THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN PUBLIC SECURITY IN EL SALVADOR

Assessing the Limitation of the Role of the Armed Forces in Public Security Activities

The Salvadoran military is one of El Salvador's oldest government entities,² dating back to 1822 when El Salvador formed part of the United Provinces of Central America. Under the constitutional reforms implemented following the armed conflict, the President of the Republic is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (Art. 168, paragraph 11 and Art. 213 of the Constitution). The reforms also established that the Armed Forces is a permanent, professional, apolitical, and non-deliberative institution (Art. 211) that has the fundamental mission of defending El Salvador's sovereignty and territorial integrity³.

Furthermore, Article 217 of El Salvador's Constitution states that "firearms, ammunition, explosives, and similar items can only be manufactured, imported, exported, bought or sold, possessed, and carried with the authorization and direct supervision" of the Ministry of National Defense.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES

The National Defense Law⁴ establishes a National Defense System with three levels: the Policy Oversight Level, the Management Level, and the Implementation Level. According to Article 5 of this law, the first level is headed by the President of the Republic, an advisory group, and a task force, which together compose the National Security Council (*Consejo de la Seguridad Nacional*).

The second level consists of the ministers of the Fields of Action⁵: Internal, Diplomatic, Economic, and Military. The first of these refers to government preparations to safeguard the country with military support, when necessary; the second to support organizing for this effort; the third to adapting the economy in accordance with the country's needs; and the fourth with military deployment in defense of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Finally, Article 5.3 of the National Defense Law grants the Armed Forces significant involvement at the Implementation Level:

The Ministers are in charge of implementing the different Fields of Action, and the government bodies and institutions, along with the Branches of the Armed Forces, are tasked with enforcing the directives.

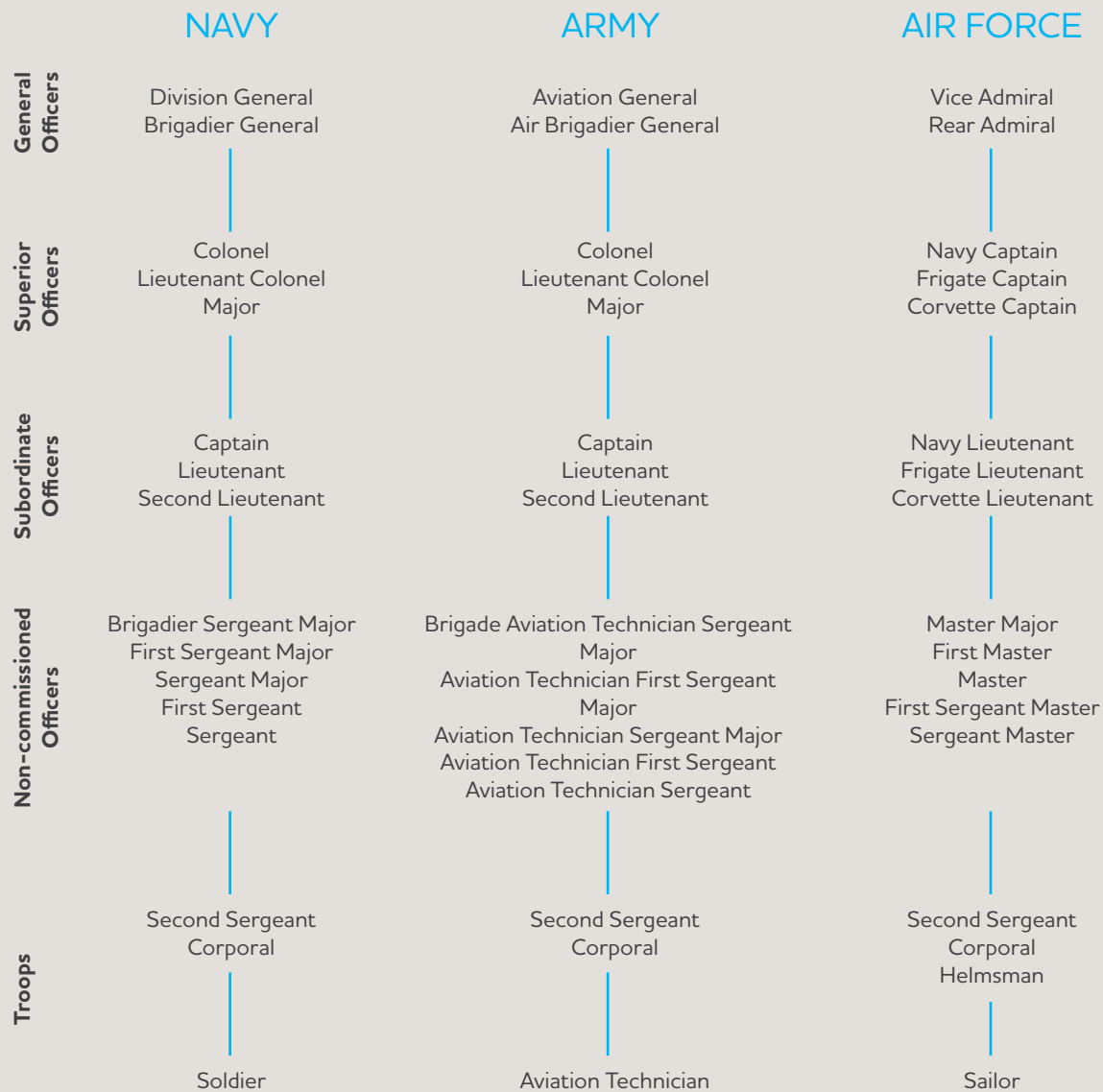
Although the Ministry of National Defense has full responsibility for forming the Military Sphere of Action, the above article gives the ministry an operational hand in the other fields as well. It is thus unsurprising that this ministry's organizational structure for 2014–2016 has four specialized departments for each of these spheres. These departments are under the command of the Defense Policy Directorate (see Annex 1). Furthermore, according to this ministry's Organizational Manual, many of the Armed Forces' strategic and operational bodies have ties to most ministries, such as the ministries of Foreign Relations, Health, Public Works, Transportation and Housing,

Treasury, Agriculture and Livestock, and others. The same document even states that the Ministry of National Defense, through the Defense Policy Directorate,⁶ will maintain ties with nongovernmental organizations such as the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic Development (*Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico, Fusades*) to monitor

and participate in initiatives related to the country's economic development.⁷ Documents from the MDN show that the laws governing its activities grant the military broad involvement within the Salvadoran government, regulating its participation and cooperation on economic, diplomatic, and political matters, in addition to military issues.

FIGURE 1

HIERARCHY OF THE ARMED FORCES



Source: *Military Career Law*⁹

In terms of its organization, the Armed Forces has a more robust hierarchical structure than that of the PNC. Article 9.4 of the Organic Law of the Armed Forces⁸ establishes three permanent branches of the military: the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy.

MILITARY PERSONNEL

The Access to Public Information Unit (*Unidad de Acceso a la Información Pública*) has repeatedly stated that the number of military personnel is classified, as it is considered information that has direct bearing on the protection of the MDN's legal interests from threats to national sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹⁰

However, the military's justification of its refusal to provide general statistics on the number of people it employs is incompatible with

Article 10.2 of the Public Information Access Law (*Ley de Acceso a la Información Pública, LAIP*), which considers that data to be public information. Similarly, the MDN's reasoning that publishing the number of people it employs is a national defense and public security risk does not make sense, given that the PNC, the main institution responsible for public security in the country, has published that information on its own transparency portal.

Despite these difficulties, it was possible to gather information on the number of military personnel in El Salvador only for two of the four years under study (2014 and 2016) through the Latin America Security and Defense Network (*Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina, RESDAL*) and its Comparative Atlas of Defense in Latin America and the Caribbean from 2014 and 2016, which report the number of military personnel in the country.

TABLE 1

MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES IN EL SALVADOR, 2014-2016

	2014			2016		
	24,799			24,023		
MDN Branches	Army	Air Force	Navy	Army	Air Force	Navy
	84%	8%	8%	84%	8%	8%
	20,897	1,957	1,945	20,179*	1,922*	1,922*
General MDN Member Categories				Officers	Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs)	Troops
				17%	6%	77%
				3,976	1,477	18,570
Sex of MDN Members	Men	Women		Men	Women	
	96.5%	3.5%		94.5%	5.5%	
	23,927	872		22,711	1,314	

Source: RESDAL, 2014 and 2016

*The RESDAL report only provides the percentage distribution of staff; the number of members per area corresponds to internal calculations

MILITARY OPERATIONS

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the MDN's main task in post-conflict El Salvador is to guarantee its territorial integrity. For that reason, much of its activity centers on securing land, air, and sea borders.

According to data published by the MDN, a total of 122,959 border surveillance operations were carried out between June 2014 and May 2018. Of these, 82.6% were land patrols in border areas, 9% were land patrols in the country's coastal areas or island territory, 6.5% were maritime patrols, and 1.9% were aerial missions.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF MDN BORDER SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS, 2014–2018

Type of Operation	Period				Total for 2014–2018
	June 2014–May 2015	June 2015–May 2016	June 2016–May 2017	June 2017–May 2018	
Land patrols in border areas	28,571	25,200	27,444	20,369	101,584
Land patrols in coastal and island areas	6,220	2,709	1,651	470	11,050
Maritime patrols	3,408	1,624	1,696	1,224	7,952
Air missions	1,351	476	254	292	2,373

Source: MDN, Annual Reports 2014–2018

These statistics reflect major military deployments to secure different types of borders. Even so, the data shows that each type of surveillance operation decreased significantly over the period covered by this report.

Land patrols on island territory experienced the sharpest drop, falling by 92.4% from over 6,200 in 2014–2015 to less than 500 in 2017–2018. Air surveillance missions saw the second-largest decrease, from over 1,300 to less than 300, a 78.4% reduction. Maritime patrols also dropped from 3,408 to 1,224 (64.1%). Lastly, patrols of land border areas fell from 28,571 to 20,369 in the same period, a 28.7% reduction.

As analyzed further on in this report, this

reduction could be due to the major impact of the high demand for armed forces personnel to participate in different areas of public security, leading to a drop in constitutionally mandated operations.

BUDGET OF THE ARMED FORCES

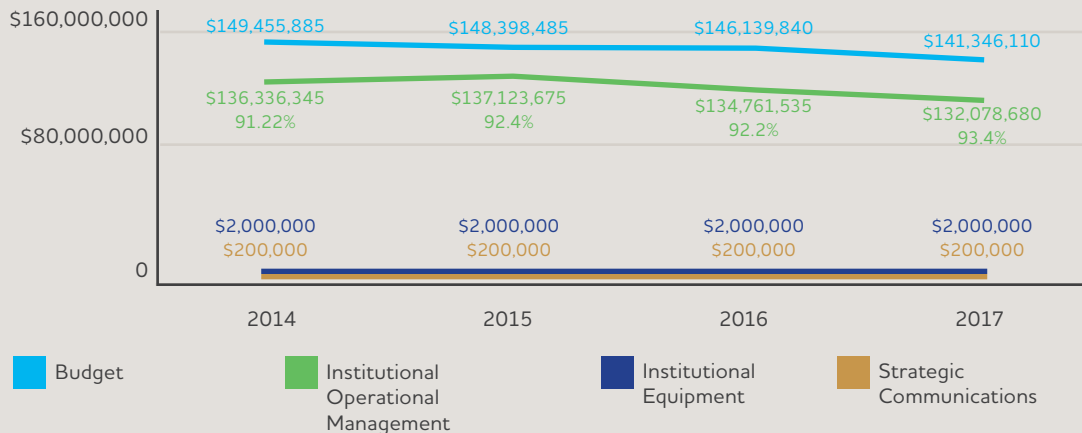
Information from the budgets approved by the Ministry of Finance show that, from 2014 to 2017, the resources allocated to the Ministry of National Defense dropped by just 5.4%, from \$149,445,885 in 2014 to \$141,346,110 in 2017, a decrease of \$8,109,775.

However, Ministry of Finance reports show that while the initial funds allocated to the MDN have dropped, the Institutional Operative

Management category, which covers the maintenance of Naval, Air Force, and Army units, accounts for more than 90% of its budget.

GRAPH 1

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET, 2014-2017



Source: Ministry of Finance 2014-2016, approved budget

The official information available¹¹ shows that the funds allocated to the Armed Forces of El Salvador constitute around 3% of the national

budget. Also, they were equivalent to 0.6% of the GDP for 2014 to 2017.

TABLE 3

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET AND NATIONAL GDP, 2014-2017

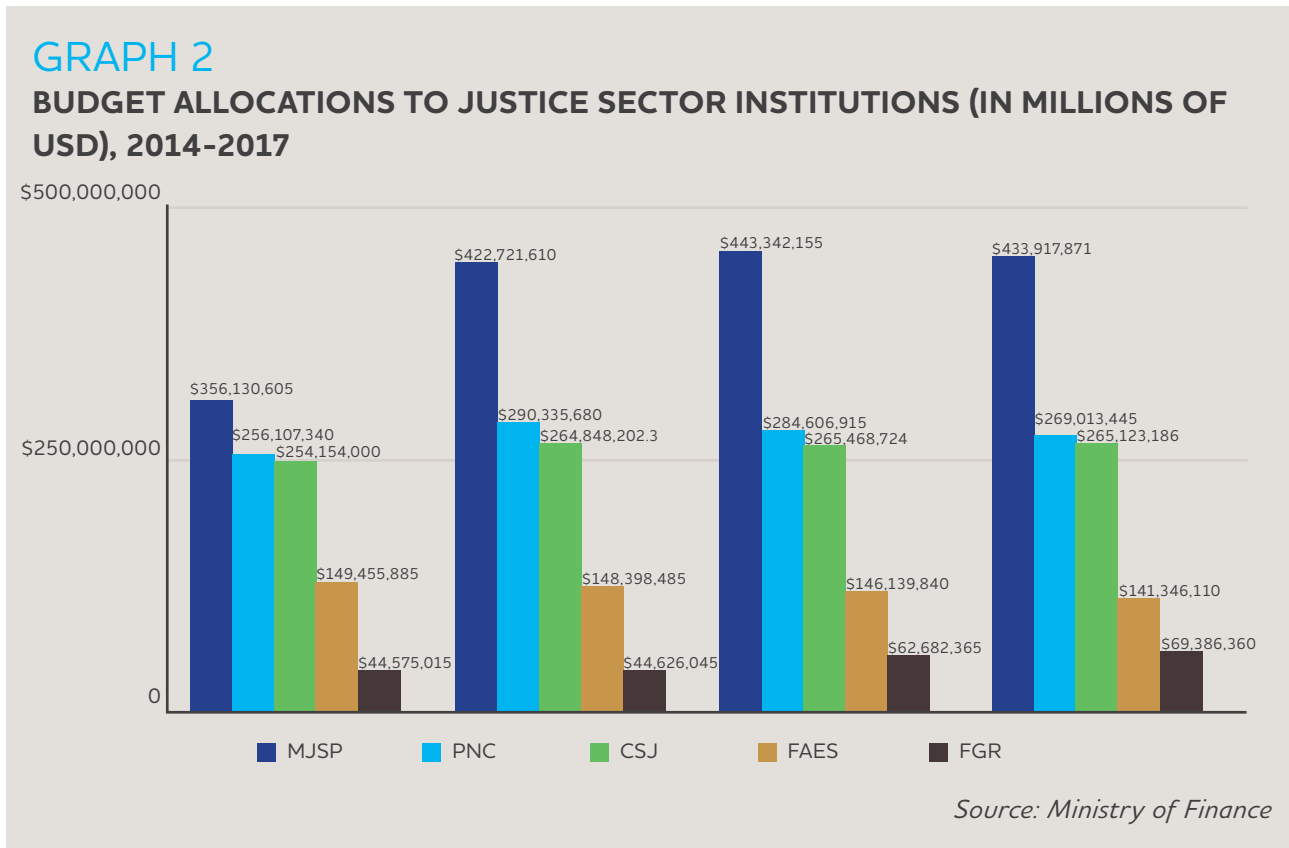
Year	Budget approved for the Ministry of National Defense (in millions of USD)	National budget (in millions of USD)	GDP at current prices (in millions of USD)	Budget approved for the Ministry of National Defense (% of national budget)	Budget approved for the Ministry of National Defense (% of GDP)
2014	149.5	4,679.5	22,593	3.19%	0.66%
2015	148.4	4,823	23,438	3.08%	0.63%
2016	146.2	4,860.8	24,154	3.01%	0.61%
2017	141.4	4,957.8	24,928	2.85%	0.57%

Source: Portal of Fiscal Transparency of the Ministry of Finance (2020) and International Monetary Fund (2019)

Additionally, according to official information from the Ministry of Finance,¹² institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the PNC, and the Supreme Court of Justice were allocated more resources than the Ministry of National Defense.

But notably, the Ministry of National Defense had a cumulative budget of over \$585 million

between 2014 and 2017, while the FGR had a budget of just \$221,269,785 for the same period. In other words, the Salvadoran Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas de El Salvador, FAES) received \$364,070,535 more than the FGR at a time when the country is not at war and despite the fact that the FGR is the main entity in charge of investigating crimes nationwide.



Another notable aspect of the Armed Forces' finances is the ratio of the approved budgets to the amounts actually executed as of the end of each fiscal year. The official data available¹¹ shows that from 2014 to 2017, the Armed Forces executed \$49.1 million more than were originally allocated.

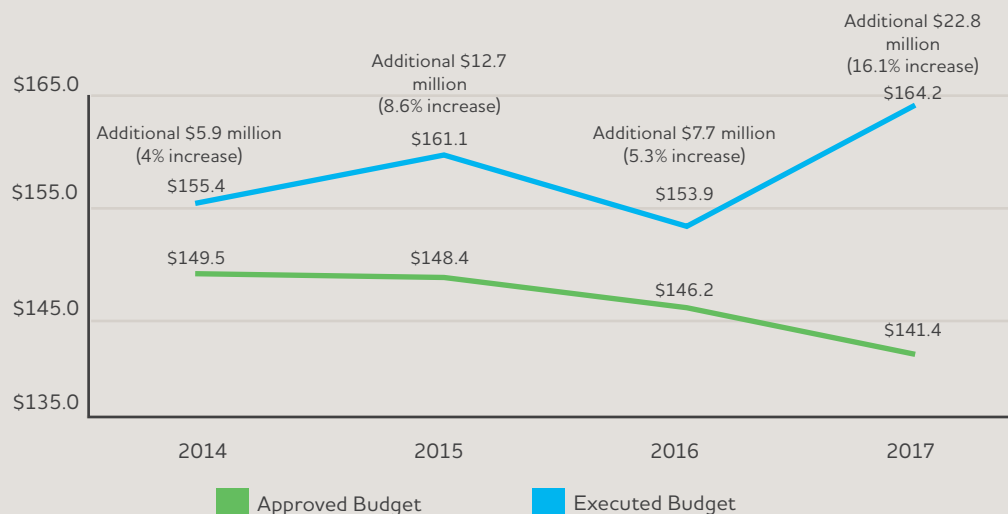
Budget execution was highest in 2017. This year, the MDN was originally allocated \$141.4 million, but as of the end of the fiscal year it had executed \$164.2 million, or 16.1% more than its

initial budget.

Records on the MDN's budget published by the Ministry of Finance show this increase in the line item category for Institutional Operational Management, which encompasses operations of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The line item was originally approved for \$132,078,680, but its budget execution was recorded as \$154,964,999, an increase of more than \$22 million.

GRAPH 3

BUDGET APPROVED AND EXECUTED BY THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (IN MILLIONS OF USD), 2014-2017



Source: Financial Transparency Portal (2020)

THE ARMED FORCES' INTERVENTION IN PUBLIC SECURITY

Prior research has demonstrated that El Salvador has experienced remilitarization processes that have opened the way for the intervention of the Armed Forces in different spheres of national life, especially public security.¹³

From 2014 to 2017, the Salvadoran government issued a series of executive orders that permitted the Army's uninterrupted participation in public security tasks.

The first order during the period covered by this report was issued in March of 2014. Executive Order No. 25, issued by President Mauricio Funes, instructed the Armed Forces to support the PNC between the end of the presidential elections of that year until two days after the

new administration was instated.

The Cerén administration, in power from June 2014 to June 2017, passed 5 new executive orders to ensure the annual renewal of the validity of military involvement in public security.

From the content of the orders issued during this period, it can be observed that the support provided by the military went beyond conducting joint patrols with the PNC. Between March and June of 2014, and between May 2015 and December 2016, the military had the power to plan operations, and control the perimeter of schools, which undeniably oversteps the powers that the Constitution grants the Armed Forces of El Salvador.

TABLE 4

TIMELINE OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS ISSUED TO USE THE MILITARY FOR PUBLIC SECURITY, 2014-2017

YEAR	DATE OF ISSUANCE	ORDER TYPE	ORDER NUMBER	BRIEF SUMMARY
2014	March 3	Executive	No. 25 ¹⁴	This order instructed a number of Armed Forces personnel to help the PNC maintain public security until June 3, 2014. These actions include planning and executing preventive operations and joint patrols, under the oversight of the PNC. The order includes peacekeeping operations in specific municipalities that show signs of increased violence, especially emphasizing the protection of national borders in places identified as unauthorized crossings and reinforced security around the perimeter of schools.
	June 6	Executive	No. 2 ¹⁵	This order modifies Executive Order No. 60 of September 28, 2009, which made the Armed Forces available to help the PNC maintain public security. This order extends the period of support until June 15, 2015 . This decree includes external perimeter security at prison facilities, intermediate centers, and juvenile detention centers, as well as support for guarding and security tasks at prison centers and controlling the people entering and exiting those facilities. The order states that the human and material resources of the Armed Forces would be used to achieve this purpose.
2015	May 26	Executive	No. 61 ¹⁶	This order again modifies Executive Order No. 60 of September 28, 2009, which makes the Armed Forces available to help maintain public security. It includes the power to plan operations , provides human and material resources, and extends the support until December 31, 2016 .
2016	April 21	Executive	No. 25 ¹⁷	This Order also modifies Executive Order No. 60 of September 28, 2009 and makes the armed forces available to help maintain public security until December 31, 2016 . Unlike the previous order, this one eliminates the power of planning operations. This order includes perimeter protection at schools.
	December 23	Executive	No. 68 ¹⁸	This order modifies Executive Order No. 60 of September 28, 2009 and makes the Armed Forces available to help maintain public security until December 31, 2017 .
2017	December 20	Executive	No. 49 ¹⁹	This order modifies Executive Order No. 60 of September 28, 2009 and makes the Armed Forces available to help maintain public security until Monday, December 31, 2018 .

Source: Official Record of El Salvador, 2014-2017

The immediate consequence of the military involvement in public security instructed in the orders cited above was an increase in the military

personnel supporting these activities. Although the MDN denied information requests regarding the total number of military personnel, the

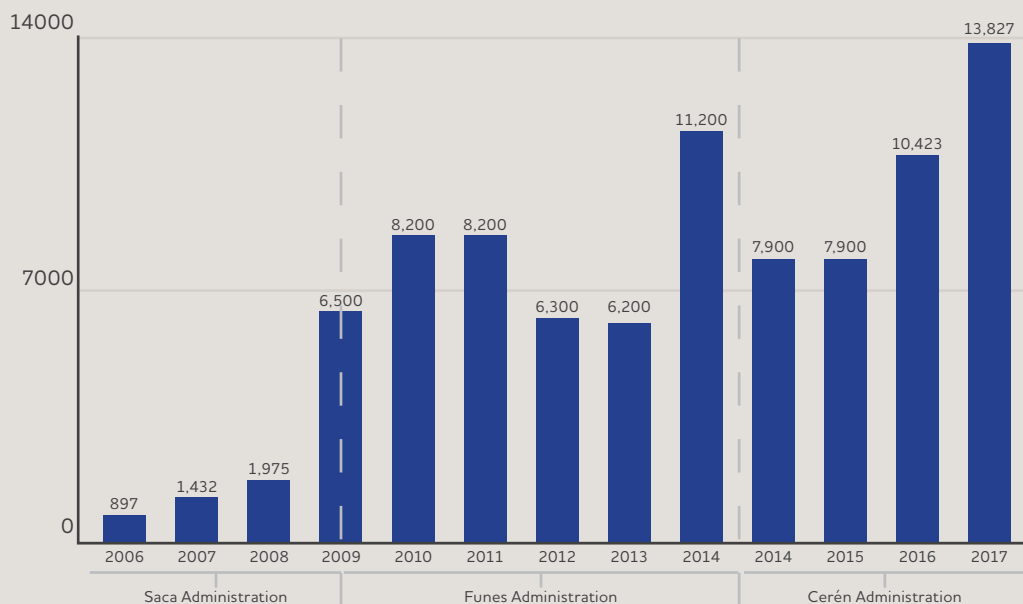
ministry did provide information on the number of military personnel who participated in public security activities.

Official information from the MDN shows that from 2006 to 2017, the number of military personnel involved in public security tasks rose

significantly, starting in 2009. More specifically, an average of 12,812 troops per year participated in this task each year between 2014 and 2017. The period saw a 23.5% increase in military personnel involved in public security, with a total of 13,827 troops in 2017, as compared to 2014, which began operations with more than 11,000.

GRAPH 4

MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES, 2006-2017



Source: Iudop, 2014 and MDN, 2019

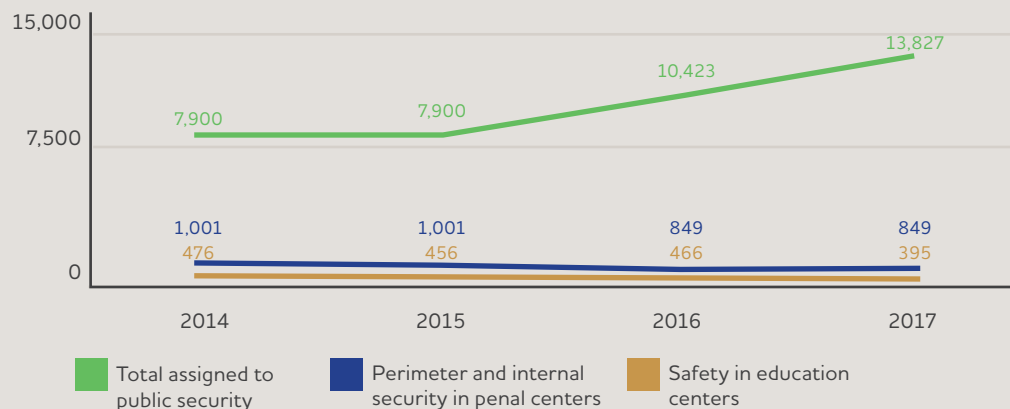
* 2014: The first data point corresponding to this year refers to the number of military personnel authorized until June 2014; after this date, a new decree was issued that authorized 7,900 personnel²⁰ for one year on a permanent basis¹³.

The content of the executive orders issued between 2014 and 2017, along with official statistics on the number of military personnel assigned to public security activities, revealed that “the plans for supporting security went from being marginal activities to being a significant part of the normal and strategic roles of the armed forces.”²⁰

Assigning more troops to this activity obviously means that military personnel are deployed more widely within El Salvador. As mentioned previously, the level of military intervention from 2014 to 2017 promoted by the Executive Branch meant that between 1,477 and 1,244 members of the military were assigned each year to surveillance tasks at schools and prisons.

GRAPH 5

MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES, BY AREA OF SUPPORT, 2014-2017



Source: MDN, 2019

As has happened in other Central American countries, El Salvador has been able to maximize its presence in multiple spaces by using the armed forces for public security. In this case, its public security interventions extended to the countries' schools and prisons. This strategy is "a recipe that combines a high percentage of military presence with a lower number of police, resulting in presence and occupation."²¹

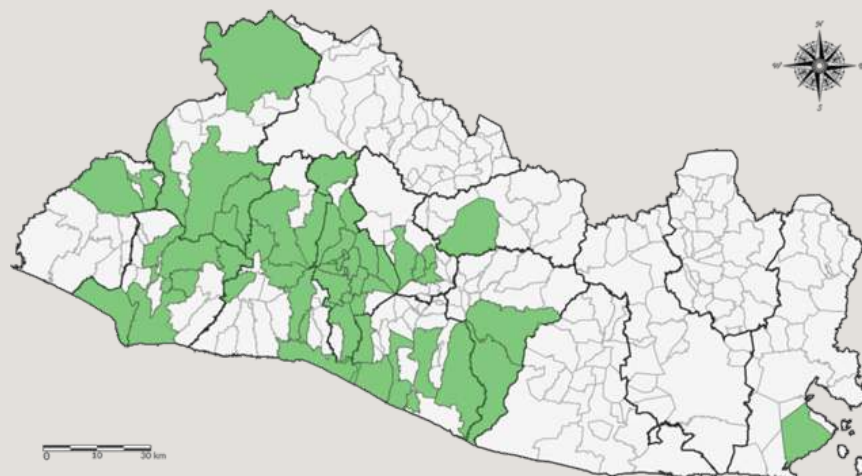
As indicated in other Central America Monitor reports, official information for 2014 to 2017 shows a 7.2% decrease in the police force (26,000 members), and the members of the military exceeded 24,000 during the same

period. These statistics seem to show that authorities have focused more on building up the number of military personnel to ensure greater involvement in public security. This runs counter to the reform of the Salvadoran government advanced by the 1992 Peace Accords, which explicitly stated a commitment to reduce the size of the military.

Official information from the MDN reveals that around 20% of El Salvador's municipalities (50 municipalities) had military personnel assigned to public security tasks between 2009 in 2017, as shown in the figure below.

FIGURE 2

REGIONAL DEPLOYMENT OF MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO PUBLIC SECURITY TASKS



Ahuachapán	Atiquizaya		Ciudad Arce		Panchimalco		San Luis Talpa
	Ahuachapán		San Juan Opico		Tonacatepeque		San Pedro Masahuat
Santa Ana	Coatepeque	La Libertad	Quetzaltepeque	San Salvador	Ilopango	La Paz	Zacatecoluca
	El Congo		Colón		San Martín		Santiago Nonualco
	Chalchuapa		Tepecoyo		Ciudad Delgado		Olocuilta
	Santa Ana		Santa Tecla		Soyapango	Santa Cruz Michapa	
	Metapán		La Libertad		Apopa	San Pedro Perulapán	
	Armenia		Zaragoza		San Salvador	Monte San Juan	
Sonsonate	Nahuizalco	San Salvador	San Marcos	El Paisnal	Cabañas	Cojutepeque	
	Sonsonate		Nejapa	Mejicanos		Ilobasco	
	Caluco		Guazapa	Santo Tomás		Tecoluca	
	Izalco			Ayutuxtepeque	San Vicente	San Vicente	
	Acajutla			Cuscaticingo	La Unión	Conchagua	

Source: MDN, 2019

Note: According to MDN public information, military intervention in public security activities began in 2009 in the municipalities illustrated above. Municipalities with grey shading coincide with municipalities categorized by the Safe El Salvador Plan as priority intervention sites for 2015-2018

Official information from the MDN from 2014 to 2017 shows that most military personnel assigned to public security tasks were deployed to priority municipalities under the Safe El Salvador Plan (Plan El Salvador Seguro, PESS). According to MDN's report on its activities between June 2016 and May 2017, most of these municipalities were territories where Zeus Command (Comando Zeus) ran operations.²²

PESS was “a plan built on five pillars (preventing violence, controlling and prosecuting crimes, rehabilitation and reinsertion, protecting and

caring for victims, and strengthening institutions) and 124 priority actions to fight crime in the country.”²³ The Salvadoran Government aimed to use this plan to focus on specific geographical areas in its efforts to address violence and insecurity. The Plan was implemented from 2015 to 2018. The table below shows the municipalities included in the PESS and marks those that coincide with the municipalities to which Armed Forces personnel was deployed to perform public security tasks.

TABLE 5

MUNICIPALITIES INCLUDED IN THE SAFE EL SALVADOR PLAN, 2015-2017

	Phase 1 (2015)	Phase 2 (2016)	Phase 3 (2017)
La Libertad	Colón	San Juan Opico	Ciudad Arce
			Santa Tecla
		Quezaltepeque	La Libertad
			Zaragoza
Santa Ana	Santa Ana	Chalchuapa	Coatepeque
			El Congo
			Metapán
San Salvador	Ciudad Delgado	San Martín	Panchimalco
			Tonacatepeque
			Ilopango
	Santo Tomás		
	Mejicanos	Apopa	Ayutuxtepeque
			Cuscatancingo
	Soyapango		San Marcos
San Salvador	San Salvador	Nejapa	
		Guazapa	
Sonsonate	Sonsonate	Izalco	Armenia
		Nahuizalco	Acajutla
La Paz	Zacatecoluca	Santiago Nonualco	San Luis Talpa
		Olocuilta	San Pedro Masahuat
Cuscatlán	Cojutepeque	San Pedro Perulapán	Santa Cruz Michapa

San Miguel	---	San Miguel	---
Usulután	Jiquilisco	Usulután	---
Ahuachapán	---	Ahuachapán	Atiquizaya
Cabañas	---	Ilobasco	---
La Unión	---	Conchagua	La Unión
San Vicente	---	San Vicente	Tecoluca
Total per phase	10 municipalities	16 municipalities	24 municipalities

Source: GOES, 2015, page 78

Note: the municipalities with a gray background coincide with those municipalities in which Salvadoran army members intervened in public security activities between 2009 and 2017.

Additionally, in the period analyzed, the MDN's annual reports record the creation of specialized military units to participate in these tasks. The MDN's public documents report the creation of the Trident Naval Task Force (*Fuerza de Tarea Naval Tridente*)²⁴ in 2015, the creation of the Specialized Response Forces (*Fuerzas Especializadas de Reacción, FERES*) and the Territorial Intervention and Recovery Force (*Fuerza de Intervención y Recuperación Territorial, FIRT*)²⁵ in April 2016, and the creation of the Vulcan Task Force (*Fuerza de Tarea Vulcano*)²⁶ in September 2017, among others.

The New Dawn Campaign Plan (*Plan de Campaña Nuevo Amanecer*) was the main programmatic basis of the MDN's public security operations

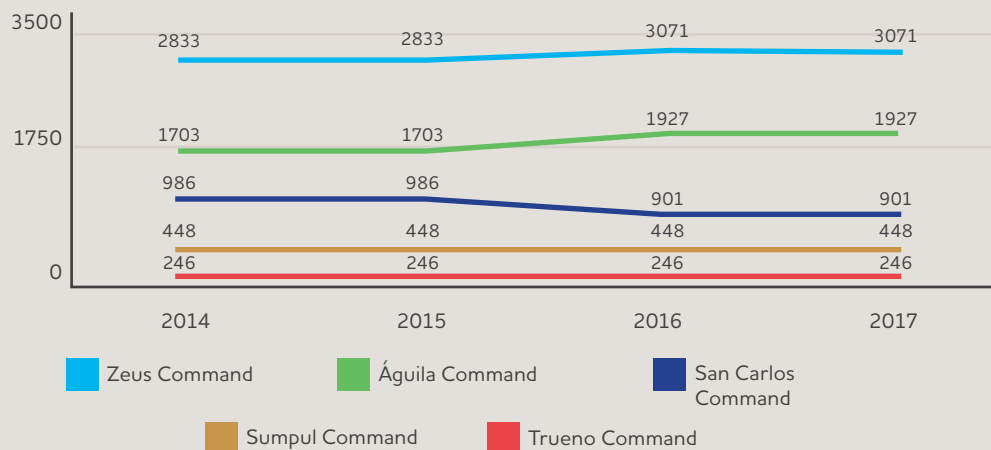
between 2014 and 2017.

According to the MDN's annual reports, the units of the Armed Forces that have traditionally performed public security tasks over the last decade are Zeus Command, San Carlos Command, Sumpul Command, Águila Command, and Trueno Command.

Official MDN data shows that from 2014 to 2017, the number of personnel rose at two of these five units (Zeus and Águila), remained stable at two (Trueno and Sumpul), and dropped at just one (San Carlos)—from 986 in 2014 to 901 in 2017, or mere 85 troops, as shown in the graph below.

GRAPH 6

NUMBER OF PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE ZEUS, SAN CARLOS, SUMPUL, ÁGUILA, AND TRUENO COMMANDS, 2014-2017



Official data shows that 78.7% of the military personnel assigned to public security in El Salvador between 2014 and 2015 were assigned to these five units (6,216 of the total of 7,900). However, this proportion fell in 2016 and 2017.

In 2016, the personnel assigned to these units only made up 63.3% of the total assigned to public security, and in 2017 they only made up 47.7%. In other words, of the 13,827 troops that participated in public security activities in 2017, 6,593 were part of the Zeus, San Carlos, Sumpul, Águila, and Trueno units, while 7,234 were part

of additional units organized to support the PNC in security tasks.

According to official information from the MDN, these five units have very diverse assignments in different fields, and the public security support they provide to other government entities is not limited to the PNC. The table below shows a breakdown of each unit's assignment, the government entity it supports, and its personnel, based on the annual reports the MDN submitted to the Legislative Assembly between June 2013 and May 2016.

TABLE 6
INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTED BY THE ARMED FORCES UNDER THE NEW DAWN CAMPAIGN PLAN, 2013-2016

Units	Assignment	Institution supported	JUNE 2013 – MAY 2014	JUNE 2014 – MAY 2015	JUNE 2015 – MAY 2016
			PERSONNEL		
Zeus Command	This unit provides support in the form of 3,100 troops stationed in the places in El Salvador with the highest crime rates. It was originally deployed to 8 of the 14 departments.*	National Civilian Police (PNC)	3,100	3,100	3,100
Trueno Command	This unit conducts joint operations in response to crime throughout the country, as public security activities.**		--	--	600
Community Mutual Support Groups (Grupos Conjuntos de Apoyo a la Comunidad, GCAC)	These groups are formed under the Community Support and Prevention Plan. Deploying 1,000 members of the Armed Forces, they help fight crime at the national level.*		2,302	--	--
Águila Command	The members of this unit are deployed nationwide to help the PNC fight gangs and ordinary crime.**	Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, MINED) and Ministry of Tourism (Ministerio de Turismo, MITUR)	--	2,302	2,302
San Carlos Command	Deploying 1,200 troops, this unit helps secure the perimeter of different prisons nationwide, including high-security facilities, low security facilities, and juvenile rehabilitation centers.*	General Directorate of Prison Centers (Dirección General de Centros Penales, DGCP)	1,200	1,200	1,200
Sumpul Command	With 1,000 military troops, this unit patrols and controls more than 130 unauthorized crossings along the national border.*	General Directorate of Immigration and Foreign Persons (Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería, DGME)	1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL TROOPS			7,602	7,602	8,202

Source: MDN, Annual Reports 2013-2017

*June 2013 – May 2014 Annual Report

**June 2014 – May 2015 Annual Report

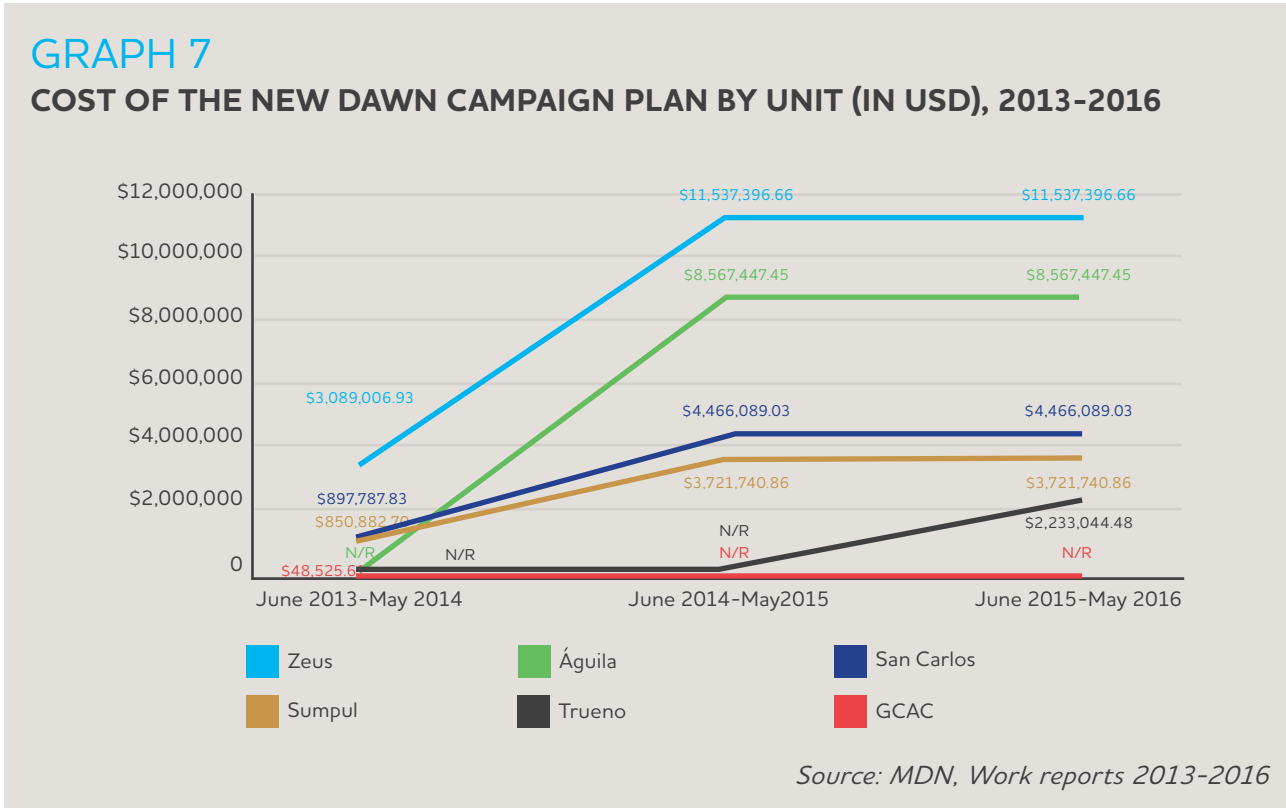
***June 2015 – May 2016 Annual Report

Note: The Cuscatlán Joint Force (Grupo Conjunto Cuscatlán, GCC) is not included. The purpose of this joint unit is to fight drug trafficking and associated crimes by helping control air and sea traffic and performing inspections at airports and ports. It is mentioned in the June 2015 – May 2016 Annual Report. Also excluded is the Trident Naval Task Force, a Naval Special Forces Unit that performs operations to fight drug trafficking activities and crime in Salvadoran territorial waters and elsewhere at sea and that is mentioned in the June 2016–May 2017 annual report. These units are not included because the official documents do not record the number of troops assigned to them.

In terms of the operational costs of the New Dawn Campaign Plan reported by the MDN, between 2013 and 2016 there was a significant increase in resources for each of the main units that carry out that plan.

Zeus Command saw a 273.5% rise in funding

between 2013 and 2016, from \$3,089,006.93 to \$11,537,396.66. Meanwhile, the San Carlos Command saw a 397.5% increase during the same period, from \$897,787.83 to \$4,466,089.03. The Sumpul Command, in turn, saw its budget swell by 337.4% in this period, from \$850,882.70 to \$3,721,740.86.



As their own data show, in practice, these Commands have the authority to detain individuals, including minors, while conducting joint activities with the PNC or while operating without the PNC.

As for the activities that each of the units officially reported between June 2013 and May 2018, official data from Zeus Command shows that during this period it searched over 2 million people, made more than 43,000 arrests,

and seized over \$168,000 and 157 portions of different drugs. It is worth noting that the official data on the operational activity of this unit in the area of public security only shows 49 joint operations with the PNC, which highlights the autonomy with which this type of unit has operated and how these types of military activities displace police presence within El Salvador rather than supporting it.

TABLE 7

PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES OF THE ZEUS COMMAND, 2013-2018

ACTIVITIES			ZEUS COMMAND				
			JUNE 2013 - MAY 2014	JUNE 2014- MAY 2015	JUNE 2015- MAY 2016	JUNE 2016- MAY 2017	JUNE 2017- MAY 2018
Registration of Persons			658,915	781,077	560,674	--	--
Vehicle Registration			150,081	113,088	158,819	--	--
Foot Patrols			108,142	140,097	105,281	131,493	--
Vehicle Controls			14,866	17,437	7,800	15,019	--
Vehicle Patrols			1,914	12,029	9,703	9,609	--
Joint Operations with PNC			49	--	--	--	--
Apprehensions**			29,133	4,997	2,196	4,505	3,025
Drug Seizures	Marijuana	Portions	--	--	5,223	15,909	7,823*
		Pounds	--	--	73	58	--
	Cocaine	Portions	--	--	--	381	--
		Kilograms	--	--	3.23	--	--
	Crack	Portions	--	--	--	1,416	--
		Rocks	--	--	678	--	--
Drug not specified	Portions	32,243	101,896	--	--	--	
Firearm Seizures***			239	393	420	410	229
Ammunition Seizures****			1,816	5,355	4,773	4,225	1,565
Cash Seizures (\$)			\$109,205.63	\$23,353.00	\$1,862.40	--	\$34,312.00
Public Transport Safety			--	4,892	--	--	--

Source: MDN, Work reports 2013-2018

*Work Report JUNE 2017 - MAY 2018 does not specify the unit of measurement for reported drug seizures

** Includes apprehensions in joint PNC operations and in operations involving minors

*** Includes makeshift weapons

**** Includes specialized military weapons (M-67 grenades)

Furthermore, official data shows that San Carlos Command, despite having a main function of ensuring the security of the country's prisons, had the capacity to search over 730,000 people and make more than 1,000 arrests, as well as

to confiscate more than \$42,000 and over 13,000 pounds of marijuana and perform a total of 77,213 patrols on foot, according to official records for the period from June 2013 to May 2018.

TABLE 8

PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES OF THE SAN CARLOS COMMAND, 2013-2018

ACTIVITIES		SAN CARLOS COMMAND					
		JUNE 2013 - MAY 2014	JUNE 2014- MAY 2015	JUNE 2015- MAY 2016	JUNE 2016- MAY 2017	JUNE 2017- MAY 2018	
Registration of Persons		236,982	310,139	191,901	--	--	
Vehicle Registration		99,226	177,138	82,910	--	--	
Foot Patrols		31,060	20,501	10,725	14,927	--	
Vehicle Registration		--	--	5,238	--	--	
Vehicle Controls		11,823	19,671	1,424	6,763	--	
Vehicle Patrols		1,785	2,281	--	2,363	--	
Apprehensions**		809	107	94	35	20	
Drug Sei- zures	Marijuana	Portions	--	--	8,667	269	1*
		Pounds	13,399	--	--	4	
	Cocaine	Portions	--	--	--	1	--
	Crack	Portions	--	--	1,956	--	--
	Drug not specified	Portions	--	14,446	--	--	--
Firearm Seizures***		30	10	1,361	12	3	
Ammunition Seizures		--	136	488	55,196	61	
Cash Seizures (\$)		\$21,839.65	\$14,422.00	\$2,600.00	--	\$3,807.00	

Source: MDN, Work reports 2013-2018

*Work Report JUNE 2017 - MAY 2018 does not specify the unit of measurement for reported drug seizures

** Includes apprehensions in joint PNC operations and in operations involving minors

*** Includes craft weapons and Criminal Support Groups of the same unit

The Sumpul Command, which has the main mission of monitoring unauthorized border crossings, reported searching 683,522 people and over 350,000 vehicles between June 2013 and May 2018, in addition to carrying out 138,644 foot patrols and 883 arrests, and seizing more than 30,000 portions of drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, and others, as

well as confiscating more than \$33,000.

Notably, this unit confiscated less drugs and money than other units in the interior of the country, even though this unit's operations focus on blind spots along the borders.

TABLE 9

PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES OF THE SUMPUL COMMAND, 2013-2018

ACTIVITIES			SUMPUL COMMAND				
			JUNE 2013 - MAY 2014	JUNE 2014- MAY 2015	JUNE 2015- MAY 2016	JUNE 2016- MAY 2017	JUNE 2017- MAY 2018
Registration of Persons			211,818	302,554	169,150	--	--
Vehicle Registration***			97,807	120,578	132,687	--	--
Foot Patrols			33,082	46,246	27,212	32,104	--
Vehicle Controls / Checkpoints			8,476	14,525	7,391	14,973	--
Vehicle Patrols			--	2,704	--	82	--
Apprehensions**			299	129	103	244	108
Drug seizures	Marijuana	Portions	--	--	272	439	83*
		Pounds	--	--	--	52	
	Cocaine	Portions	--	--	--	9	--
	Crack	Portions	--	--	--	1	--
	Drug not specified	Portions	--	29,373	--	--	--
Firearms Seizures			22	513	18	19	14
Ammunition Seizures			--	1,284	--	496	63
Cash Seizures (\$)			\$9,761.34	\$22,221.00	\$1,025.00	--	\$560.50

Source: MDN, Work reports 2013-2018

*Work Report JUNE 2017 - MAY 2018 does not specify the unit of measurement for reported drug seizures

** Includes apprehensions in joint PNC operations and in operations involving minors

*** Includes registration of motorcycles, motorbike taxis and buses

Águila Command, which is in charge of operations to combat gangs and ordinary crime, reported a total of 801,048 searches of people, 3,394 arrests, over 134,000 searches of vehicles, and more than 155,000 foot patrols between June 2014 and May 2016, as well as the seizure of more than 10,000 portions of drugs and over \$19,000.

Notably, the MDN reports do not record any joint operations with the police during the period covered by this report, even though supporting the PNC in its work to control criminal organizations is part of this unit's assignments.

TABLE 10

PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES OF THE ÁGUILA COMMAND, 2014-2018

ACTIVITIES		ÁGUILA COMMAND				
		JUNE 2014- MAY 2015	JUNE 2015-	JUNIO 2016- MAYO 2017	JUNIO 2017- MAYO 2018	
Registration of Persons		MAY 2016	JUNE 2016-	--	--	
Vehicle Registration		MAY 2017	JUNE 2017-	--	--	
Foot Patrols		MAY 2018	88,014	77,122	--	
Vehicle Controls / Checkpoints		35,954	6,125	22,664	--	
Vehicle Patrols		8,876	--	17,049	--	
Apprehensions**		2,625	1,126	1,653	615	
Drug sei-zures	Marijuana	Portions	--	3,930	4,310	1,798*
		Pounds	--	75	66	
	Cocaine	Portions	--	--	55	--
		Kilograms	--	--	5	--
	Crack	Portions	--	2,119	188	--
		Rocks	18	--	--	--
	Drug not specified	Portions	13,594	--	--	--
Firearm Seizures ***		481	189	308	113	
Ammunition Seizures		3,000	1,233	2,078	805	
Cash Seizures (\$)		\$13,125.00	\$4,355.00	--	\$2,083.00	

Source: MDN, Work reports 2014-2018

*Work Report JUNE 2017 - MAY 2018 does not specify the unit of measurement for reported drug seizures

** Includes apprehensions in joint PNC operations and in operations involving minors

*** Includes makeshift weapons

The rest of the military units that reported activities related to public security focused their efforts on the same areas as the units described above. Of the six units of this kind mentioned in the MDN’s official documents, only one had joint patrols with the PNC: the Community Joint Support Groups, which reported 59 of these

operations between June 2013 and May 2014.

Combined, these units report seizing more than \$22,000 and 4000 kilograms of drugs, and arresting more than 4000 people between June 2013 and May 2018.

TABLE 11

PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES OF OTHER MDN UNITS, 2013-2018

ACTIVITIES		CO-MMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS	TRUENOS COMMAND		CUSCATLÁN JOINT COMMAND				FERES COMMAND		VULCANO CO-MMAND
		JUNE 2013 - MAY 2014	JUNE 2015- MAY 2016	JUNE 2016- MAY 2017	JUNE 2013- MAY 2014	JUNE 2014- MAY 2015	JUNE 2015- MAY 2016	JUNE 2017- MAY 2018	JUNE 2016- MAY 2017	JUNE 2017- MAY 2018	JUNE 2017- MAY 2018
Registration of Persons		376,979	75,000	--	--	--	--	320	--	--	--
Vehicle Registration		157,130	20,000	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Foot Patrols		45,586	5,000	210	--	--	--	432	--	--	--
Vehicle Patrols		6,394	3,901	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Maritime Patrols			--	--	--	--	--	81	--	--	--
Vehicle Controls		21,946	25,000	22	--	--	--	109	--	--	--
Joint Operations with PNC		59	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Apprehensions		1,978	16	60	--	--	--	66	965	214	829
Drug seizures	Marijuana	Portions	--	--	67	--	--	--	18	4,507	--
		Packets	--	--	--	--	5	--	--	1432*	--
		Pounds	--	2	--	--	--	--	259		--
		Plants	--	--	--	667	35	233	--		--
	Cocaine	Portions	--	--	--	--	827	1,364	--		--
		Kilograms	--	--	--	4,346	1,885	5,934	5	--	--
	Crack	Portions	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	542	--
		Rocks	--	--	--	--	964	39	--	--	--
Methamphetamine	Pills	--	--	--	100	--	--	--	--	--	
Firearms Seizures		373	12	6	--	--	--	2	296	74	187
Ammunition Seizures***		2,151	102	25	--	--	--	--	2,192	471	--
Cash Seizures (\$)		--	--	--	--	--	\$19,256.00	\$40.00	--	\$3,130.00	--
Public Transport Safety		13,128	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: MDN, Work reports 2013-2018

*Work Report JUNE 2017 - MAY 2018 does not specify the unit of measurement for reported drug seizures

** Includes makeshift weapons

*** Includes specialized military weaponry (fragmentary grenades)

This information shows that the military units involved in public security between June 2013 and May 2018 had a major hand in drug seizures.

Together, these military units and commands seized a total of 25,341.23 kg of cocaine, or more than 55,000 pounds.

TABLE 12

TOTAL DRUG SEIZURES BY MDN COMMANDS IN PUBLIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES, 2013-2018

Drug	Measurement	Quantity
Marijuana	Seizures*	11,137
	Portions	43,611
	Packages	5
	Pounds	13,988
	Plants	935
Cocaine	Portions	2,637
	Kilograms**	25,341.23
Crack	Portions	6,222
	Rocks	1,699
Methamphetamine	Pills	100
Drug not specified	Portions	191,552

Source: MDN, Work reports 2013-2018

**Number of seizures, without specifying measure*

***For cocaine, the total ounces were converted to kilograms to report a single unit of measure.*

This data paints a picture of the military's broad intervention in public security between 2014 and 2017.

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE ARMED FORCES

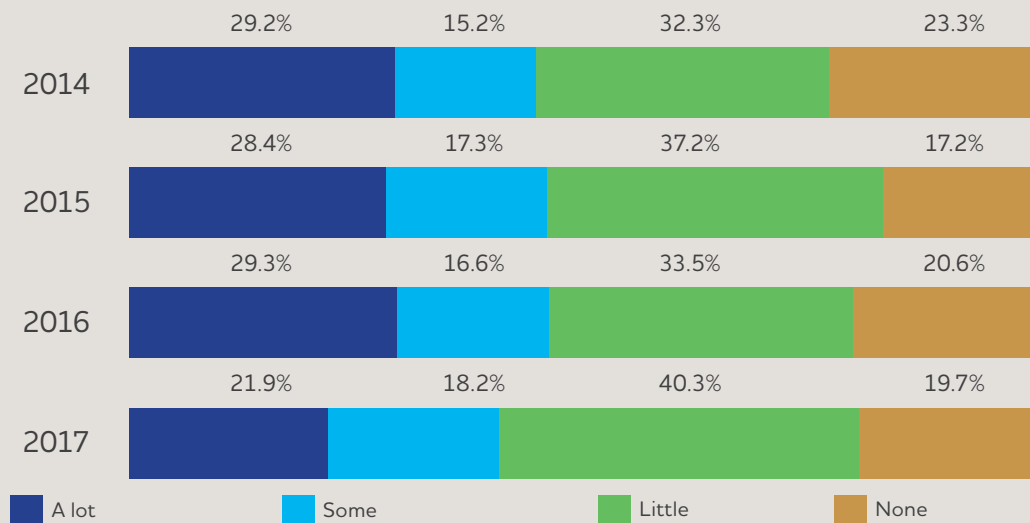
An additional element of analysis covered by this Central American Monitor report is how public confidence in the Armed Forces in El Salvador has changed over time.

Data from Iudop opinion surveys during the period in question shows that between 40% and 46% of the population of El Salvador had a moderate or high level of confidence in the

Armed Forces of El Salvador (FAES). The year 2017 saw a major drop in public confidence in the Armed Forces. That year, four out of every 10 Salvadorans said they had moderate or high confidence in the armed forces, a drop of around 6 percentage points from the level recorded the previous year.

GRAPH 8

PUBLIC TRUST IN THE ARMED FORCES, 2014-2017



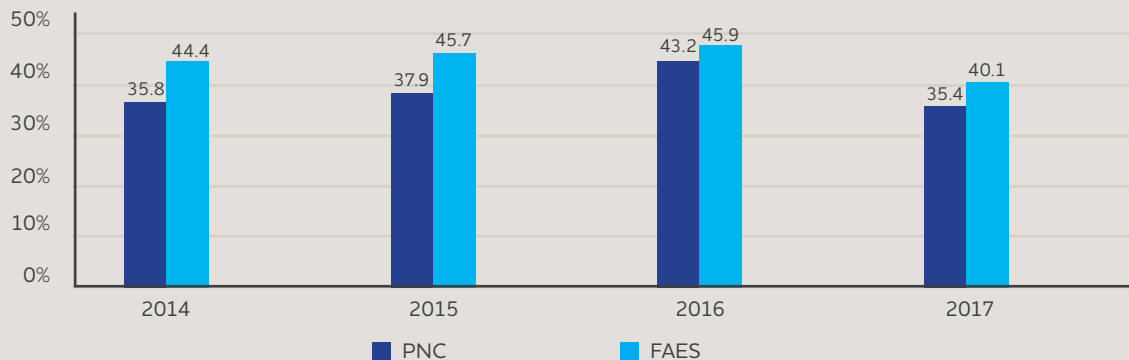
Source: Survey Series Iudop-UCA, 2014-2017

As indicated in a previous Monitor report, which analyzed the police force, Iudop opinion surveys show that citizens have much less confidence in the PNC than in the Armed Forces. The trend is the same throughout the 2014-2017 period. The only year in which the PNC had a level of confidence similar to that of the Armed

Forces was 2016, when the percentages were 43.2% and 45.9%, respectively. But during the period covered by this report, the level of public confidence in the PNC never exceeded that of the armed forces. Graph 9 below shows the rate of confidence in both entities between 2014 and 2017.

GRAPH 9

COMPARISON OF PUBLIC TRUST IN THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE, 2014-2017



Note: These percentages include respondents who indicated having "some" or "a lot" of trust.
Source: Survey Series Iudop-UCA, 2014-2017

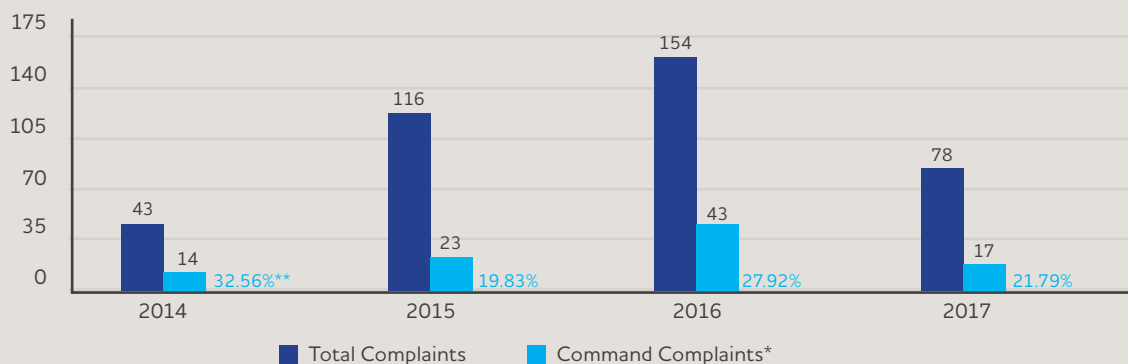
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OVERSIGHT OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Finally, a key factor in the Armed Forces' participation in public security is the government's capacity to hold the military accountable for its actions. MDN data points to significant limitations that hinder interagency supervision of the military's involvement in public security tasks. For example, according to

data processed by the MDN itself, reports of human rights violations committed by the Zeus, San Carlos, and Sumpul Commands filed with the MDN between 2014 in 2017 made up between 20% and 32% of all complaints filed against the entire Armed Forces during that period.

GRAPH 10

COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE MDN FOR VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 2014-2017



Source: MDN, 2019

*Data correspond to complaints from the Zeus, San Carlos, Sumpul Commands and their respective Task Forces.

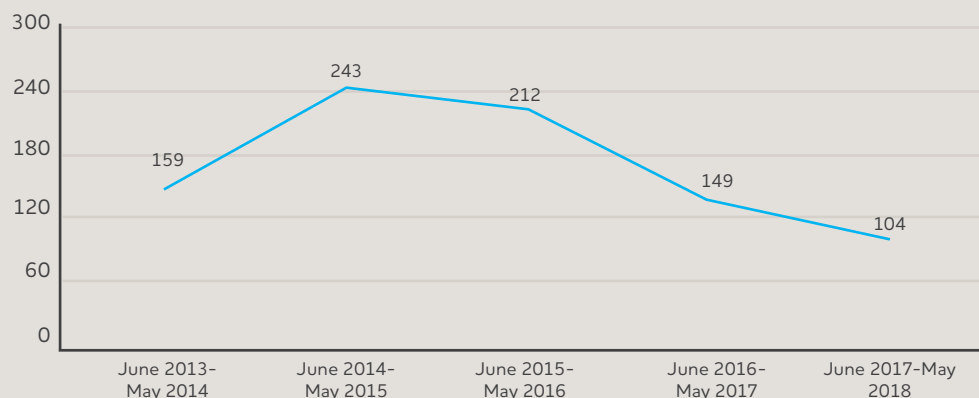
**The percentages correspond to the proportion of complaints against the above-listed Commands out of the total complaints filed against the MDN.

Meanwhile, external accountability entities, such as the Office of the Public Defender for Human Rights (Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, PDDH) show that the number of complaints filed externally is much

higher. According to the PDDH's official reports on its activities, it recorded more than 100 reports per year, despite a clear overall trend towards fewer complaints filed against the MDN (a 34.6% drop).

GRAPH 11

COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE PDDH AGAINST THE MDN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, 2014-2017



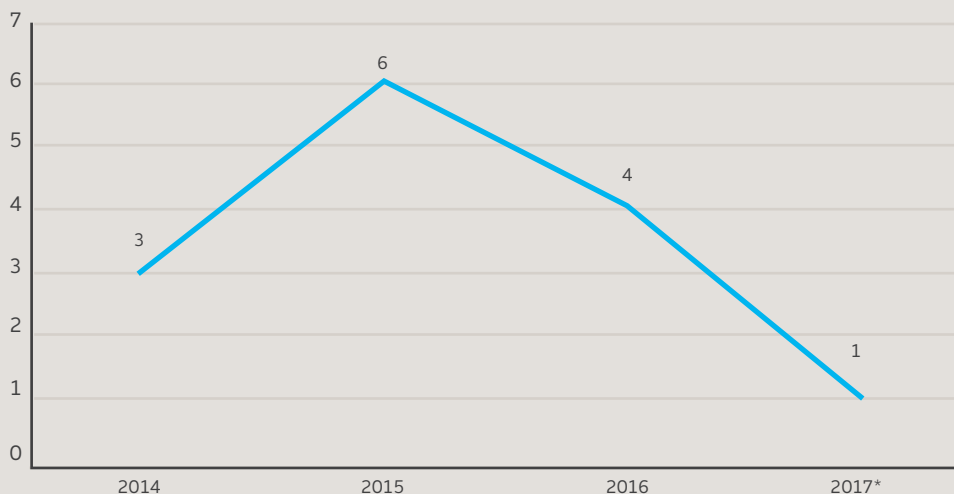
Source: PDDH, Work reports 2013-2018

Another important element is the number of reports of extrajudicial killings committed by the Armed Forces that the PDDH has received.

A total of 14 cases of this type were recorded between 2014 and 2017.

GRAPH 12

COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE PDDH AGAINST THE MDN FOR EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS, 2014-2016



Source: PDDH, 2017

* Data reported up to September 2017

Few complaints against these types of crimes are filed, likely due to systematic intimidation perpetrated by government security agents against victims. Notwithstanding, previous Central America Monitor reports have referenced media reports, including 2016 coverage by La Prensa Gráfica, allowing some insight into the number of extrajudicial executions committed in the country.²⁷ In reviewing media reports, Iudop identified 111 incidents in 2016 that imply extrajudicial executions may have taken place. Some 278 people were killed in these incidents. Approximately half (50.4%) of these incidents referred to deaths in alleged armed confrontations between members of the police, military, and gangs. Roughly one quarter (26.1%) of these incidents referred to confrontations between combined forces and gangs. Some 21.6% referred to deaths caused by so-called “extermination groups.”²⁸ This may indicate a high level of unfiled complaints in these cases.

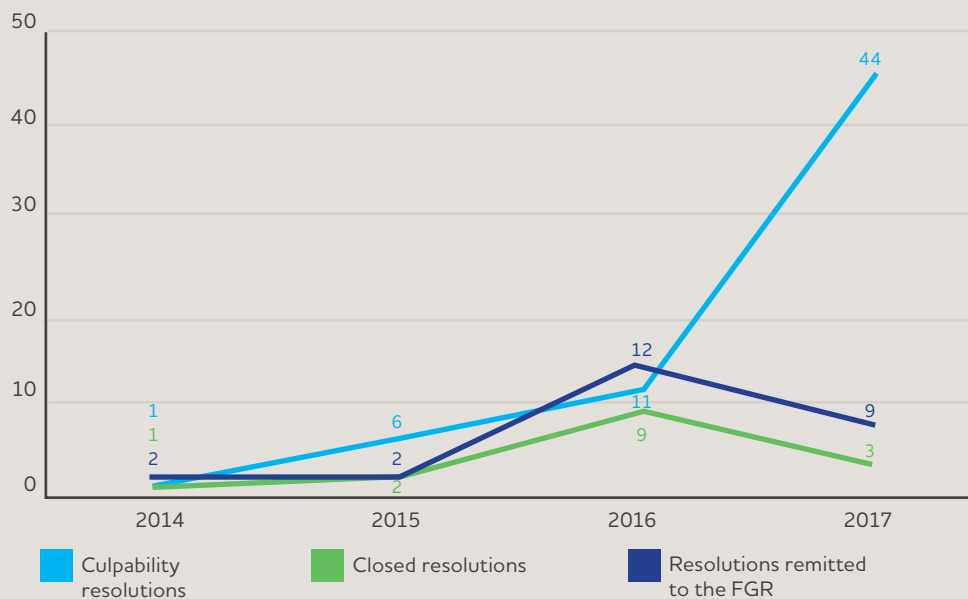
Furthermore, official PDDH data reveals that

only a very small percentage of the complaints received lead to a resolution from this entity, showing the need to invest more resources in this accountability entity so it can efficiently perform its function. Between 2014 and 2017, the PDDH issued 23 resolutions holding the person in question responsible, and a total of 15 to the FGR.

However, 62 resolutions to drop cases were issued during the same period. This may be due to the difficulties of finding evidence to continue with the investigation, the impossibility of singling out the military unit under investigation, the gaps in the description of the events submitted to the PDDH, the human resource and financial limitations that keep the process from moving forward swiftly and lead to the loss of evidence to support a resolution holding the person responsible, among other types of factors that prevent more in-depth examinations of these cases.

GRAPH 13

RESOLUTIONS ISSUED BY THE PDDH AGAINST THE ARMED FORCES, 2014-2017



Source: PDDH, 2019

The other entity that holds the Armed Forces accountable for its activity is the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic (FGR). Between 2014 and 2017, the FGR reported investigating a total of 612 members of the military suspected of committing serious crimes. Notably, the number of suspects investigated jumped 124.8% between 2014 and 2016.

However, as pointed out in previous Iudop studies, the number of criminal charges that allow cases investigated by the FGR to be tried

in court is very low. The period covered by this report is no exception: 222 criminal charges were filed during this period.

The crimes with the widest gap between the number of people investigated by the FGR and the number of criminal charges filed before the courts were threats, rape and other types of sexual assault, and false imprisonment. The table below shows how the statistics changed over the period 2014–2017.

TABLE 13

NUMBER OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IMPLICATED IN INVESTIGATIONS AND NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CHARGED BY THE FGR IN MAJOR RECORDED CRIMES, 2014-2017

Crime	2014		2015		2016		2017*	
	Implicated	Charged	Implicated	Charged	Implicated	Charged	Implicated	Charged
Homicide ¹	10	2	17	13	77	45	23	25
Injuries ²	28	7	57	8	55	17	23	12
Threats ³	20	3	38	6	42	10	14	8
Rape and other sexual assaults ⁴	17	3	15	6	15	4	7	1
Deprivation of liberty ⁵	12	0	4	0	7	0	1	0
Arbitrary acts	3	0	3	1	4	0	0	0
Damages ⁶	5	1	6	1	12	3	2	0
Bribery ⁷	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	0
Illegal possession, carrying or driving of firearms	12	7	7	5	11	8	4	2
Traffic of prohibited objects in prisons	1	1	8	3	3	3	2	2
Illicit Groups and Terrorist Organizations ⁸	6	3	5	1	7	3	4	2
Expressions of violence against women	3	0	5	1	3	1	9	1
TOTAL	117	27	170	48	236	94	89	53

Source: FGR, 2017

*Data as of September 2017

¹Includes: Simple homicide (128 CP) and Aggravated homicide (129 CP).

² Includes: Injuries (142 CP), Grave Injuries (143 CP), Very Grave Injuries (144 CP) and Aggravated Injuries (145 CP).

³ Includes: *Threats (154 CP) and Threats with Special Aggravation (154-155 CP).*

⁴ Includes: *Rape (158 CP), Rape of Minors or Disabled People (159 CP), Other Sexual Assaults (160 CP), Sexual Assault of Minors or Disabled People (161 CP), Abuse (163 CP), Aggravated Abuse (158-162 CP), Aggravated Sexual Assault of Minors or Disabled People (161-162 CP), Other Aggressions Aggravated Sexual Assault (160-162 CP) and Aggravated Rape on Minors and Disabled People (159-162).*

⁵ Includes: *Deprivation of liberty (148 CP) and Deprivation of liberty for Public Official or Employee, Security Agent or Public Authority (290 CP).*

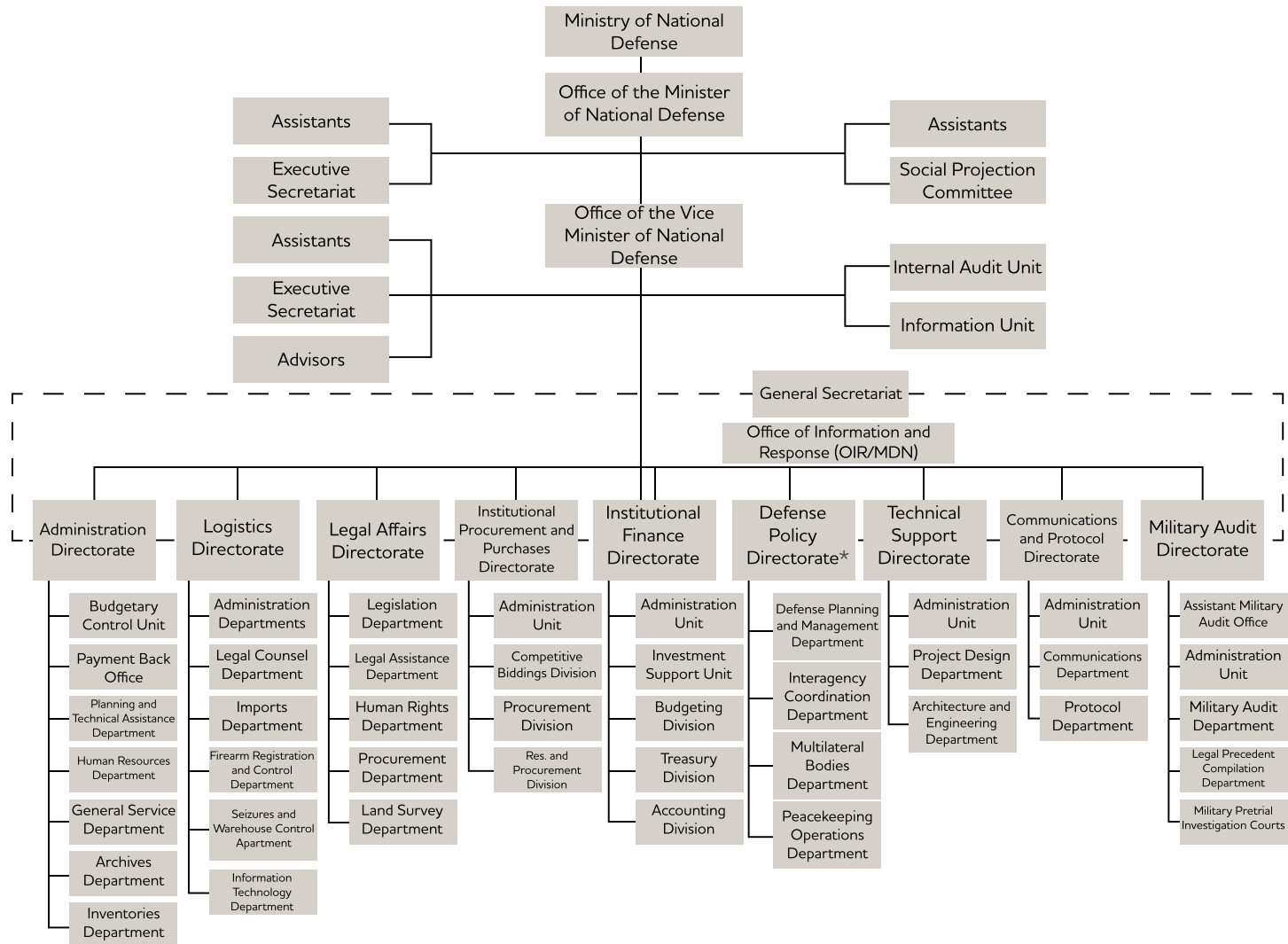
⁶ Includes: *Damages (221 CP) and Aggravated Damages (222 CP).*

⁷ Includes: *Past Bribery (330 CP) and Active Bribery (335 CP).*

⁸ Includes: *Illicit Groups (345 CP) and Terrorist Organizations (13 LECAT).*

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1



*The units affiliated with the Defense Policy Directorate were referred to, between 2014 and 2016, as Departments of Fields of Action: Internal, Military, Diplomatic, and Economic. In 2017, the MDN denominated these units differently, as shown in the chart above. However, a comparison of the available Organizational Manuals indicates that these departments maintain some similar functions, despite their change in name.

NOTES

- ¹A detailed list of indicators is available at www.wola.org/cam.
- ²Ministry of National Defense [MDN] (s/f) Army Foundation 1824. Official Website of El Salvador's Ministry of National Defense. Retrieved from: https://www.fuerzaarmada.mil.sv/?page_id=747 on August 21, 2020.
- ³Constituent Assembly [A.C.] (1983) Constitution of the Republic of El Salvador. Decree N° 38. D.O. N° 234, Tome N° 281 of December 16, 1983.
- ⁴Legislative Assembly [A.L.] (2002) National Defense Law. Legislative Decree N° 948, D.O. N° 184, Tome N° 357, October 3, 2002. Retrieved from: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/decretos/details/357> on August 15, 2020.
- ⁵Article 3 of the National Defense Law defines a field of action as an umbrella group for cabinet ministries and other executive branch institutions, with the purpose of facilitating planning, coordination, and implementation of work to prevent or address conflict.
- ⁶Ministry of National Defense [MDN] (2014) Organizational Manual of the Ministry of National Defense. Administration Directorate. Planning and Technical Assistance Department. May 2014. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/instituciones/mdn/documents/196229/download> on August 18, 2020.
- ⁷Ministry of National Defense [MDN] (2018) Organizational Manual of the Ministry of National Defense. Administration Directorate. February 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/instituciones/mdn/documents/376640/download> on August 19, 2020
- ⁸Legislative Assembly [A.L.] (1998) Organic Law of the Armed Forces of El Salvador. Legislative Decree N° 353, D.O. N° 143, Tome N° 340, July 30, 1998. Retrieved from: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/decretos/details/356> on August 14, 2020.
- ⁹Legislative Assembly [A.L.] (1995) Military Career Law. Legislative Decree N° 476. D.O. N° 222, Tome N° 329 of November 30, 1995. Retrieved from: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/decretos/details/3444> on August 14, 2020.
- ¹⁰MDN Resolution, No. 040 and 041/06JUL020.
- ¹¹Ministry of Finance (2020) Resultados de la Ejecución Presupuestaria del Sector Público 2014 a 2017. Fiscal Transparency Portal and International Monetary Fund, (2019) World Economic Outlook Database October 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/02/weodata/index.aspx> on September 6, 2020.
- ¹²Ministry of Finance (2020) Resultados de la Ejecución Presupuestaria del Sector Público 2017. Portal de Transparencia Fiscal. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparenciafiscal.gob.sv/downloads/pdf/700-DGCG-IF-2018-00012.pdf> on September 8, 2020.
- Ministry of Finance (2020) Resultados de la Ejecución Presupuestaria del Sector Público 2016. Fiscal Transparency Portal. Retrieved from: https://www.transparenciafiscal.gob.sv/downloads/pdf/DGCG02000020_03_CAPITULO_II_2016.pdf on September 8, 2020.
- Ministry of Finance (2020) Resultados de la Ejecución Presupuestaria del Sector Público 2015. Fiscal Transparency Portal. Retrieved from: https://www.transparenciafiscal.gob.sv/downloads/pdf/DC6016_03_-_CAPITULO_II.pdf on September 8, 2020.
- Ministry of Finance (2020) Resultados de la Ejecución Presupuestaria del Sector Público 2014. Fiscal Transparency Portal. Retrieved from: https://www.transparenciafiscal.gob.sv/downloads/pdf/DC9283_CAPITULO_II_2014.pdf on September 8, 2020.
- ¹³Aguilar, J. (2016) The role of the army in El Salvador's internal security: Converting an exception to permanence, in Reconceptualization of violence in the Northern Triangle. Addressing security in the countries of northern Central America from a democratic viewpoint. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Retrieved from: https://mx.boell.org/sites/default/files/reconceptualizacion_de_la_violencia_web-final.pdf on August 18, 2020.
- Aguilar, J. (2019) Public security policies in El Salvador 2003-2018. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Retrieved from: https://sv.boell.org/sites/default/files/las_politicas_de_seguridad_publica_en_el_salvador_2003-2018.pdf on August 20, 2020.
- ¹⁴Presidency of El Salvador, Executive Branch [O.E.] (2014) Executive Decree N.25, D.O N° 41, Tome N° 402 of March 3, 2014, retrieved from: <https://www.diariooficial.gob.sv/diarios/do-2014/03-marzo/03-03-2014.pdf> on July 25, 2020.
- ¹⁵Presidency of El Salvador, Executive Branch [O.E.] (2014) Reform to Executive Decree N° 60, Executive Decree N°2, D.O N° 104, Tome N° 403 of June 6, 2014, retrieved from: <https://www.diariooficial.gob.sv/diarios/do-2014/06-junio/06-06-2014.pdf> on July 25, 2020.
- ¹⁶Presidency of El Salvador, Executive Branch [O.E.] (2015) Reform to Executive Decree N° 60, Executive Decree N° 61, D.O N° 93, Tome N° 407 of May 26, 2015, retrieved from: <https://www.diariooficial.gob.sv/diarios/do-2015/05-mayo/26-05-2015.pdf> on July 28, 2020.

- ¹⁷Presidency of El Salvador [P.E.S.] (2016) Reform to Executive Decree N° 60, Executive Decree N° 25, D.O N° 73, Tome N° 411 on April 21, 2016, retrieved from: <https://www.diariooficial.gob.sv/diarios/do-2016/04-abril/21-04-2016.pdf> on July 29, 2020.
- ¹⁸Presidency of El Salvador [P.E.S.] (2016) Reform to Executive Decree N° 60, Executive Decree N° 68, D.O N° 240, Tome N. 413 on December 23, 2016, retrieved from: <https://www.diariooficial.gob.sv/diarios/do-2016/12-diciembre/23-12-2016.pdf> on July 29, 2020.
- ¹⁹Presidency of El Salvador [P.E.S.] (2017) Reform to Executive Decree N° 60, Executive Decree N° 49, D.O N° 238, Tome N. 427 on Wednesday, December 20, 2017, retrieved from: <https://www.diariooficial.gob.sv/diarios/do-2017/12-diciembre/20-12-2017.pdf> on July 29, 2020.
- ²⁰University Institute for Public Opinion [IUDOP] (2014) The security and justice situation 2009-2014. Aguilar, J. (Coord.) 1st edition. Iudop. Retrieved from: http://www.uca.edu.sv/iudop/wp-content/uploads/libro_la_situacion_de_la_seguridad.pdf on September 29, 2020.
- ²¹Myrna Mack Foundation [FMM] (2016) The systematic cooptation of the government in Guatemala, in Reconceptualization of violence in the Northern Triangle. Addressing security in the countries of northern Central America from a democratic viewpoint. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Retrieved from: https://mx.boell.org/sites/default/files/reconceptualizacion_de_la_violencia_web-final.pdf on Monday, September 28, 2020.
- ²²Ministry of National Defense [MDN] (2017) Work reports 2016-2017. Page 27. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/institutions/mdn/documents/memorias-de-labores> on September 30, 2020.
- ²³Government of El Salvador [GOES] (2015) Safe El Salvador Plan. National Council for Citizen Security and Coexistence. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/institutions/mjisp/documents/129525/download> on September 30, 2020.
- ²⁴Montes, J. (2020) Strengthening the Trident Naval Task Force, amphibious command of the Naval Force of El Salvador. Retrieved from: <https://www.defensa.com/centro-america/fortalecimiento-fuerza-tarea-naval-tridente-comando-anfibio> on September 30, 2020.
- ²⁵Ministry of National Defense [MDN] (2016) Work reports 2015-2016. Page 23. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/institutions/mdn/documents/memorias-de-labores> on September 30, 2020.
- ²⁶Ministry of National Defense [MDN] (2018) Work reports 2017-2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/institutions/mdn/documents/memorias-de-labores> on September 30, 2020.
- ²⁷Iudop, 2016 in Idhuca, 2017.
- ²⁸Iudop, 2016, in Idhuca, 2017.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

THE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC OPINION (Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública, IUDOP) is a research center based at the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA) in El Salvador. In collaboration with other areas of the university, the IUDOP seeks to systematically and scientifically monitor the social, political, economic, and cultural situation of the country.

THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA (WOLA) is a leading research and advocacy organization advancing human rights in the Americas. We envision a future where public policies protect human rights and recognize human dignity, and where justice overcomes violence.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Central America Monitor is a subregional project that seeks to assess the level of progress being made by the countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador in the areas of strengthening the rule of law, reducing violence, combating corruption and organized crime, and protecting human rights through the use of a series of indicators. The project also monitors and analyzes international cooperation programs in the aforementioned areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Latin American Division of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Seattle International Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, and the Moriah Fund for their financial support and excellent advice that has made this project possible.

For more information visit: www.wola.org/es/cam