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## **El Salvador: Summary Of Peace Talks & Related Events**

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Nov. 25: Rebel and government negotiators reconvened peace talks in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato (Mexico). The key issue continues to be composition and organization of the future national civilian police force (PNC). Nov. 26: President Alfredo Cristiani told reporters that military clashes had significantly declined in the wake of the rebel truce and reduction of army operations. He also accused the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) of obstructing the coffee harvest, thereby reneging on a pledge to halt economic sabotage. In a communique, the FMLN accused the government of endangering the truce by launching offensive military maneuvers in traditional rebel strongholds in Morazan department and Guazapa Volcano, located north of the capital. In a paid advertisement published in newspaper El Mundo, The Peace and Work Crusade accused President Cristiani of being a "traitor," a "member of the false right," and of "giving away the country" in peace negotiations with the FMLN. Nov. 27: The Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party released a statement expressing support for President Cristiani's efforts in the peace talks. The Peace and Work Crusade was described as "unpatriotic and ahistorical...traitors." The FMLN released a communique stating the following: "The FMLN has not attacked military posts or barracks, nor has it carried out ambush or sabotage actions. But the military and the government have responded with provocations that threaten the continuity of the truce." In response, the government released a statement asserting that FMLN commanders are "seeing ghosts." Col. Mauricio Vargas assistant armed forces chief of staff and member of the government delegation at the talks said the FMLN was using the truce as a cover to consolidate rebel positions, extort money from landowners, and occupy new territory. FMLN commander "Raul" said coffee growers were "trying to torpedo" the peace process by requesting that the UN observer mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) take action to stop the rebels from collecting "war taxes." Nov. 29: In Mexico, a group of rebel field commanders met with the FMLN negotiations delegation to discuss the status of the truce. According to an FMLN source cited by the Agence France-Presse, the field commanders planned to return to El Salvador over the weekend to evaluate the truce first hand. Nov. 30: UN mediator Alvaro de Soto told reporters that a two-day recess would begin at noon Dec. 1. He said, "I believe the negotiations are advancing positively, and [most of the] issues regarding the national civil police" have been resolved. Dec. 2: FMLN sources cited by the Agence France-Presse said the rebel delegation will propose that prior to graduation of civilian police officers at the new academy, the rebels would continue to patrol areas of the country under FMLN control, and existing government police forces would carry out the same functions elsewhere. According to the FMLN proposal, both temporary police forces would be supervised by the UN. The US and Soviet governments issued a joint statement urging government and rebel negotiators to "make every effort to...bring the armed conflict to a definitive end" before Jan. 1, 1992. Dec. 3: The talks were reconvened to continue discussions regarding the PNC. FMLN spokesperson Roberto Canas said that the armed forces were involved in organizing a street demonstration scheduled to take place Dec. 8 in San Salvador. He added that all political parties and private sector organizations were invited to participate, while the FMLN was explicitly excluded. According to Canas, such activities could undermine the negotiation process. Dec. 4: In a report on the situation in Central America, UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar said the Salvadoran peace talks had entered

a final stage, despite obstacles thrown up by "groups opposed to the negotiations process." The Salvadoran government released a communique announcing street demonstrations on Dec. 8 to show support for the ongoing peace talks in Mexico. The statement said the demonstrations would take place in San Salvador and all department capitals. Event organizer is the Unity Committee for Peace, comprised of business organizations, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), the National Conciliation Party (PCN) and the Authentic Christian Movement (MAC). In Mexico, FMLN spokesperson Canas said the Unity Committee was a front for the armed forces. The demonstrations, according to Canas, are aimed at rallying support for public security forces, and establishing a rightist network to pressure Cristiani into hardening the government's position at the negotiating table. In a communique, the FMLN said a rebel delegation will be sent to San Salvador to participate in the Dec. 8 demonstration. The Front expressed concern over an attempt to exclude the rebels from the event, in that "peace is an aspiration of all Salvadorans." Col. Vargas said that FMLN patrols in areas currently under rebel control during a transition period "is absolutely impossible...We will be trying to reestablish order [at that time]." (See Dec. 2 entry above.) (Basic data from Associated Press 11/27/91, 11/30/91; Spanish news service EFE, 11/25/91, 11/26/91, 12/03/91; Agence France-Presse, 11/25- 11/30/91, 12/02-04/91; ACAN-EFE, 11/26/91, 11/28/91, 11/29/91, 12/04/91)

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