

In December 1991, the FMLN suddenly introduced into the negotiations a new demand for land reform. The government responded by insisting upon a cease-fire before it would address broader social and political issues.

The FMLN agreed to the cease-fire, and the final peace accord was signed on January 16, 1992 in Mexico City. (Hampson, 1996:142) The cease-fire agreement gave the parties from February 1, 1992 and October 31, 1992 to end its armed confrontation, and meet the conditions of the accord. ONUSAL was responsible for investigating any violations of the cease-fire. (Constable, 1993:108)

On paper, the accords appeared to be a victory for the rebel movement. The Salvadoran government pledged to radically reduce the power of the military, and cut in half its 63,000 member armed forces over 2 years, disband five counterinsurgency battalions linked to severe human rights abuses, create a new civilian police force in which ex-rebels would participate, and purge the military of abusive officers, based on recommendations by an independent commission. Meanwhile, the rebels agreed to surrender their weapons under UN supervision, and gradually to demobilize its 6000-8000 combatants. (Constable, 1993: 108)

However, mistrust between parties caused delays on both sides in the proper implementation of the agreement. Pressures from the United Nations and other states encouraged both parties to comply with the stipulations in the accord. In addition, ONUSAL encountered problems in fulfilling its responsibilities, such as internal organizational challenges, and difficulties in observing itself. ONUSAL was fraught by insufficient resources to fulfill its duties, lack of coordination with other groups, and limited influential power. Despite its weaknesses, it did promote awareness, and gave legitimacy to the peace process.

Truth Commission

The Commission on Truth was created on April 27, 1991 as part of the peace accords in Mexico. It was mandated to investigate and report on serious acts of violence that occurred between January 1980 and July 1991, to make recommendations that would prevent the recurrence of these events, and to promote national reconciliation. The investigations of the history of human rights violations were used to give an overall assessment of the pattern of violations. (Kaye, 1997:698)

It received 22,000 complaints of serious acts of violence that had occurred between January 1980 and July 1991. Of these accusations, 60 percent referred to illegal executions, 25 percent involved 'forced disappearances', and over 20 percent dealt with instances of torture. (Planchart, 1993:43) The Commission confirmed 7,312 specific cases of human rights violations, including 5,566 deaths and disappearances, and indirect evidence of abuse to 13,562 victims, including 11,130 deaths and disappearances. (Hampson, 1996: 156) In addition, statistical results of the report indicated that 97% of the violations stated in the Truth Commission report were attributed to rightist military, paramilitary, security forces, and death squads. Meanwhile, only 3% were attributed to the FMLN. (Hampson, 1996: 157) Statistics also indicate that violence against