



**Committee:** Organization of the American States (OAS).

**Topic B:** Gang-related violence in the northern triangle.

**Moderator:** Mónica Uribe Aguirre.

**Chair:** Mabel Ledesma Farías.

The Organization of American States (or OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization. OAS successor, come into being in Bogota, Colombia in April 1948. OAS is the world's longest standing intergovernmental political organization. It performs a fundamental role in the promotion of democracy, peace, human rights, multidimensional security and integral development in the Americas. OAS main purposes are to strengthen the peace and security of the continent and to fulfill its regional obligations. The OAS also battles multiple important topics involved with the well being of the continent with some including the defense and promotion of human rights and democracy, fighting against corruption, and the cooperation of all of its members to find solutions for a better future.

The organization was established to achieve an order of justice, peace, promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and their independence. Right now, the OAS brings it consists of 35 independent states, who all constitutes the main political, judicial and social government convention.

In the past years, in the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) there has been a lot of violence. Thousands of people from the Northern Triangle have arrived in the past few years to the United States of America looking for asylum, their countries, known as the Northern Triangle, in the 1980's were rocked by civil wars leaving a legacy of violence and fragile institutions. This region affected by drug trafficking, and corruption. In recent years, the number of people that have left the Northern Triangle reached 110,000. Migrants from the Northern Triangle cite violence, forced gang recruitment, extortion, as well as poverty and lack of opportunity as their reasons for leaving these three countries.

El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras rank among the most violent countries in the world. El Salvador became the most violent country in the world when gang-related violence

brought the homicide rate to 103 per hundred thousand. Also Extortion is rampant. Hondurans and Salvadoreans pay (an estimated) \$390 million, \$61 million and \$200 million in annual extortion fees to organized crime groups. The target of these extortions are primarily small businesses, public transportation operators, residents of poor neighborhoods, and attacks on people that do not pay contribute to the violence.

There is violence in each country, but the spread of gangs, drug trafficking and corruption are common threads in the Northern Triangle. Criminal groups in the Northern Triangle include transnational criminal organizations which are associated to Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Drug trafficking is added to the violence. U.S. officials said that 90% of documented cocaine flows into the United States passing through the region. In addition to that and also the extortion the criminal groups in the region also profit from kidnapping for ransom and human trafficking and smuggling. 95% of the crimes got punished, but just in some areas, and the public has little trust in the police and the security forces. "There has been so much penetration of the state and so much criminal involvement in security forces, it makes it difficult to think about how they would [reform] without some outside intervention," says Eric Olson, an expert on the region at the Wilson Center.

In 2012, the Salvadoran President's administration helped broker truces between MS-18 and MS-13 gangs, and thanks to that homicides fell by more than the 40% that year. The reduction of violence and crimes between the gangs, extortion, continued unabated when in 2014 the peace deal unraveled, killings were more than double. Allegations that the members of the ruling National Party, in Honduras embezzled social security funds led protesters to call for the ouster of the President in 2015. The Organization of the American States in response established the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) to prevent corruption, reform the criminal justice and electoral systems, and also to improve public safety.

This problem in the Northern Triangle has been an issue, a rough issue in the past years. A lot of things have happened there, a lot of people have left those three countries in order to be free and secure from them, they have gone from the Northern Triangle to the United States. The governments of the Northern Triangle enacted a series of *mano dura* ("heavy hand"), policies that expanded police powers and punishments for gang members. In most cases, these policies failed to reduce the crime and they could have indirectly led to a

growth in gang membership. The United States of America State Department and human rights groups have raised concerns about these policies denouncing police violence against civilians and prison conditions.

It is important to solve this issue, to find new solutions for this problem, thanks to the others that did not work.

U.S. have responded to the violence in the Northern Triangle in different ways. The Millennium Challenge Corporation awarded hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Also the U.S. has provided \$1 billion in aid through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to help the region's law enforcement, counternarcotics and justice systems. When President Donald J. Trump took the power in the U.S. in these few years nearly 350,000 immigrants from the Northern Triangle will lose the legal right to work and live in the United States of America.

Central America's Violent Northern Triangle. (n.d.). Retrieved September 28, 2019, from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/central-americas-violent-northern-triangle>

What Drives Violence in Central America's Northern Triangle? (n.d.). Retrieved September 28,

2019, from [https://www.usip.org/index.php/events/what-drives-violence-central-americas-northern-triangle?utm\\_source=www.usip.gov](https://www.usip.org/index.php/events/what-drives-violence-central-americas-northern-triangle?utm_source=www.usip.gov)

What Drives Violence in Central America's Northern Triangle? (n.d.). Retrieved September 28, 2019, from [https://www.usip.org/index.php/events/what-drives-violence-central-americas-northern-triangle?utm\\_source=www.usip.gov](https://www.usip.org/index.php/events/what-drives-violence-central-americas-northern-triangle?utm_source=www.usip.gov)