



OAS STUDY GUIDE

Topic A: The Venezuela-Guyana Border Dispute

Topic B: El-Salvador - The New Blueprint for Eradicating Organized Crime?





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THE CHAIRS LETTER:

Dear Delegates,

We are very excited and look forward to welcoming you to our lovely OAS Committee in ATIDMUN 2024! We are your chairs - your Powerpuff chairs 🥰

The Organization Of The American States Committee (OAS) plays a crucial and multifaceted role in the Western Hemisphere, promoting democracy, protecting human rights, enhancing security, and fostering sustainable development among its member states. The OAS supports democratic governance through election monitoring and technical assistance while advocating for human rights via bodies like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It addresses security challenges such as drug trafficking and terrorism and promotes regional cooperation for effective strategies. Additionally, the OAS fosters economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability through various initiatives and plays a crucial role in conflict resolution and judicial system strengthening, ensuring justice and the rule of law. Through these comprehensive efforts, the OAS contributes to the political stability, social equity, and economic prosperity of the Americas.

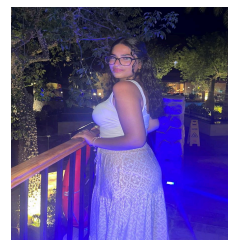
Our first topic is “The Venezuela-Guyana Border Dispute,” and the second is “El-Salvador—The New Blueprint for Eradicating Organized Crime.” Both topics have long and complicated backgrounds, requiring creative, strong, and innovative resolutions.

We can not wait to hear your ideas for this committee and watch you proudly present your country. Remember, take the moment and taste it; you’ve got no reason to be afraid.

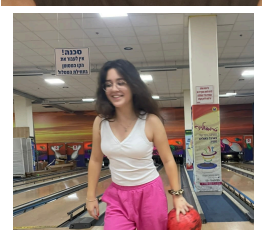
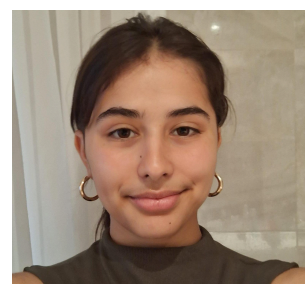
We hope you have lots of fun, learn new things, and meet incredible people.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you need any help. Good Luck!!!!

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

The Organization of American States (OAS) is a regional organization founded on April 30, 1948, for regional solidarity and cooperation among its 35 member states from North, Central, and South America, as well as the Caribbean. The OAS is guided by its principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, democracy, human rights, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. These principles guide the OAS in its efforts to address conflicts, promote dialogue, and stability in the region, foster cooperation among its member states, and uphold Hemisphere.

As you know, our lovely committee will include 2 topics:

- 1) The Venezuela-Guyana Border Dispute.
- 2) El-Salvador - The New Blueprint for Eradicating Organised Crime.

SO, HOW DOES THE OAS RELATE TO THE TOPICS?

While the primary focus of the OAS is on issues within the Western Hemisphere, the organization also recognizes that regional stability and security are interconnected and that conflicts or disputes within one country can have broader implications for the entire region, the OAS aims to prevent conflicts from escalating which is explains its involvement and help to the issues. the organization may become involved to facilitate dialogue, mediation, and negotiation in order to seek peaceful resolutions.

IN THE CASE OF THE VENEZUELA-GUYANA BORDER DISPUTE,

The OAS has been involved in the conflict between Venezuela and Guyana because it has the potential to disrupt regional peace and stability. The OAS has supported efforts to find a peaceful and mutually acceptable solution to the territorial disagreement. The OAS works through its various bodies and committees and serves as a forum for political dialogue, policy analysis, and decision-making in the Western Hemisphere.

IN THE EL-SALVADOR - THE NEW BLUEPRINT FOR ERADICATING ORGANISED CRIME CASE

El Salvador has been suffering from gangs that are decreasing security and frightening the population therefore the OAS is trying to put an end to it and give El Salvador the peace they want because the OAS aims for peace, security, and stability, which explains the reason for the organization's involvement in the issue.



TOPIC A: THE VENEZUELA-GUYANA BORDER DISPUTE

BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE:

A TERRITORIAL DISPUTE SINCE THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

The Venezuela-Guyana border dispute is a long-standing disagreement over the boundary between the two countries. In the late 19th century, Venezuela and Great Britain, which controlled Guyana at the time, were involved in a territorial dispute over the boundaries of the region due to conflicting claims over the territory known as the Essequibo region.

Both countries claimed historical and legal rights to the area such as Historical records, colonial treaties, and previous agreements (Historical claims by Venezuela based on Spanish colonial era boundaries vs historical claims by the UK) and colonial treaties (Spain for Venezuela and the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for Guyana).

During the 19th century, Britain gained control of the colony Essequibo west of the Courantyne River, which became British Guiana and then modern Guyana. The remaining colony, Suriname (also called "Dutch Guiana"), remained under Dutch control until its independence in 1975. (Which explains why The territorial dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain was influenced by broader colonial rivalries). Both Venezuela and the United Kingdom also sought to utilize the region's natural resources like gold and timber, in order to gain economic benefits and enhance its political and geopolitical influence in the region. Both countries wanted control over the disputed territory, which symbolized each country's territorial integrity and rights as sovereign states.

THE 1899 ARBITRATION

The Arbitral Award, also known as the Arbitration Award, refers to a decision or ruling made by neutral arbitrators or a panel of experts to settle a dispute between two or more parties fairly and impartially. In the context of the Venezuela-Guyana border dispute, the Arbitral Award of 1899 was a ruling issued by an international tribunal to resolve the territorial dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain over the boundaries of the Essequibo region.

It started, In February 1887, When Venezuela severed diplomatic relations with Great Britain over the issue, and at the same time tried to involve the United States in its dispute with Britain. In 1894-1895, Venezuela finally succeeded in getting U.S. support for arbitration. 2 years later, on February 2, 1897, the Treaty of Washington for arbitration on the boundaries of British Guiana



was signed by the United States (representing Venezuela) and Great Britain (representing its colony British Guiana), and ratified in June. The Arbitration Tribunal convened in Paris in 1898

A year later, the international tribunal known as the Arbitral Award ruled in favor of Great Britain, establishing the borders of Guyana. Venezuela had claimed that the Arbitral Award was invalid and refused to accept the decision, which has been contested by it since 1962. This led to a longstanding border dispute that remains unresolved to this day, with both countries holding firm to their respective claims (Conversely, Guyana upholds that the border is as determined by this arbitral award).

POST-INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENTS AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR RESOLVING THE ISSUE (THE GENEVA AGREEMENT OF 1966)

The Geneva Agreement is a treaty between Venezuela and the United Kingdom, along with its colony of British Guiana, that was signed in Geneva, Switzerland, on 17 February 1966. The Geneva Agreement was published in the Official Gazette¹ of Venezuela on April 15, 1966, and subsequently registered with the General Office of the Organization of the United Nations² on May 5, 1966.

Three months after the agreement was signed, on May 26, 1966, the colony of British Guiana received its independence from Britain, declaring itself the "Republic of Guyana", From that point forward, the new country joined the agreement as an independent nation alongside the United Kingdom and Venezuela, fully taking over the United Kingdom's former position in talks with Venezuela regarding the border dispute.

The treaty outlines the steps taken to resolve the territorial dispute between Venezuela and the United Kingdom³, arising from Venezuela's contention to the UN in 1962 that the 1899 declaration by the Paris Tribunal of Arbitration⁴ awarding the territory to British Guiana was canceled.

The United Nations Involvement

The Geneva Agreement established the creation of a "Mixed Commission" composed of representatives of Venezuela and British Guiana who were given a period of four years to arrive at a final resolution regarding the border dispute, or else choose some other form of peaceful settlement outlined by the UN. But it seemed like there were no agreements.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_gazette

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Secretariat

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guyana%E2%80%93Venezuela_territorial_dispute

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Arbitral_Award



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In 1983, Venezuela proposed to make direct negotiations with Guyana, but Guyana refused and proposed three alternate routes of reaching an agreement: the United Nations General Assembly⁵, the United Nations Security Council⁶, or the International Court of Justice⁷, each of which was rejected by Venezuela, and the dispute remained, unresolved.

The OAS was actually involved in the Venezuela-Guyana border dispute, especially as a mediator and facilitator of dialogue between the two countries, and was the one that had encouraged both Venezuela and Guyana to engage in diplomatic negotiations and adhere to international law, including the UN Charter and the Geneva Agreement of 1966.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Court_of_Justice



CURRENT SITUATION

THE 2023 INTENSIFICATION OF THE DISPUTE

In 2015, ExxonMobil, an American oil and gas corporation, discovered valuable oil reserves in the waters off the coast of Essequibo, reigniting the long-standing dispute between Guyana and Venezuela. The discovery significantly boosted Guyana's growing economy, which is heavily reliant on its oil and gas resources. On the other hand, Venezuela has been grappling with hyperinflation and numerous economic challenges (oil dependency, debt, poverty, economic mismanagement, corruption, and more). The potential wealth from the disputed territory could potentially revive Venezuela's struggling economy.

In September 2023, Guyana, which currently governs the Essequibo area, conducted an auction for an exploration license in the disputed waters, awarding bids to eight companies for drilling rights. Shortly after, the Venezuelan government laid claim to the territory. Guyana's control over Essequibo had long been contentious, with Venezuela asserting ownership since the 19th century. However, it was only after Guyana utilized the disputed area to significantly boost its economy that Venezuela took action.

Swiftly, the dispute became a crisis. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro held a referendum, asking Venezuelans if the government should claim sovereignty over Essequibo, and reportedly got massive support from citizens. The ICJ (International Court of Justice) ordered Venezuela not to take any action challenging Guyana's control over Essequibo, to which they responded in one of the Venezuelan newspapers: "We ratify our historical position of not recognizing the ICJ as a mechanism to resolve the controversy of our Essequibo. They will not be able to subvert the right of the Venezuelan people to express themselves through voting". He shared a map of Venezuela showing Essequibo within its borders. Meanwhile, a Brazilian official urged Venezuela to avoid threatening Guyana's borders.

Venezuela filled the borders with many military forces, threatening to take over Essequibo. Brazil and many other countries got involved, giving military aid to one side of the conflict or stating their support of one of the countries. For example, the USA contributed military aid to Guyana, including new technologies. On December 14th, 2023, the presidents of Guyana and Venezuela met and agreed not to use military forces against each other and to solve the conflict according to international law, even though Venezuela doesn't recognize the ICJ.



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VENEZUELA'S NEW STATE IN ESSEQUIBO

On April 3rd, 2024, Venezuela's President Maduro declared Essequibo would be ruled by Venezuela and filled the borders with military forces once again. Allegedly, stressed by the upcoming elections, the president - who didn't succeed in recovering Venezuela from its poor state of enduring many crimes a year and from its failing economy - made this move in order to distract the citizens from his own failures. Instead of trying to improve his policies, he blames Guyana for taking Venezuela's chance to recover from its hardships - the chance that lies in Essequibo. Not long after, the Venezuelan parliament formally declared Essequibo as a Venezuelan state. However, Venezuela's declaration did not have any actual legal consequences, aside from extremely intensifying the centuries-long conflict.

Venezuela proceeded to expand its military presence in the borders the past year, mostly in Anacoco Island and Punta Barima. There, are hundreds of soldiers and battalions that threaten the already questioned peace in the area. In these places are also reported intense military activity and tanks driving near the borders. Additionally, Venezuela deployed warships. The Venezuelan troops are a real danger to Guyana, which has a relatively small army that includes only about 5,000 soldiers. The USA, which uses Guyana for its rich natural resources, showed once again its support of Guyana.

Today, neither country seems open to negotiations, or ready to step down from the territory claim. Robert Persaud, Guyana's foreign secretary, says: "Guyana is not prepared to give up an inch of its territory and will do everything in its power and in accordance with international law to protect it". The dispute remains unresolved. If events will keep going in the same direction we will be at risk of a new war. And that is where bodies like the OAS step in, doing their best to calm the spirits in a joint effort to make the world a better place.

REGIONAL STABILITY CONCERNS

The escalation of the dispute has implications for regional stability in South America and the Caribbean. Other nations in the region are closely watching developments, concerned about the potential for broader instability if the situation deteriorates further.



GLOBAL RESOURCE COMPETITION

The discovery of significant oil reserves off the coast of the Essequibo region has heightened the stakes of the dispute. International oil companies and investors with interests in the area are closely monitoring the situation, and an escalation of the conflict will likely impact their operations and investments. Furthermore, The dispute underscores the broader global competition for natural resources, particularly oil and minerals. It demonstrates how such competition can reignite dormant territorial disputes and potentially lead to international tensions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. POLICY

The dispute may impact U.S. policy towards Venezuela, including recent shifts in the "maximum pressure" approach and the easing of sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector. How the U.S. and other major powers respond to the dispute could have wider geopolitical implications.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What kind of agreement could be reached regarding the dispute?
2. How does your country relate to the topic?
3. Does your country take Venezuela's/UK's side? Or is it a neutral country?
4. What is your country's policy on situations similar to this?
5. Should we peacefully solve this situation? And if so, how can we peacefully solve this situation?

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TOPIC B: EL-SALVADOR - THE NEW BLUEPRINT FOR ERADICATING ORGANIZED CRIME?

BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUE'S BEGINNING

El Salvador's brutal civil war, which raged from 1980 to 1992, left the country deeply scarred. The conflict was full of intense violence and human rights abuses and had devastating effects on the country's social and economic fabric. As a result of the war, a lot of Salvadorans were compelled to leave their homes and seek refuge abroad, with many emigrating to the United States. In the U.S., these Salvadoran immigrants, particularly the younger generation, faced a new set of challenges, such as social exclusion, economic issues, and community violence. Due to these hard conditions that they faced, Salvadoran youth began to form gangs as a means of self-protection and social cohesion. These gangs, which at first were a way to defend themselves against external threats and provide a sense of belonging, eventually evolved into powerful criminal organizations. The legacy of the civil war contributed to the transnational spread of gang culture, further entrenching violence and criminality both in El Salvador and within Salvadoran communities abroad, especially after the people of El Salvador returned to their homeland after the war was over which caused the spread of crime among them.

SALVADORAN GANGS RETURN TO EL SALVADOR

After Salvadoran gangs were deported back to El Salvador in the 1990s and early 2000s, the country saw a sharp increase in gang-related violence. These gang members, armed with organizational skills and violent tactics from the U.S., rapidly expanded their gangs and started recruiting marginalized and poor youth, thriving in a context of weak law enforcement, fragile state institutions, and widespread poverty. The gangs' criminal activities, including extortion, drug, and human trafficking, severely impacted the economy and society.

GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS AGAINST THE GANGS

Mano Dura

El Salvador's response to the gangs and their harmless was creating anti-gang measures called "Mano Dura" which included:

1. Harsh Legislation: the law allowed arresting individuals who are suspected of being gang members depending on their appearance such as tattoos and gang-related clothing.



2. **Military Involvement:** the government spread military forces along with the police to combat gang violence and establish checkpoints in the gangs' areas.
3. **Mass Arrests:** Large-scale arrests and incarceration of suspected gang members were carried out. Prisons became overcrowded, and many gang leaders continued to operate from behind bars.
4. **Community Programs:** preventing gang recruitment through social programs aiming to save the youth, providing education, jobs, and community development projects.
5. **International Cooperation:** El Salvador collaborated with neighboring countries and international organizations to address the transnational nature of gang activities.

Despite the efforts, the government wasn't able to stop the gangs, especially since the measures were aimed at repression rather than addressing root causes.

“Super Mano Dura”

After the failure of “mano dura” new measures were taken to stop the gangs called “super mano dura” which included:

1. **Stricter Legislation:** The laws were toughened further, allowing for the arrest of anyone suspected of gang involvement, often based on appearance or behavior alone.
2. **Increased Military and Police Operations:** the forces were increased and checkpoints were established in every suspected area.
3. **Mass Incarceration:** The policy led to the mass incarceration of suspected gang members, causing severe overcrowding in prisons and often worsening conditions within the penal system.
4. **Zero tolerance:** authorities harshed down on any gang-related activities with zero tolerance.

This policy was hardly criticized as it was accused of abusing human rights and did not address the root causes of gang proliferation. But overall, it did not result in a sustained decrease in gang activity.



CURRENT SITUATION

BUKELE'S AND HIS NEW ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS

Nayib Armando Bukele Ortez - El-Salvador's president - started his presidential term in 2019. In March 2022, a great tragedy fell upon his nation. In March, 87 people were murdered by gangs over the course of one week. His administration implemented a state of emergency, which has given his government almost free reign in "the war against the gangs". El-Salvador, which has a long history with gangs and never before succeeded in reducing them, suddenly became one of the top countries in fighting gangs.

By April 2nd, 2024, at least 70,000 alleged gang members were arrested. The Terrorism Confinement Center, a prison that was built in Tecoluca in the midst of the gang crackdown that Ortez operated, had over 12,000 prisoners. The country's homicide rate decreased from 18.1 homicides per 100,000 people in 2021 to 2.4 in 2023, an astonishing improvement. In fact, this rate is the second-lowest in the Americas⁸, right after Canada. Ortez's success in the fight against the gangs is indubitably helping the country in a lot of aspects, but at what cost?

The success of the government is due mostly to extreme political measures and political power. The emergency laws gave much more freedom of action to the Salvadoran government. The right to legal defense and the freedom of movement were shrank down under the policy, while loosening rules on making arrests and allowing the state to intercept civilian communications. about 2 percent of the adult population in El Salvador is under arrest. Some may claim these extreme acts were more than necessary for a serious attempt to fight crime in the Americas, but others are concerned about the broadening of governmental control.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EL-SALVADOR'S "WAR ON GANGS"

The swift reduction of crime in El Salvador was noticed around the world, and voices calling for embracing El Salvador's special policy in other countries, especially ones in the Americas, started to be heard. However, they were faced with a lot of backlash. A big part of the reason that the fight against gangs was so efficient in El Salvador, was the typical way gangs are gathered there. Almost only El Salvador has defined the criminal landscape. This makes the act of locating alleged gang members a lot easier for the country. This does not apply to other countries, and it's just one example of the fact that influenced by international differences, the policy won't work as

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americas>



well in other countries.

Aside from the unique circumstances that make this method so efficient in El-Salvador and not so efficient for its bordering countries, many see this method as a threat to democracy. A part of the reason that this method is so successful, is because it minimizes constitutional rights, and gives the government the power to arrest almost anyone at any time, which some will call too much power and even dictatorship.

KEY ISSUES:

The gangs in El Salvador do not only have an effect on a part of the country or some people, the gangs have an effect on the entire country. The effect of these gangs comes in different shapes and in different areas, such as:

1. Escalation of Violence: The gangs are known for their extreme violence, including homicides, assaults, and torture causing El Salvador to have one of the highest rates of crimes.
2. Economic Impact: The Gangs are affecting the businesses by extortion, threatening small and big workplaces, and giving the businesses a choice as to whether they cooperate or close down.
3. Social Disruption: The presence of gangs disrupts community life, for residents live in fear that limits their movements and actions. Schools and community centers often close or operate under threat, depriving young people of education and safe recreational spaces.
4. Forced Migration: The relentless violence and lack of economic opportunities drive many Salvadorans to leave the country. This mass migration, primarily to the United States, separates families and places immense pressure on asylum systems in destination countries. It also deprives El Salvador of a significant portion of its workforce and potential innovators.
5. Public Mental Health Crisis: Due to the violence and instability, people start struggling with mental health, especially the residents in the gang-controlled areas. Mental health issues, including trauma and PTSD, are widespread but often go untreated.
6. Political Instability: The gangs' influence affects the politicians by exerting pressure on them and influencing elections through violence. This destabilized democratic process makes it difficult to implement effective policies.



7. Recruitment of Youth: Gangs actively recruit young people, often as early as elementary school age. This assures the continuing of the cycle of violence, by teaching the young about violence at an early age. It also robs the country of its future generation of leaders, professionals, and citizens who could contribute positively to society.

El-Salvador is yet to stop the emergency state that gives the government enough or more than enough, power to stop the gangs. The OAS has urged it to end this state because it suspends human rights, but it's still implemented now, two years after it was first enforced. This topic encompasses a lot of conflicts, and clashings of rights, things that make it controversial, and the same things that make it crucial for the OAS to make a decision in the matter as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are the main goals of the new blueprint for eradicating organized crime in El Salvador?
2. How does the new plan address the root causes of gang violence?
3. What role will law enforcement play in the new strategy?
4. Are there any new laws or policies included in the blueprint?
5. How will the blueprint support at-risk youth and communities?
6. What measures are being taken to ensure human rights are protected?
7. How does the blueprint involve international cooperation?
8. What are the expected outcomes of the new plan?
9. How will the government measure the success of the blueprint?
10. What challenges does the blueprint aim to overcome?
11. Should your country support El-Salvador's actions, and even adopt them?
Are the actions of the El-Salvador government democratic or not?

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