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El Salvador: Statistics On Extent Of Poverty

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According to a recent report delivered by Deputy Planning Minister Ernesto Mauricio Altschul, nearly two-thirds of El Salvador's urban residents are living in poverty: 29.3% in "extreme poverty," and 31.8% in "relative poverty." Altschul described the country's social welfare conditions as "chaotic." In the past year, he said, unemployment was 57.9%, infant mortality increased by 55%, and the housing shortage reached 600,000 units. Health Minister Dr. Lisandro Vasquez, and Deputy Health Minister Dr. Carlos Miranda reported that the government's inadequate spending on health services had caused a "grave crisis" in hospitals. The officials said 60% of Salvadorans are malnourished, and only 37% of the population has access to hospital services. The ratio of hospital beds and nursing personnel to every 10,000 Salvadorans is 14 and three, respectively. According to UNICEF, the maternal mortality rate in El Salvador is 7.4%, while 400 newborns die every week, result of malnutrition or lack of medical attention. (Basic data from Salpress-Notisal weekly summary, 07/16/89; Radio Venceremos weekly report, 07/09-16/89)

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