

El Salvador Cases, 1970-2012
Last Updated: 12 December 2017

torg	gname	onset	min	max
T369	FARABUNDO MARTI POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES	14-Sep-79	1970	1979
T785	PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP) (EL SALVADOR)	31-Dec-79	1974	1979
T80	FUERZAS ARMADAS DE RESISTENCIA NACIONAL (FARN)		1975	1979
T702528	UNION GUERRERA BLANCA (UGB)		1976	1980
T560	PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY BLOC (BPR)		1978	1982
T168	28 FEBRUARY PEOPLE'S LEAGUE		1978	0
T166	FARABUNDO MARTI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (FMLN)	18-May-80	1978	1994
T1337	UNITED POPULAR ACTION FRONT (FAPU)		1978	1980
T1901	SECRET ANTI-COMMUNIST ARMY (ESA)		1978	1989
T673	CENTRAL AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY (PRTC)		1979	1979
T1806	MAXIMILIANO HERNANDEZ MARTINEZ BRIGADE		1980	1992
T1834	NATIONAL ANTI COMMUNIST COMMANDO		1984	1987
T1803	MANUEL JOSE ARCE COMMANDO		1988	1988
T147	DECEMBER 20 MOVEMENT (M-20)		1990	1992
T2078	MODELOS		2005	0
T2075	CENTRALES LOCOS SALVATRUCHAS		2005	0
T559	COMMUNIST PARTY OF EL SALVADOR		0	0

I. FARABUNDO MARTI POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES

Torg ID: 369

Min. Group Date: 1970

Max. Group Date: 1979

Onset: 1979

Aliases: People's Liberation Forces (Fpl), Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation Forces, Fuerzas Populares De Liberacion (Fpl), People's Liberation Forces (El Salvador), Popular Forces Of Liberation, Popular Liberation Forces

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: FLP

Group Formation: 1970

Group End: 1980 (merger to form FMLN)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Farabundo Martí Popular Liberation Forces, also referred to as the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), was a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla group formed in 1970 by members of the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) (Gunson et al. 2015). The FPL later broke away from the PCS, which lacked emphasis on armed struggle, to engage in a “prolonged popular war” against the Salvadoran military dictatorship (CIA 1984, 5; Gunson et. al. 2015). The FPL rejected capitalism, opposed the Salvadoran oligarchy, and sought to establish a communist El Salvador (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 533; MIPT 2008). The group’s earliest documented violent incident dates to 1977 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 533; GTD 2017).

Geography

The FPL originated as an urban terrorist group yet later adopted the characteristics of a rural guerrilla movement (CIA 1984, 21). The three cities that had the highest FPL attack frequencies, in descending order, were San Salvador, San Vicente, and Santa Ana (GTD 2017). By 1979, the FPL developed a stronghold in Chalatenango, a mountainous and rural province in northern El Salvador (Gunson et al. 2015). After the group joined the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), it operated in the northern, central, and paracentral Salvadoran fronts and had outside headquarters in Nicaragua (CIA 1984, 2, 21). It is unclear what year they established this base in Nicaragua. Records do not indicate that the FPL conducted transnational attacks.

Organizational Structure

The FPL was an independent terrorist group between 1970 and 1980. In this time period, the group raised millions of dollars in funding from ransom money (Gleditsch et al. 2013). The FPL’s enterprise had two major branches: military and political. The military arm was the Popular Armed Forces of Liberation (PAFL) and, by 1984, had force levels between 2,800 and 3,500 individuals (CIA 1984, 21). The mass political

organization was the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR) (CIA 1984, 21). The BPR's coalition included peasants, slum dwellers, students, and teachers, totalling an estimated 60,000 members (Gunson et. al. 2015; Global Security n.d.). In 1980, FPL began coordinating efforts with four other left-wing guerrilla groups under the FMLN, an umbrella organization (Gleditsch et al. 2013).

During the 1970s, former PCS secretary-general Cayetano Carpio led the FPL. Carpio grew up in a poor Salvadoran home and worked as a labor organizer. After the formation of FPL, he served as the senior commander of its armed forces. Carpio committed suicide in 1983, shortly after the murder of his deputy ([Meislin 1983](#)). The death of Carpio and his deputy resulted in the decline of the FPL's status within the FMLN.

External Ties

Breakaway members from the PCS founded the FPL yet maintained Marxist-Leninist beliefs. The FPL was pro-Cuba and viewed Cuba as an aspirational governmental model. The FPL provided material aid to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua ([Crenshaw and Pimlott, 1997](#)). Cuba and the Soviet Union provided support to the FMLN, of which the FPL was a member (Global Security n.d.).

In 1980, the FPL joined the FMLN, an umbrella organization of five left-wing Salvadoran terrorist groups: the FPL, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), Communist Party of El Salvador/ Armed Forces of Liberation (PCES/ FAL), and Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers/ Popular Liberation Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRTC/ FARLP) (CIA 1984, 2). The FMLN sought to coordinate the Salvadoran leftist insurgency.

Some groups have splintered off from the FPL. These groups include the People's Liberation Army (EPL) and the Clara Elizabeth Ramírez Front (FCER) (Canada IRB 1989).

Group Outcome

As guerilla attacks increased during the 1970s, the Salvadoran military government responded with force. Between 1979 and 1981, army-backed death squads resulted in the death of more than 30,000 people (BBC News 2017). FPL's last recorded attack as an independent insurgent group was on December 29, 1979 (GTD 2017). In 1980, the FPL joined four other left-wing guerrilla groups to form a unified insurgency, known as the FMLN (Gleditsch et al. 2013). Today, the FMLN no longer conducts terrorist activities and is one of El Salvador's two major political parties (MIPT 2008).

- II. PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP) (EL SALVADOR)
Torg ID: 785

Min. Group Date: 1974
Max. Group Date: 1979
Onset: 1979

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

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<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/elsalvador2.htm>
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http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/NSAEX_casedesc.pdf
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https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000048997.pdf

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: Any additional aliases you may have encountered

Group Formation: 1973 (form), 1974 (first attack)

Group End: 1980 (merger to form FMLN)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) officially formed in 1973 yet had begun its development in 1971 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534). Different student groups, some with a militant background, contributed to the ERP's formation. The group sought to overthrow the government in order to secure "social justice" and a more democratic government (Martín Alvarez 2010, 13-14). The ERP had a shallow, heterogenous Marxist-Leninist ideology that combined influences from the Theology of Liberation, Theory of Dependency, and 1960s anti-authoritarian student movements (Martín Alvarez 2014). The ERP's earliest documented attack occurred on April 30, 1974 (GTD 2017).

Geography

The ERP's stronghold was in the Morazán Department, particularly in the Torola/ Villa El Rosario/ San Fernando region (Martín Alvarez 2010, 13). Nearly three-quarters (74%) of recorded ERP attacks occurred in San Salvador (GTD 2017). Records do not indicate that the ERP was transnational or had headquarters outside of El Salvador.

Organizational Structure

The ERP was a political organization with a military arm (Gleditsch et al. 2013, 415). Different student groups, some with a militant background, contributed to the ERP's formation. The group was composed of radical Marxists and militant Christian socialists (CIA 1984, 21). The group's armed wing was the ERP; the group's political wing was the Popular Leagues of February 28 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534). The ERP rallied students, workers, and peasants. In the earlier stages of the organization, the group was organized as a federation of small collectives (Martín Alvarez 2014). After a period of organizational decentralization, the ERP's most prominent leader, Joaquin Villalobos, took power (Martín Alvarez 2014). Villalobos was born into a middle-class Salvadoran family in San Salvador. After dropping out from college, where he studied economics, he became the leader of the ERP ([New York Times 1982](#)). Under Villalobos, the ERP developed a command and control structure, which sectioned combatants into large units. In 1980, the group had an estimated 800 fighters (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534). By 1984, the ERP armed forces had between 3000 and 3500 soldiers (CIA 1984, 21).

External Ties

A number of groups emerged from the ERP. In 1973, internal activists splintered from the ERP and formed the Workers' Revolutionary Organisation (ORT) (Martín Alvarez 2010, 14). The Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) also split from the ERP in 1975,

as the FARN disagreed with the ERP's emphasis on terrorism (CIA 1984, 9). In 1977, the ERP created the Salvadoran Revolutionary Party and the Popular Leagues of 28 (CIA 1984, 21).

In 1980, the ERP joined the FMLN, an umbrella organization of five left-wing Salvadoran terrorist groups: the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), ERP, Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), Communist Party of El Salvador/ Armed Forces of Liberation (PCES/ FAL), and Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers/ Popular Liberation Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRTC/ FARLP) (CIA 1984, 2). The FMLN sought to coordinate insurgent activities.

During the ERP's independent stage, records do not indicate that the group received direct material aid from external state actors. Cuba and the Soviet Union, however, later provided support to the FMLN, of which the ERP was a member (Global Security n.d.).

Group Outcome

As guerilla attacks increased during the 1970s, the Salvadoran military government responded with force. Between 1979 and 1981, army-backed death squads resulted in the death of more than 30,000 people (BBC News 2017). The ERP's last recorded attack as an independent insurgent group was on December 19, 1979 (GTD 2017). In 1980, the ERP joined four other left-wing guerrilla groups to form a unified organization, known as the FMLN (Gleditsch et al. 2013). Today, the FMLN no longer conducts terrorist activities and is one of El Salvador's two major political parties (MIPT 2008).

III. FUERZAS ARMADAS DE RESISTENCIA NACIONAL (FARN)

Torg ID: 80

Min. Group Date: 1975

Max. Group Date: 1979

Onset: NA

Aliases: Armed Forces Of National Resistance, Armed Forces Of National Resistance (Farn), Fuerzas Armadas De Resistencia Nacional (Farn), National Resistance, Resistencia Nacional (Rn)

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Group Formation: 1975

Group End: 1980 (merger)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

FARN formed in 1975 after splintering from the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP) (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532; MIPT 2008). FARN’s leader split from the ERP shortly after ERP members killed the FARN’s leader Roque Dalton (CIA 1984, 22). The group’s earliest documented attack was on June 28, 1976 (GTD 2017). FARN considered itself a “Marxist-Leninist proletarian army” (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532). The group staunchly opposed imperialism, which they viewed as exported by foreign governments and corporations (MIPT 2008). It wanted to overthrow the government (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532).

Geography

FARN was an urban terrorist group (MIPT 2008). Of recorded incidents, the two cities with the most frequent attacks were San Salvador and Santa Ana (GTD 2017). FARN’s

stronghold was located on the Guazapa volcano, which is north of San Salvador (Gunson et al. 2015).

Organizational Structure

Middle-class citizens, who often had associations with the Christian Democratic Party's youth movement, made up most of the FARN's coalition (MIPT 2008). The group's political front organization, the United Popular Action Front (FAPU), brought in support of urban trade unionists (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532; Gunson et al. 2015). In 1980, the group had 800 fighters (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532). By 1984, the CIA estimated that the FARN possessed between 1,400 and 1,550 combatants. The forces were organized in "at least two battalions" (CIA 1984, 22).

Before it splintered from the ERP, FARN was led by Roque Dalton Garcia (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532). Roque Dalton was a noted poet and former Communist Party member (CIA 1984, 22). After Roque Dalton's death, the next prominent leader of FARN was Ferman Cienfuegos (CIA 1984, 22). Cienfuegos (born in Costa Rica) came from a middle-class Salvadoran background and briefly worked as a teacher. He joined the ERP then FARN. Cienfuegos was seen to be more moderate and open to non-Marxist connections ([New York Times 1982](#)).

The group received its money from kidnapping business executives (MIPT 2008).

External Ties

FARN partnered with FAPU, its political wing, in 1975. FAPU became FARN's mass front organization (CIA 1984, 22). FAPU enabled FARN to gain the support of urban trade unionists (Gunson et al. 2015).

In 1980, FARN joined the FMLN, an umbrella organization of five left-wing Salvadoran terrorist groups: the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), ERP, Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), Communist Party of El Salvador/ Armed Forces of Liberation (PCES/ FAL), and Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers/ Popular Liberation Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRTC/ FARLP) (CIA 1984, 2). The FMLN sought to coordinate insurgent activities.

During FARN's independent stage, records do not indicate that the group received direct material aid from external state actors. Cuba and the Soviet Union, however, later provided support to the FMLN, of which FARN was a member (Global Security n.d.).

Group Outcome

As guerilla attacks increased during the 1970s, the Salvadoran military government responded with force. Between 1979 and 1981, army-backed death squads resulted in the death of more than 30,000 people (BBC News 2017). FARN's last recorded attack as an independent insurgent group was on December 11, 1979 (GTD 2017). In Autumn of 1980, FARN joined other left-wing guerrilla groups to form a unified organization, known as the FMLN (Gleditsch et al. 2013). The FMLN signed a peace agreement with the Salvadoran government in 1991. Today, the FMLN no longer conducts terrorist activities and is one of El Salvador's two major political parties (MIPT 2008).

IV. UNION GUERRERA BLANCA (UGB)

Torg ID: 702528

Min. Group Date: 1976

Max. Group Date: 1980

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: White Warrior's Union, Union of White Guerrillas, Union de Guerrillas Blancos

Group Formation: 1976

Group End: 1980 (unknown - maybe disband)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Union Guerrera Blanca, also known as the White Warrior's Union, formed in 1976 and had its first attack the same year (GTD 2017; Central Intelligence Agency. N.d.; Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535). The UGB's first attack took place on August 24, 1976 in San Salvador (GTD 2017). The group, known as one of the right-wing death squads, participated in the assassinations and oppression of leftist protest groups that did not support the social hierarchy and social order of El Salvador after the war (Global Security n.d.; Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Geography

The group's attacks were focused on cities in El Salvador, such as San Salvador (GTD 2017). Their bases were located in Guatemala (Global Security n.d.). The group is not transnational.

Organizational Structure

The group was led by Roberto D'Aubuisson along with officers of the National Guard (Central Intelligence Agency. n.d.). The group is made up of National Guard officers, and many of the members were Salvadoran (Global Security n.d.; Central Intelligence Agency. n.d.). The group size is unknown.

External Ties

The UGB is an alleged group. It has been speculated that the group received military inspiration from regimes in Guatemala, and had ties with El Salvador's military government forces (Washington Post 1977).

Group Outcome

The group's last attack took place on February 10, 1980 (GTD 2017). It is not clear why the group disbanded, but it appears they did so after D'Aubuisson was released from active duty and the El Salvador government was coup'd (Central Intelligence Agency. n.d.).

V. PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY BLOC (BPR)

Torg ID: 560

Min. Group Date: 1978

Max. Group Date: 1982

Onset: NA

Aliases: Popular Revolutionary Bloc (Bpr), Peoples Revolutionary Bloc, Peoples Revolutionary Bloc (Bpr), People's Revolutionary Bloc (Bpr)

Part 1. Bibliography

- Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman. "People's Revolutionary Bloc." Political Terrorism: A New Guide. Routledge. 1988. P. 534. gDrive PDF.
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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

Group Formation: This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

Group End: This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

Geography

This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

Organizational Structure

This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

External Ties

This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

Group Outcome

This is the political wing of the FPL formed in 1975 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534; Canada IRB 1989).

VI. 28 FEBRUARY PEOPLE'S LEAGUE

Torg ID: 168

Min. Group Date: 1978

Max. Group Date: 0

Onset: NA

Aliases: February 28 Popular Leagues, 28 February People's League, 28 February People's League, Ligas Populares 28 De Febrero (Lp-28)

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This is the political wing of the ERP.

Group Formation: This is the political wing of the ERP.

Group End: This is the political wing of the ERP.

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

In 1977, the ERP formed the Popular Leagues of 28 (LP-28). The LP-28 was a leftist group that sought government change and the reduction of U.S. influence in El Salvador (MIPT 2008). The group's first recorded attacks date to December 1979 (GTD 2017).

Geography

Of the group's recorded attacks, the majority occurred in San Salvador (GTD 2017). Records do not indicate that the group was transnational. Moreover, records do not reveal LP-28's headquarters.

Organizational Structure

The LP-28 had an estimated 10,000 members (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534). The group "united a peasant union, a worker organization, and two student groups" ([Czerny 1981](#)). Other organizational details, including leadership and financial sources, are unknown.

External Ties

In 1977, the ERP created the Salvadoran Revolutionary Party and the Popular Leagues of 28 (CIA 1984, 21). It is believed that the LP-28 was to serve as a mass front organization for the ERP (MIPT 2008).

The LP-28 joined the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) in 1980. The CRM involved three other leftist movements seeking regime change, the reduction of U.S. influence in El Salvador, and the reduction of the Salvadoran oligarchy's power (MIPT 2008).

Group Outcome

The LP-28's last recorded attack was July 11, 1980 (GTD 2017). In 1992, the Salvadoran Civil War came to an end with a peace settlement between the Salvadoran

government and leftist rebel groups. The group never disappeared, yet it ceased terrorist activities (MIPT 2008).

VII. FARABUNDO MARTI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (FMLN)

Torg ID: 166

Min. Group Date: 1978

Max. Group Date: 1994

Onset: 1980

Aliases: Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (Fmln), Frente Farabundo Marti Para La Liberaci6N Nacional (Fmln), Frente Farabundo Marti De Liberacion Nacional-Frente Democratico Revolucionario (Fmln-Fdr)

Part 1. Bibliography

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- "El Salvador Civil War." Global Security. N.d. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/elsalvador2.htm>
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- "El Salvador: The Insurgent Alliance." Central Intelligence Agency. Declassified. 1984. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86S00596R000200590001-4.pdf>
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http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/NSAEX_casedesc.pdf
- “Nicaragua: Export of Subversion to El Salvador.” Declassified. Central Intelligence Agency.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85M00363R001403210029-4.pdf>
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<https://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/15/world/nicaragua-defends-role-as-rebel-haven-saying-it-fostered-salvador-peace.html>

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1980

Group End: 1991 (disarm)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) officially formed on October 10, 1980. Records indicate the group engaged in violent activity that same month (GTD 2017). The FMLN sought to coordinate five leftist guerrilla groups part of the Salvadoran leftist insurgency. The organization’s overarching goal was the replacement of the Salvadoran military dictatorship with a communist government (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532; MIPT 2008).

Geography

FMLN strongholds were in the northern department of Chalatenango and the north-eastern department of Morazán (Gunson et al. 2015). Both departments have mountainous regions.

The FMLN engaged in both urban and rural guerilla warfare (Gleditsch et al. 2013, 413). The FMLN operated in four major Salvadoran war fronts: central, paracentral, western, and eastern (Gunson et al. 2015).

FMLN violent activities extended beyond El Salvador. The FMLN also conducted attacks in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (GTD 2017). The FMLN had an active base in Nicaragua for the 11 years it was active.

Organizational Structure

The FMLN was composed of five leftist organizations. Each of these groups, while part of the FMLN, maintained its own military, logistic, and chain of command structures (Martin Alvarez n.d., 17). The FMLN, however, had a unified command structure by 1986 (Gunson et al. 2015).

The FMLN was organized into political and military wings. The former, or the General Command, specialized in propaganda and public diplomacy, while the latter coordinated the FMLN's armed resistance (Martin Alvarez n.d., 17; MIPT 2008). By 1984, the FMLN was estimated to have 11,000-12,000 combatants (Gunson et al. 2015). At the end of 1991, the FMLN was estimated to have between 6,000-7,000 members (Gleditsch et al. 2013, 415).

Five core leaders led the development of the FMLN: Leonel Gonzalez of the FPL, Joaquín Villalobos Hues of the ERP, Ferman Cienfuegos of FARN, Jorge Shafik Handal of the PCES/FAL, and Roberto Roca of the PRTC/ FARLP (CIA 1984, 2). The majority of the leaders came from middle- or upper-middle class backgrounds and were active in university political movements. Personal rivalries amongst the leaders were known to have caused broader internal strife within the FMLN (CIA 1984, 3).

The FMLN received its funding from the Cuban government and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas (MIPT 2008). The group received other material support from the Soviet bloc (Global Security n.d.). Some internal FMLN groups raised money through kidnapping high profile figures.

External Ties

The FMLN was an umbrella organization of five left-wing Salvadoran guerrilla groups: the FPL, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), Communist Party of El Salvador/ Armed Forces of Liberation (PCES/ FAL), and Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers/ Popular Liberation Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRTC/ FARLP) (CIA 1984, 2).

The FMLN had direct ties with the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), which was another leftist mass organization (Gunson et al. 2015). The FMLN also had the support of the liberation movement within the Catholic Church and Salvadoran labor unions (Global Security n.d.).

Throughout the 1980s, Cuba and the Soviet Union provided monetary support and arms to the FMLN (Global Security n.d.).

Group Outcome

In their efforts against the FMLN, the Salvadoran government received U.S. counterinsurgency support, in the form of money and military advisors (Global Security n.d.). U.S. support of Salvadoran counterinsurgency efforts led to the demise of the FMLN (Gunson et al. 2015). In 1991, the FMLN signed a peace agreement with the Salvadoran government. The group's final violent incident was on November 1, 1994 (GTD 2017). Today, the FMLN no longer conducts terrorist activities and is one of El Salvador's two major political parties (MIPT 2008).

VIII. UNITED POPULAR ACTION FRONT

Torg ID: 1337

Min. Group Date: 1978

Max. Group Date: 1980

Onset: NA

Aliases: United Popular Action Front, United Popular Action Front (Fapu)

Part 1. Bibliography

- Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman. "Unified Popular Action Front." Political Terrorism: A New Guide. Routledge. 1988. P. 535. gDrive PDF.
- GTD Perpetrator 4094. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified June 2017.
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=4094>
- Phil Gunson, Greg Chamberlain, and Andrew Thompson. "FAPU." The Dictionary of Contemporary Politics of Central America and the Caribbean. Routledge. 2015.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=tEJACwAAQBAJ&q=fapu#v=snippet&q=fapu&f=false>
- "El Salvador: The Insurgent Alliance." Central Intelligence Agency. Declassified. 1984.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86S00596R000200590001-4.pdf>
- Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, El Salvador: United Popular Action Front (Frente de Acción Popular Unificada, FAPU); treatment of current and former members; reports of "death squad" threats or attacks (1999-2000), 2 January 2001, SLV36172.E, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4beaa18.html>

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Group Formation: This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Group End: This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Geography

This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Organizational Structure

This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

External Ties

This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Group Outcome

This is the political wing of FARN (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

IX. SECRET ANTI-COMMUNIST ARMY (ESA)

Torg ID: 1901

Min. Group Date: 1978

Max. Group Date: 1989

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

- Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman. "Salvadorean Anti-Communist Army." Political Terrorism: A New Guide. Routledge. 1988. P. 535. gDrive PDF.
- GTD Perpetrator 364. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified June 2017.
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=364>
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<https://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/04/29/Guerrillas-charge-US-Embassy-linked-to-death-squads/5293452062800/>

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- “El Salvador: Controlling Right-wing Terrorism.” Declassified. Central Intelligence Agency. N.d. p. 11. https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000075083.pdf

Part 2. Basic Coding

Group Formation: 1978

Group End: 1989, last recorded attack

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA) first came to attention for violent activities on October 20, 1978 in Guatemala City, Guatemala (GTD 2017). The group had extreme anti-communist beliefs and supported the military governments in Guatemala and El Salvador ([Carey et al. 2013](#)). ESA was associated with other right-wing terror groups in El Salvador (Chavez 1983). Attacks were mostly directed at teachers, priests, and nuns (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 535).

Geography

ESA conducted attacks in Guatemala and El Salvador. The group most frequently targeted Guatemala City and San Salvador (GTD 2017). Other geographic information about ESA could not be found.

Organizational Structure

ESA, like other right-wing terror groups, operated as a militia and moved around armed groups in vehicles (IFHR 1999). By mid 1980, the Nationalist Republican Alliance in El Salvador (ARENA) is said to have integrated ESA into its paramilitary structure (CIA n.d., 11). The group also claimed to have been an umbrella organization for various right-wing terror groups (Chavez 1983).

Membership of Salvadoran right-wing groups, like the ESA, typically drew from the ruling class, particularly those from the military or those with economic clout (IFHR 1999).

Information on ESA’s leadership could not be found.

External Ties

ESA had ties to other right-wing groups operating in El Salvador. The group conducted clandestine operations on behalf of ARENA (CIA n.d., 6). ESA claimed to be the umbrella group for the Death Squad, Anti-Communist Brigade and White War Union (Chavez 1983).

ESA had links to the Guatemalan and Salvadoran governments (Carey et al. 2013). The U.S. Embassy in El Salvador was accused of complicity with ESA and other death squads (Drudge 1984).

Group Outcome

Between 1979 and 1981, Salvadoran army-backed death squads, including ESA, resulted in the death of more than 30,000 people (BBC News 2017). The group's final documented attack was on December 28, 1989 in Guatemala City (GTD 2017). In 1991, the insurgents signed a peace agreement with the Salvadoran government. Death squads in El Salvador saw little legal action after the peace agreement and began to initiate criminal activities in the late 1990s (IFHR 1999).

- X. CENTRAL AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY (PRTC)
Torg ID: 673
Min. Group Date: 1979
Max. Group Date: 1979
Onset: NA

Aliases: Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (Prtc), Central American Workers Revolutionary Party (Prtc), Central American Workers' Revolutionary Party (Prtc)

Part 1. Bibliography

- Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman. "Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers." Political Terrorism: A New Guide. Routledge. 1988. P. 534. gDrive PDF.
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<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=2727>
- "El Salvador: Guerrilla Capabilities and Prospects over the next two years." Central Intelligence Agency. Declassified. 1984.
https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000808520.pdf
- "El Salvador: The Insurgent Alliance." Central Intelligence Agency. Declassified. 1984.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86S00596R000200590001-4.pdf>
- Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, El Salvador: Origin, ideology and activities of the PRTC (Field Workers Revolutionary Party), 1975-1990, 1 July 1990, SLV6572, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ac0a88.html>

- Nidia Diaz. "APROXIMACIÓN A LA HISTORIA DEL PRTC." CEDEMA. 2006. <http://www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=1554>

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: PRTC

Group Formation: 1976 (Form), 1979 (first attack)

Group End: 1980 (merger)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC) formed on January 25, 1976, as a regional party organization (Diaz 2006). While the group started in Costa Rica and branched out to other Central American countries, the El Salvador branch became the most active (CIA 1984, 23; CIA 1984, 13). The group was Marxist-Leninist and ideologically influenced by Marx, Lenin, Che Guevara, and Francisco Morazan (Diaz 2006). It aimed to overthrow the El Salvador government. The group's first documented attack occurred on September 21, 1979 (GTD 2017).

Geography

The group formed in Costa Rica and had contacts throughout Central America yet was most active in El Salvador (CIA 1984, 23). Documents do not reveal the location of the PRTC's headquarters. The group's only documented violent incident prior to joining the FMLN occurred in San Salvador, El Salvador (GTD 2017). Records do not specify that the PRTC conducted attacks outside of El Salvador, but it is believed the group attempted to organize armed insurgent movements throughout Central America ([CIA 1996. 4](#)).

Organizational Structure

The PRTC had both political and military operations in El Salvador. The PRTC formed its mass political organization, the Popular Liberation Movement (MLP), in 1979. The group's political wing was also known as the Liberation Leagues (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534). The military branch of the group was known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces for Popular Liberation (FARLP), which was created in 1982 after the PRTC joined the umbrella organization, the FMLN. By 1984, the group had an estimated 700 to 850 combatants (CIA 1984, 23). A second assessment says the group had 300 members in

1984 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534). The group's leader was Roberto Roca (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 534).

One of the central founders of the PRTC was Nidia Diaz, who grew up in El Salvador and went to the University of El Salvador prior to founding the PRTC (Diaz 2006; [Diaz 2010](#)). The Salvadoran branch of the PRTC was also led by Francisco Jovel Urquilla (CIA 1984, 23). In 1984, the CIA assessed that the PRTC had organizational and leadership challenges, which led to an inability to coordinate political and military strategies (CIA 1984, 12).

External Ties

In 1980, the Salvadoran PRTC joined the FMLN, an umbrella organization of five left-wing Salvadoran terrorist groups: the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), ERP, Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), Communist Party of El Salvador/ Armed Forces of Liberation (PCES/ FAL), and Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers/ Popular Liberation Revolutionary Armed Forces (PRTC/ FARLP) (CIA 1984, 2). The FMLN sought to coordinate insurgent activities in El Salvador.

During the PRTC's independent stage, it demonstrated close ties with Cubans and Nicaraguans. Cuba and the Soviet Union later provided support to the FMLN, of which PRTC was a member (Global Security n.d.). The group had non-state level contacts in Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama, among others (Diaz 2006).

Group Outcome

The group's only documented attack prior to joining an umbrella organization occurred on September 21, 1979 (GTD 2017). In Autumn of 1980, the PRTC joined other left-wing guerrilla groups to form the unifying insurgent organization, the FMLN. As guerilla attacks increased during the 1970s, the Salvadoran military government responded with force. Between 1979 and 1981, army-backed death squads resulted in the death of more than 30,000 people (BBC News 2017). The FMLN signed a peace agreement with the Salvadoran government in 1991. Today, the FMLN no longer conducts terrorist activities and is one of El Salvador's two major political parties (MIPT 2008).

- XI. MAXIMILIANO HERNANDEZ MARTINEZ BRIGADE
Torg ID: 1806
Min. Group Date: 1980
Max. Group Date: 1992
Onset: NA

Part 1. Bibliography

- Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman. "Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Anti Communist Alliance." Political Terrorism: A New Guide. Routledge. 1988. P. 533. gDrive PDF.
- GTD Perpetrator 1891. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified June 2017.
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=1891>
- "El Salvador: Controlling Right-wing Terrorism." Declassified. Central Intelligence Agency. N.d. p. 11. https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000075083.pdf
- "AROUND THE WORLD; Salvador Official Seized by Rightist Death Squad." 1983. New York Times, Sep 23. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/424771954?accountid=14026>.
- "Notorious Death Squad Returns to El Salvador." 1987. Toronto Star, Jun 17, C6. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/435575349?accountid=14026>.
- Reuters. 1992. "Death Squad Back in Action." Calgary Herald, Oct 24, A2. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/244187919?accountid=14026>.

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Anti Communist Alliance, MHM

Group Formation: 1980

Group End: 1992 (unknown)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

It is unknown precisely when the MHM formed, but it first came to attention in 1980. It was named after President Amilcar Martinez Arguera of El Salvador (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 533). The group's first attack was on September 13, 1980 in Apopa, El Salvador (GTD 2017). The group was a right-wing, paramilitary squad (New York Times 1983; CIA n.d., 11).

Geography

Almost all of the group's attacks took place in San Salvador (GTD 2017). The group is not transnational.

Organizational Structure

The MHM's was named after Amilcar Martinez Arguera, who was the president of El Salvador from 1931-1944. Martinez also ended the peasant uprising in 1932, with a violent force killing up to 30,000 people (Schmid and Jongman 1998; Toronto Star 1987;

Calgary 1992). It is unknown who the leader of the organization was. They do not have any recorded political wings or membership records.

External Ties

The MHM claimed responsibility for some of their attacks, but not their 1992 attack (GTD 2017). They were believed to have ties with the El Salvador National Guard (Schmid and Jongman 1988). They attacked Christian Democrats (CIA n.d.) and also members of FDR.

Group Outcome

The group's last attack took place on October 23, 1992 (GTD 2017). It threatened UN peacekeepers in 1992, but never carried out an attack (Calgary Herald 1992). It is unknown why the group ended its activity, but may be related to the end of the El Salvador Civil War.

Notes for Iris:

- all right-wing groups received government support
- this group may have had deep ties to the government
- their later attacks they don't claim responsibility for coinciding with when they disappear

XII. NATIONAL ANTI COMMUNIST COMMANDO

Torg ID: 1834

Min. Group Date: 1984

Max. Group Date: 1987

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

- Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman. "Anti Communist Commando for the Salvation of the University." Political Terrorism: A New Guide. Routledge. 1988. P. 534. gDrive PDF.
- GTD Perpetrator 2508. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified June 2017.
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=2508>
- "Death Squad in El Salvador Threatens to Kill Journalists." New York Times. 1984.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1984/03/02/world/death-squad-in-el-salvador-threatens-to-kill-journalists.html>
- "El Salvador: Controlling Right-wing Terrorism." Declassified. Central Intelligence Agency. N.d. p. 11. https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000075083.pdf

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: Salvadoran Anti-Communist Command, CAS, Anti-Communist Commando for the Salvation of the University

Group Formation: 1983

Group End: 1987 (unknown)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The group formed in 1983 (CIA n.d., 11). It came to attention in 1983 when it kidnapped an IR professor in November 1983 (Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532). It was a right-wing death squad that targeted citizens that collaborated with leftist Salvadorean groups (New York Times 1984; Schmid and Jongman 1988, 532).

Geography

The group conducted attacks in San Salvador and Delgado, El Salvador (New York Times 1984; GTD 2017). There is no evidence the group is transnational or had an external base.

Organizational Structure

No information could be found about the group's organizational structure.

External Ties

The group may have worked with the Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA) and the National Salvation Movement (MS-28) (CIA n.d., 11). There is some speculation the group is only an alias for other right-wing organizations.

Group Outcome

The group's last known attack was in 1987 when it tried to assassinate a member of the legislative assembly in Delgado, El Salvador (GTD 2017). It is unknown what happened to the group after this last incident. It does not claim responsibility for any additional attacks.

XIII. MANUEL JOSE ARCE COMMANDO

Torg ID: 1803

Min. Group Date: 1988

Max. Group Date: 1988

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

- GTD Perpetrator 2269. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified June 2017.
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=2269>
- "New Terror Tactic in El Salvador - Car Bombings Hit Capital." 1988. San Francisco Chronicle (Pre-1997 Fulltext), Oct 20, A25.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/302283860?accountid=14026>.

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1988

Group End: 1988 (unknown)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

It is unknown when the group formed, but it first came to attention in 1988 for a series of attacks in San Salvador, El Salvador (GTD 2017). It is unclear what the group's aims or ideology is.

Geography

The attacks happened in San Salvador, El Salvador (San Francisco Chronicle 1988; GTD 2017).

Organizational Structure

No information could be found about the group's organizational structure.

External Ties

The group had a "loose affiliation" with the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (San Francisco Chronicle 1988).

Group Outcome

The group's last attack was in October 1988 when it detonated a bomb outside a government building (GTD 2017; San Francisco Chronicle 1988). The group is not heard from again after this incident. The group may be a part of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front umbrella organization.

XIV. DECEMBER 20 MOVEMENT (M-20)

Torg ID: 147

Min. Group Date: 1990

Max. Group Date: 1992

Onset: NA

Aliases: December 20 Movement (M-20), 20 December Movement (M-20), 20 December National Liberation Movement, December 20 Movement, M-20, Movimiento De Diciembre 20, Movimiento De Diciembre 20 (M-20)

Part 1. Bibliography

- "December 20 Movement." Terrorist Organization Profile No. 233, MIPT Knowledge Base, 2008, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F5OaS_pTJg52rjAbH1YPQBazAZ5sSpR29XXjD-p-d9E/edit
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- "Panama: Terrorists say they targeted Americans." Los Angeles Times. 1990. http://articles.latimes.com/1990-03-18/news/mn-916_1_terrorist-group
- Edward Mickolus and Susan Simmon. "Terrorism, 1992-1995: A Chronology of Events and a Selectively Annotated Bibliography." ABC-CLIO. 1997. P. 173. https://books.google.com/books?id=UIBzCC0c2McC&pg=PA173&lpq=PA173&dq=panama+december+20+movement+terrorism&source=bl&ots=AmPQkuLCHQ&sig=lg30MzyHoodcKlsfd2d5tpnGvac&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjE0ZuH_ofYAhVJw2MKHRFhDzcQ6AEIPjAE#v=onepage&q=panama%20december%2020%20movement%20terrorism&f=false

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1990

Group End: 1992

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The December 20 Movement formed between 1989 and 1990 (Los Angeles Times 1990). The group's first attack was in March 1990 when it attacked a US helicopter and discotheque (Global Terrorism Database 2017). The December 20 Movement formed as a violent group, emerging after the U.S. invasion that overthrew Gen. Manuel A. Noriega, on December 20, 1989 (Los Angeles Times 1990). The group's aim is to destabilize the Panamanian government, and the group targets members of the post-Noriega Panamanian government (MIPT 2008). It is allegedly right-wing (MIPT 2008).

Geography

The December 20 Movement has conducted attacks in cities within Panama, such as Panama City, Arrican, San Salvador, and David (Global Terrorism Database 2017). The group is not transnational.

Organizational Structure

The December 20 Movement's leadership, size estimates, and wings are unknown. However, the group's political aims are influenced by their resistance to the Panamanian government, and so the membership type may include individuals who express similar aims to resist. A man claiming to be part of the group called the office of ACAN to notify authorities of an attack the group carried out on February 27, 1992 (Mickolus and Simmons 1997, 173). Many individuals of the Colombian April 19 Movement, have been suspected to have joined the December 20 Movement (Mickolus and Simmons 1997, 175). These individuals have been identified as Julio Cesar Alvarado Rivera, Ruben Arturo Villareal, and Amado Sanchez (Mickolus and Simmons 1997).

External Ties

The December 20 Movement has not alleged any support with other organizations and groups.

Many individuals of the Colombian April 19 Movement, have been suspected to have joined the December 20 Movement (Mickolus and Simmons 1997, 175). These individuals have been identified as Julio Cesar Alvarado Rivera, Ruben Arturo Villareal, and Amado Sanchez (Mickolus and Simmons 1997).

Group Outcome

The December 20 Movement has not been active in attacks since their last attack in Panama City on November 6, 1992 (Global Terrorism Database 2017). Panama police arrested 5 members of M-20 in June 1992 (Mickolus and Simmons 1997, 175).

Notes for Iris:

-unclear why Colombian members are opposing the US invasion in Panama, but the similar name and membership might indicate a larger shared goal between the two groups?

XV. **MODELOS**

Torg ID: 2078

Min. Group Date: 2005

Max. Group Date: 0

Onset: NA

Aliases: Modelos, Modelos Locos Salvatruchos, Modelos Locos Salvatruchos (MIs)

Part 1. Bibliography

- “Una clica controla el barrior San Jacinto.” El Salvador. 2015.
<http://www.elsalvador.com/noticias/nacional/170363/una-clica-controla-el-barrio-san-jacinto/>

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

Group Formation: This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

Group End: This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

Geography

This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

Organizational Structure

This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

External Ties

This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

Group Outcome

This is a faction of MS-13 (see below).

XVI. CENTRALES LOCOS SALVATRUCHAS

Torg ID: 2075

Min. Group Date: 2005

Max. Group Date: 0

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

- Sol Velasquez. "MS13." InsightCrime. 2017.
<https://www.insightcrime.org/el-salvador-organized-crime-news/mara-salvatrucha-ms-13-profile/>
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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: MS-13, Mara Salvatrucha

Group Formation: early 1980's

Group End: 2017 (active)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Centrales Locos Salvatruchas formed in the early 1980s in Los Angeles (Insight Crime 2017; BBC 2017). Civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua caused refugees to migrate to Los Angeles. Refugees from El Salvador organized into different criminal groups, including the Centrales Locos Salvatruchas becoming an incredibly prominent one (Insight Crime 2017). The Centrales Locos Salvatruchas is a narco-trafficking group which possesses no political aims.

Geography

The Centrales Locos Salvatruchas conducts attacks in Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala (Insight Crime 2017). The group has bases in El Salvador, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles (Insight Crime 2017). The group is transnational.

Organizational Structure

Kevin Ramsés Moreno Bonilla is the leader of the Centrales Locos Salvatruchas, Nicaragua municipality (El Salvador 2017). However, the group has incredibly loose leadership, and is rather a collection of subgroups who identify as part of this larger unit. Certain units - like MS13 - have a hierarchical organization (Insight Crime 2017).

The group recruits incredibly young members whose ages range between 11 and 40, and they tend to be young Hispanic men experiencing financial hardships ([Canada IRB 2006](#)). The group's members were also initially refugees from El Salvador, and the group's size was estimated to be 70,000 in the "Northern Triangle," at an unknown date (Velasquez 2017). In 2008, the group was estimated to have between 6,000 and 10,000 members (BBC 2017). The group also uses methods of extortion, and threatening violence, in order to have recruits comply with the group ([Canada IRB 2006](#)). The El Salvadorian wing of the group experiences internal conflict between the founding leaders who are mostly in prison, and the leaders outside of prison (Farah and Babineau 2017).

External Ties

The Centrales Locos Salvatruchas is enemies with another street gang, the Barrio 18 (Insight Crime 2017). In July 2011, members of the Centrales Locos Salvatruchas joined in a meeting attended by José Juan Rodríguez Juárez, in order to discuss "The Project" (Garcia 2016). The Project was an alliance between the Mexican Mafia, MS-13, and Knights Templar for the transportation and selling of drugs in the United States (Garcia 2016).

Group Outcome

The Centrales Locos Salvatruchas is still very much one of the most prominent narco-trafficking groups of El Salvador. Kevin Ramsés Moreno Bonilla has been detained as of 2017; however, other leaders within the group are still present within the known bases (El Salvador 2017). The US responded to the group's bases within the country, with deportations under Clinton (Insight Crime 2017). The Clinton Administration also convened a task force against the gang in 1994 (BBC 2017). By 2016, the government successfully carried out measures to crack down on the group's escalating rate of violence (Velasquez 2017). The group's last violent as late as 2017 (Insight Crime 2017).

Notes for Iris:

- the group leadership is very well-organized, but it operates individual cells around US and El Salvador
- each cell is modeled uniformly
- Bonilla is a Nicaraguan refugee that came to the US and he runs the group from the US. He's not that strong or powerful as some of the other units.
- similar recruiting and financial mechanisms as the Mexican cartels
- how does this compare to the Mexican cartels? They are much stronger and resolved. The El Salvador groups are more gang-like and alliances and turf wars are more important than actual revenue from drug-trafficking.
- not as many splinters here - the groups are much more loyal to the central node of leadership than the Mexican cartels
- control vs inter-group competition/splintering dynamics are really interesting here

XVII. COMMUNIST PARTY OF EL SALVADOR

Torg ID: 559

Min. Group Date: 0

Max. Group Date: 0

Onset: NA

Aliases: None

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: PCS, PCES, Armed Forces of Liberation, FAL

Group Formation: 1945

Group End: 1992 (disarm-return to politics)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The Communist Party of El Salvador formed in 1945, after Colonel Osmin Aguirre Salinas became the leader of El Salvador (University of Central Arkansas n.d.). The group was inspired by the Farabundo Marti assassination in 1932 (Schmid and Jongman 1988). The group became violent in 1979, and has conducted bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and seizures of embassies, in order to promote their political aims of establishing a communist government within El Salvador (US State Department 1981; Schmid and Jongman 1988; CIA 1984).

Geography

The Communist Party of El Salvador has only conducted attacks within El Salvador, as their aim is to establish a new form of government within this country (US State Department 1981). The group is not transnational.

Organizational Structure

The Communist Party of El Salvador consisted of two factions, the first one being comprised of individuals lead by Shafik Handal, who work towards succeeding in their political aims by working through the electoral process, and the second faction, led by Cayetano Carpio, who tend to conduct prolonged armed attacks to destabilize the Salvadoran government (Heritage 1981). The group had a legal political front known as the National Democratic Union/Communist Party, and also maintained an armed wing referred to as the Armed Forces of Liberation (Schmid and Jongman 1988; CIA 1984). Size estimates for the group are 9,000 to 11,000 members around 1984 (CIA 1984).

External Ties

The Communist Party of El Salvador had alleged ties with the Cuban Chief of Communications following Shafik Handal's meeting with him to discuss guerilla military plans (US State Department 1981). Handal visited the U.S.S.R., Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and Ethiopia to seek the support of leaders within these areas (US State Department 1981). However, the group had a strained relationship with the USSR, as propaganda and diplomacy were used to discredit the Salvadoran government (CIA 1984). In May 1980, Salvadoran guerrilla leaders formed DRU with the help of the Soviet Union and Cuba (CIA 1984). These two countries also provided the Communist Party of El Salvador with arms (US State Department 1981). The group also worked with the larger coordinating body, referred to as the Farabundo Marti People's Liberation Front, to conduct guerilla attacks (US State Department 1981).

Group Outcome

The Communist Party of El Salvador's last recorded activity occurred in 1992. Many splinter groups emerged from this group, since its fallout (Heritage 1981). A 12-year civil war between the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the El Salvador Armed Forces (ESAF) ended in 1992 (Global Security n.d.).

Notes for Iris:

- the Communist Party of El Salvador was originally a new political party in the country in 1945
- some contradictory information about its origins
- civil war ends in 1992 and most groups disarm