

# ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

## AN OPEN LETTER TO BARACK OBAMA CONCERNING ELECTIONS IN EL SALVADOR

Dear President Obama,

We the undersigned write to congratulate you on your historic victory and wish you the best as you confront the difficult challenges we face as a global community. We also wish to bring to your attention the equally historic elections scheduled for March 2009 in El Salvador, which promise to be the most contested elections since the 1992 Peace Accords.

We write now to express our strong belief that U.S. government officials should refrain from using fear and misinformation to influence voters in El Salvador and instead should honor and respect the will of the Salvadoran people. We wish to express our full support for free and fair electoral process El Salvador, and to this end, we firmly state the following:

**The proper position of the U.S. government is one of neutrality and respect for El Salvador's independent democratic process, thus allowing the Salvadoran people to freely decide, as a matter of personal conscience and conviction, which parties and candidates they will vote for.** El Salvador and the United States have a very close relationship - nearly 25% of El Salvador's population lives in the United States, and the remittances that these immigrants send home comprise approximately 20% of El Salvador's GDP. As we work to strengthen the rights of immigrants in the United States, we also recognize that this close relationship can be used to manipulate those same Salvadorans when elections occur in their country.

**We pledge to take action to ensure that the US government remains neutral during the campaign leading up to the March 2009 Presidential vote and respects the Salvadoran people's choice regardless of the result.** In 2004, Bush Administration officials made threats that they would retaliate diplomatically and against the status of Salvadoran immigrants if an opposition party won the election. They further threatened to restrict the remittances those immigrants send to their families. However, Members of the U.S. Congress, as well as a variety of international organizations, rejected those statements as false and asserted that U.S. immigration policy is not determined by the results of foreign elections. We will work to ensure that the U.S. Congress and State Department stand by El Salvador by making a commitment against partisan intervention in El Salvador's 2009 electoral campaigns.

**The United States' immigration policy will not be influenced by the party or candidate that wins the presidential elections in March 2009.** We acknowledge that already in 2008, radio and television advertisements in El Salvador have proclaimed that an opposition party victory would threaten the immigration status of Salvadorans living in the US, as well as remittances they send home to their families. We denounce such propaganda campaigns as false and call on the U.S. Embassy to clarify that there are no threats to immigrants related to the 2009 elections results.

**We congratulate the Salvadoran people in their quest for free and fair elections in 2009 and we look forward to a future that holds peace and shared prosperity for El Salvador, the United States, and the rest of the global community.**

Coalition for Free and Fair Elections in El Salvador  
Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)  
US-El Salvador Sister-Cities  
Voices on the Border  
The SHARE Foundation, Building a New El Salvador Today  
Guatemala Solidarity Committee  
Quixote Center  
Labor Community Strategy Center (LA)  
Christians for Peace in El Salvador (CRISPAZ)  
San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper  
Peaceworks  
Global Exchange  
Jewish Voice for Peace - Seattle Chapter  
SOA Watch  
Task Force on the Americas  
Interconnect  
Project Voice AFSC New England  
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice  
Salvadorian Canadian Association of Ottawa and National Capital Region (ASCORCAN)  
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN)  
National Immigrant Solidarity Network  
ActionLA Coalition

Peace NO War Network (LA)  
Pax Christi Northeast Florida  
Colombia Action Network  
CIP Americas Program  
Oberlin in Solidarity with El Salvador  
LASC of Eugene, OR (formerly Committee in Solidarity with the Central American People, CISCAP)  
San Francisco Labor Council  
South Bay Sanctuary Covenant  
Grassroots International  
Bend-Condega Friendship Project  
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)  
Alliance for Global Justice  
CIP Americas Policy Program  
Guatemala Human Rights Commission  
North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)  
Upside Down World  
Lutheran Human Relations Association  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Homies Unidos  
Office of the Americas  
Venezuela Solidarity Network  
Nicaragua Solidarity Fair Trade Resource  
Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice, Manhattan, Kansas  
Friends Of Cuscatlan, Central America, Wichita, KS. (FOCUS)

Madison-Arcatao Sister City Project (Madison, WI)  
Watertown-El Salvador Sister City Committee  
Sister City El Barrio Baltimore  
Sister City Concord, NH-Aguacaliente  
The Los Amates-Garden State Sister Cities Committee  
Madison-Rafah (Palestine) Sister City Project in Madison, WI  
Pax Christi USA (The National Catholic Peace Movement)  
Salvadoran American National Association (SANA)  
Campaign for Labor Rights  
Georgetown Solidarity Committee  
Haiti Action Committee  
Nicaragua Network  
Missionary Oblates: Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee  
STITCH: Women Organizing for Worker Justice  
Rights Action  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles CHIRLA  
Stop-CAFTA Coalition  
Latin America Solidarity Coalition  
National Lawyers Guild San Francisco  
Caribbean & Latin America Support Project (CLASP)  
NICCA Nicaragua Center for Community Action  
Task Force on the Americas

Portland Central American Solidarity Committee (PCASC)  
Community Organizing Center for Mother Earth  
Peterborough Diocese  
Dominican Sisters of Houston  
Arlington-Teosinte Sister City Project in Arlington, Massachusetts  
Agricultural Missions, Inc.  
Arlington United for Justice with Peace  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3800  
Hands Across Borders in Erie, PA  
Old Cambridge Baptist Church  
Social Action Committee  
Community Action for Justice in the Americas (CAJA - Montana)  
Center for Environmental Education, West Chester, PA  
Centro de Capacitación Social de Panamá  
Comunidades de fe y vida (COFEVI)  
Frente Nacional de Lucha - Guatemala  
Canada-El Salvador Action Network (CELSAN)  
FUNSALPRODESEA  
Food and Water Watch  
InterReligious Task Force on Central America