



**United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Office of Inspector General**

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**Inspection of Embassy San Salvador, El Salvador**



*Embassy San Salvador*

Embassy San Salvador is ably led by a noncareer Ambassador who has leavened Department standard operating procedures with a welcome infusion of best practices from the private sector. The Ambassador and his newly arrived deputy chief of mission (DCM) insist on a good flow of information within the country team and take pains to ensure that the team's members are well informed on the Ambassador's goals and priorities. One issue of concern to post management has been the regional nature of other U.S. agency representation at post and the fact that these regional officers are not always available to respond to the Ambassador's questions and/or requests due

to their travel and other regional responsibilities. For example, there is no single Department of Homeland Security (DHS) representative who can be held accountable for all DHS activities in country. This has limited the Ambassador's ability to resolve policy issues with the Washington leadership of DHS and its Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In particular it has limited the Ambassador's ability to resolve policy issues relating to deportations, the most serious bilateral irritant.

The Ambassador and DCM have made it clear that morale is a high priority. For example, the Ambassador recently initiated a quality of life committee on which all segments of the mission community have representation. The committee is to identify any problematic aspect of working or living in El Salvador and provide management with proposed solutions. Morale at Embassy San Salvador is exceptionally good.

The Ambassador and DCM provide the post security program with excellent support and cooperation, and the security office has a positive reputation among mission staff members. The local guard and personal security programs are managed effectively, efficiently, and in line with Department policies.

U.S. immigration and visa policies are exceptionally important to the U.S.-Salvadoran bilateral relationship. Embassy San Salvador has a well-coordinated approach to the government of El Salvador on consular issues, and the section receives strong support from mission leadership.

Embassy San Salvador is making a concerted effort to eliminate duplicative administrative support systems and deserves credit for recognizing and proactively addressing this inefficiency. The embassy's strong management team, supported by an experienced locally employed staff, provides generally excellent service to the mission.

### **Background: El Salvador**

El Salvador, a stable, developing democracy that is home to 6.6 million people, is among the closest allies of the United States. El Salvador's free and fair electoral process, which is fully inclusive of former combatants, is but one indication of this country's recovery from the bloody civil war that ended in January 1992. Also notable are the successful subordination of El Salvador's military to control by civilians and the efforts of an increasingly trusted civilian police force to combat violent crime.

Despite governmental and citizen-based efforts, public security concerns and endemic poverty challenge the nation's stability. El Salvador has embraced free trade and demonstrated regional leadership by being the first country to ratify the Central American-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement. In 2001 El Salvador adopted the dollar as its currency. The country's long-term commitment to an open economy with sound economic policy reforms has resulted in increased exports, low inflation, and over \$1 billion in U.S. investments. GDP growth, however, remains unacceptably low due to a lack of domestic and foreign investment, limited natural resources, low commodity prices, high energy prices, poor budget execution, and a series of natural disasters. Job creation has not kept pace with the needs of the population, adding to outward migration pressures. Salvadorans living overseas, mostly in the United States, remit nearly \$3 billion to relatives in El Salvador each year.

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