

**EL SALVADOR**

**An Emergency Preparedness Profile**

**Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for Refugees**

**March 1990**

## FOREWORD

This profile of El Salvador is part of a Regional Emergency Preparedness Profile for Central America and Mexico. These profiles are designed to provide, in one accessible document, factual information on selected countries and are intended as an emergency preparedness measure in support of UNHCR planning and relief operations. The profiles are principally concerned with the kinds of information and resources needed during refugee emergencies in order to facilitate contingency planning and action along with rapid decision-making. They are designed to satisfy a number of audiences including UNHCR decision-makers, UNHCR Headquarters personnel proceeding on mission, newly-appointed UNHCR field personnel and consultants, UNHCR regional bureaux and field offices, and implementing partners. The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies will often be able to provide complementary information.

Various sections of UNHCR have helped the Emergency Unit compile this profile. The information does not claim to be complete - indeed an effort was made to keep the profile short, readable and concise while pointing readers to additional sources containing detail they may need. The profile has been drawn up at short notice to respond to current demand and should be viewed as a draft that may still contain inconsistencies and inaccuracies. It would be appreciated if these as well as suggestions that may strengthen future editions of the El Salvador profile could be brought to the Emergency Unit's attention.

Emergency Unit  
Technical Support Service

THE UNHCR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROFILE SERIES  
(as of December 1989)

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Malawi (1989)  
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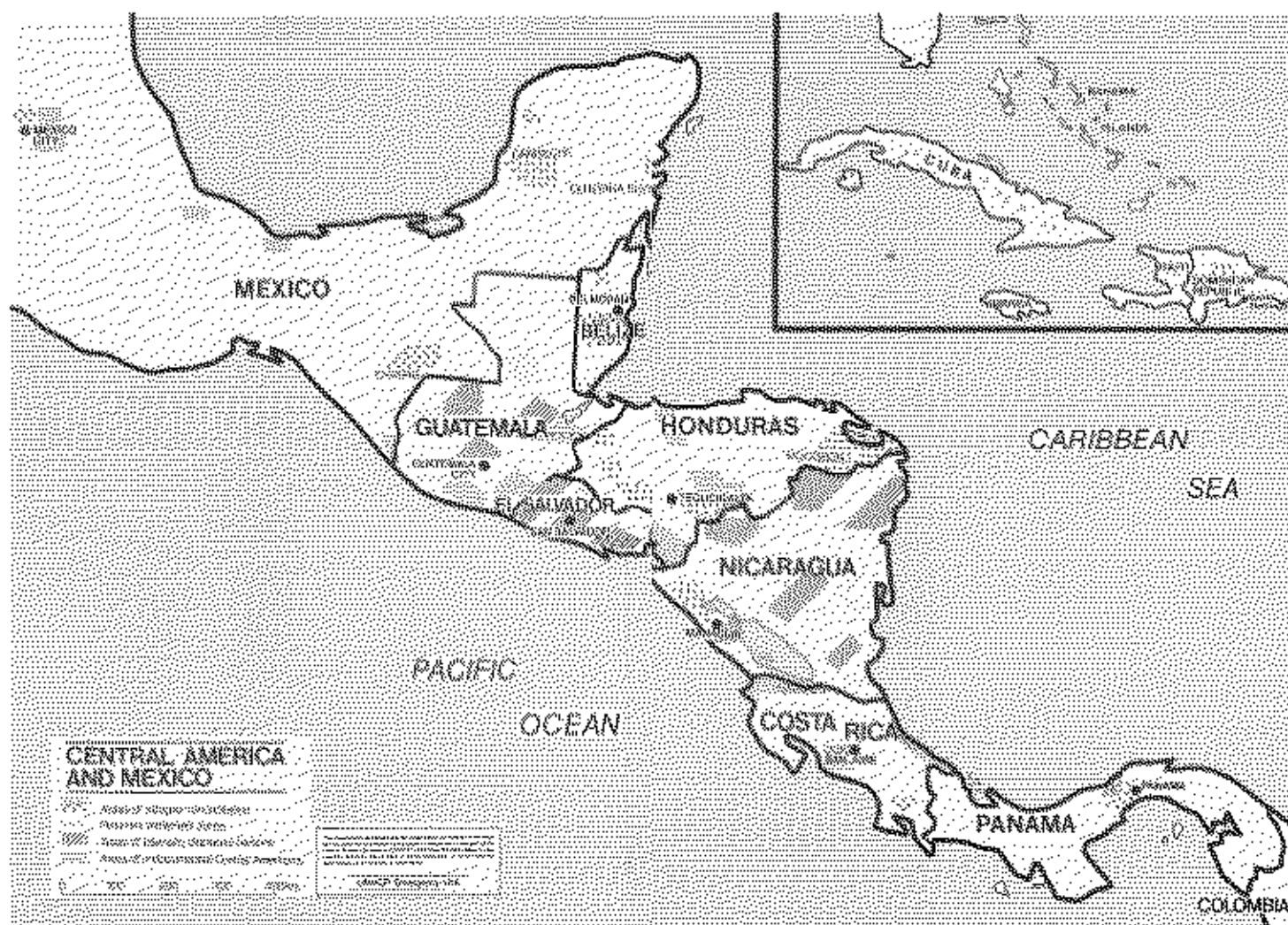
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- A. UNHCR Assistance Activities

I. Basic Facts

A. Time Zone

GMT: -6

B. Currency

100 centavos= 1 Salvadorian colon  
US\$ 1 = 6.90 Colones  
(As of March 1990. For current UN exchange  
rate, consult UNHCR, Finance Section)

C. Visa Information/  
Vaccination Requirements

Visa Information: A passport containing a photograph is  
required. Citizens of Norway, Finland, EEC,  
West Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Japan,  
Israel, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and  
Colombia do not require a visa. All others  
require a visa which is valid for 15 days, but  
can be renewed at the immigration office in  
San Salvador.

Vaccination  
Requirements: Yellow fever immunization is required for  
travellers coming from infected areas.  
Recommended: Immunization against tetanus and  
poliomyelitis.

D. Calendar and Holidays

New Year's Day	1 January
Holy Week (week before Easter, date variable)	
Labour Day	1 May
San Salvador Feasts	3-5 August
Independence Day	15 September
Columbus Day	12 October
Revolution Day	15 October
All Souls Day	2 November
First Cry for Independence	5 November
Christmas Day	25 December

For special UN holidays, consult the United  
Nations Staff Rules, Appendix B (issued  
separately for each branch office concerned).

## E. History

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country on mainland America. The country gained independence from Spain in 1821 and formed part of the Central America Federation until separation and complete independence in 1839. From the mid-19th century onwards, a small group of local landowners and merchants dominated the economy, using their political power to preserve their control of land. A peasant uprising in 1932 challenged the basis of this power structure. In the process, 30,000 people were killed by the armed forces, and the land-owning elite abdicated its control of political power to the army.

In October of 1979, the military regime of General Carlos Humberto Romero was ousted in a coup that brought a five-member junta to power.

José Napoleon Duarte was named President in December 1980. The junta began its transition to an elected government in March 1982. Duarte (Christian Democrat Party) won the presidential election of 1984. Civil strife has continued. In March 1989, Alfredo Cristiani of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), was elected President.

Source: South America, Central America and the Caribbean 1988. Europa Publications, London, 1988.

## F. Government

### Structure:

Executive power is held by the President with the assistance of the Vice-President and the Council of Ministers. The President is elected for a five-year term by universal suffrage and is ineligible for immediate re-election. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly with 60 members elected by universal suffrage for a three-year term.

The Supreme Court is the ultimate judicial body and is composed of 10 magistrates elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term.

### Regional Organization:

The country is divided into 14 departments. Each department has a governor and deputy governor who are appointed by the President and are responsible to the Minister of the



Interior. Departments are subdivided into 262 municipalities which in turn are divided into "cantones". Local authority in each municipality is vested in a Municipal Council, which is composed of a mayor ("alcalde"), a legal representative ("sindico"), and from two to twelve councilmen ("regidores"), all elected to three-year terms by popular vote.

#### G. Language

Spanish is the official language. It is spoken by almost everyone, including the Pipil Indians whose native language is Nahuatl. This is the only indigenous language still spoken, and its use is diminishing as the ladino culture spreads. It is spoken mainly by older people and women in a few southwestern towns.

#### H. Climate and Geography

Area: 21,393 sq. km.

Geographical Overview: The Republic of El Salvador lies on the Pacific coast of Central America. It is bounded on the north and east by Honduras, and on the west by Guatemala. The Pacific Ocean lies to the south, with the Gulf of Fonseca to the far southeast. Most of the country consists of volcanic highlands of moderate elevation. San Salvador, the capital, is located in these highlands at an altitude of 625 m above sea level.

Climate: During the rainy season, from May to October, precipitation is heavy throughout the country. The rest of the year there is almost no rain. San Salvador receives an average of 1,600 mm during the rainy season and only 150 mm during the dry season.

The climate is tropical, though temperatures tend to be cooler in the highlands. Temperatures rarely fall below 18°C (65°F) except on the highest slopes of the volcanic ranges. In San Salvador, the average is 23°C (74°F) varying only 3°C between the warmest and coldest months.

## I. Disaster Vulnerability

El Salvador is subject to frequent volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. The country has 25 volcanoes; however, only eight have shown significant activity. The intermontane plateau is the principal zone of earthquakes and also coincides with the zone of recent volcanic activity. The country has a long history of destructive earthquakes. San Salvador has been destroyed or badly damaged more than a dozen times since 1524. The most recent quake struck San Salvador in October 1986, killing an estimated 1,200 people.

Tropical depressions are frequent during September. They follow a path parallel to the Pacific coast, sometimes increasing in force to become tropical storms or hurricanes when they reach median latitudes. They produce heavy rains known as "temporales", which may last up to five days.

In the highlands heavy flooding and mud flows in rivers and streams wash away valuable soil in coffee cultivation areas. In San Salvador, the upland areas around the city receive the full impact of the winds and intense rains. The volcanoes and steep mountains above the city have been cleared of forest land and the soil is unstable.

El Salvador is out of the path of both the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific hurricanes. It does however occasionally suffer from the fringe effect of tropical storms from the north that damage crops and homes.

During the months of July and August, in the middle of the rainy season, a dry spell (called the "canicula") occurs that usually lasts between ten and twenty days. During this time, there is not enough rainfall to satisfy crop water requirements, and plant survival depends on water stored underground. If the "canicula" is unusually long or severe, as it was in 1972, 1976 and 1982 in the eastern part of the country, crop damage can be heavy.

J. Economy

Overview:

Agriculture remains the principal economic activity in El Salvador. The agricultural sector (including forestry and fishing) employs approximately 40% of the work-force, accounts for an estimated 40% of GDP, and generates about 80% of export revenues (primarily coffee, cotton and sugar). Most basic food requirements of the national population are domestically produced. All available arable land is utilized, at varying rates of intensity, in a country where the population density of 227 per sq km in mid-1989 is expected to increase to 425 per sq km by the end of the century.

Development of the agricultural sector has been hampered by a scarcity of land for cultivation, the high density of population, and uneven rainfall, 84% of which occurs during the period May to October. Irrigation is generally regarded as the most beneficial means of expansion and diversification of the sector. To this end, in 1986, the Inter-American Development Bank allocated a loan of US\$10 million for an important irrigation project in the Lempa-Acahuapa region.

The agrarian reform process was initiated in the country in March 1980; this was conceived in three different phases. The first consisted of expropriation of land holdings over 500 hectares; the second expropriated land holdings from 100 to 500 hectares; and the third had the objective of encouraging the peasants to claim ownership of small plots of land leased for cultivation. To date, only Phases I and III have been implemented. Phase II was practically derogated by the 1983 Constitution.

The main crops in El Salvador are: coffee, seed cotton, maize, beans, rice and millet.

Balance of  
Payments:

El Salvador's foreign debt in 1988 totalled US \$ 1,603 million. Including grants, the current account deficit fell from 3.9% of GDP to 1.2%. The most important factor accounting for the weakness of El Salvador's external position is poor export performance. By 1985, export earnings had declined to two-thirds of their 1979 level.

**Exports:** About 80% of total exports are of agricultural origin. Four traditional products - coffee, cotton, sugar, and shrimp - still account for about 70% of exports. The rest are largely non-traditional exports (primarily light manufactured products) to Central American Common Market (CACM) markets. Coffee accounts for more than half of exports. Its 13% cumulative decline in volume since 1979 is the result of reduced production and, up to late 1985, of lower world coffee prices. Principal export countries: Guatemala, Honduras, the United States of America, the European Economic Community and Japan.

**Imports:** Principal imports are machinery, transport equipment, foodstuffs, organic chemicals, and fertilizers. Major suppliers: the United States, Guatemala, the European Economic Community, Mexico and Venezuela.

Sources: Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook. International Monetary Fund, 1988; Exchange Arrangements & Exchange Restrictions, Annual Report 1987. International Monetary Fund; World Tables. World Bank, 1983.

**Crop Production:** Crop production for the domestic market is dominated by the cultivation of maize, sorghum, beans and rice, primarily in agricultural smallholdings. Production levels declined after 1979, mainly owing to the security situation and the resulting displacement of population, but substantial increases have been achieved since 1982. The Government has sought to stimulate output of basic grains since a severe drought in 1987 resulted in the loss of 25% of basic grain production and caused food shortages. Production of the major export crops has been seriously affected by the internal conflict, a shortage of credit, increases in costs and declining profitability.

Sources: El Salvador, Country Economic Memorandum. World Bank Report, 1986; El Salvador: A Country Profile. USAID/OFDA, Washington, 1987; South America, Central America and the Caribbean 1988. Europa Publications, 1988.

PLANTING AND HARVESTING CALENDAR

Commodity	Planting Season	Harvesting Season
<b>Beverages</b>		
Coffee:		
seed	February	
transplanting	May	October-February
<b>Cereals and grains</b>		
Maize:		
winter crop	May-June	August-December
summer crop or "tunamil"	September-October	December-February
"apante-shupan"	February-March	May-July
Rice:		
main crop	late June-July	October-December
early crop	early May	September-October
Grain Sorghum: (for grain)	May-June	December-February
Wheat:		
first crop	May-June	August-September
second crop	October	January
<b>Feedstuffs</b>		
Grain sorghum: (for forage)	May-June	August-October
<b>Fibers</b>		
Cotton:	June	November-March
Henequen:	March-May	August, January, or April (after 3 years)
<b>Oilseeds</b>		
Peanuts:	August	November
Sesame:	July-September	October-December
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Beans:		
main crop	May-June	August-September
second crop	August-September	December
Potatoes:	Throughout year	Throughout year
Sweet potatoes:	June-July	November-December
<b>Miscellaneous crops</b>		
Lemongrass:		Throughout year
Sugarcane: (cuttings)	September-January	November-March
Tobacco:		
seedbeds	June-July	
transplanting	September-October	December-March

Source: Planting and Harvesting Seasons in Latin America. (Foreign Agricultural Service. United States Department of Agriculture. 1958.)

# K. Population

Estimated Population (1989)	5,137,707
Population Density (1989) per km <sup>2</sup>	227
San Salvador (1989)	1,200,000
Average annual growth rate	3.5%

## Estimated Population of Departments (1989)

Ahuachapan	274,436
Sonsonate	388,328
Santa Ana	465,828
La Libertad	516,523
San Salvador	1,367,426
Chalatenango	147,930
Cuscatlán	190,388
La Paz	255,657
San Vicente	164,398
Cabañas	131,441
Usulután	387,338
San Miguel	415,488
Morazán	141,675
La Unión	290,851

Source: Dirección General de Población

# L. Health

Vital Statistics:	Births/1000 population	30.5
	Deaths/1000 population	6.9
	Infant mortality/1000 (1984)	29.8
	Life expectancy at birth	64.6 years
	Population/physician (1984)	3.4/10,000
	Population/hospital bed (1984)	1.3/ 1,000
	Total no. of hospital beds	7,668.0
	Access to safe water (1982)	55.0%*
	Access to waste disposal	51.0%*

\* percentage of total population.

Source: WHO/PAHO. Health Indicators for 1980-1985.

## Health Care System:

There are two providers of health services in El Salvador: the Salvadorian Social Security Institute (ISSS) and the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSPAS). ISSS provides services through seven urban clinics and one hospital in San Salvador, with coverage limited to 6% of the population (ISSS does not cover rural workers). MSPAS delivers health services to the rest of the population

through a multi-tiered system of hospitals, health centres, units, posts, and vaccination and mobile community posts. In 1981, El Salvador had 46 hospital establishments with a total of 7,375 beds. There were 1,793 physicians working in the country. The Ministry of Health administers 250 medical units, including 14 hospitals.

Major Causes  
of Death:

Among the major causes of death in El Salvador are intestinal infection, and respiratory and heart diseases.

For a more detailed discussion of health in El Salvador, refer to section IIA., Health system.

M. Housing and Living Conditions

The majority of the urban and rural population is unable to purchase or rent adequate housing, resulting in a proliferation of high-density squatter settlements with substandard construction and inadequate services.

Urban: marginal settlements dominate the urban landscape. An estimated 60% of San Salvador's metropolitan area population live in marginal settlements. In Santa Ana, El Salvador's second largest city, an estimated 70% of the population live in marginal housing. Five types of marginal settlements exist: "tugurios", "campamentos", "mesones", "casas viejas", and "colonias ilegales". Urban building materials are: debris or scrap, plastic, bajareque, or adobe. Houses commonly have wooden frames and walls and cement floors, with roofs of asphalted cardboard, aluminium, or cement.

Rural housing: "colonias chorizos", a rural counterpart to urban marginal settlements, are long, high density rows of crude housing. Colonias chorizos are located on narrow strips of land between large agricultural tracts and principal road networks.

A one-room adobe structure with a dirt floor and tile roof is most common, followed by "bajareque" (mud supported by a framework of small tree branches, split bamboo, adobe, straw or grasses). Roofs are thatched with sugarcane leaves or grass. Since "bajareque" cottages are not durable, adobe dwellings are preferred by rural residents. Rural kitchens are generally separated from the rest of the house.

Principal fuels for cooking are wood, corn cobs, husk and stalks, and "bagazo" (sugar cane). Tobacco stems are also used. Kerosene lanterns are the most common source of light. Latrines are rare. Rivers or springs supply water for half of the population while community wells or public standpipes are other sources. "Pilas" (open basins to collect rainwater from roofs) supply water for washing. Water is distributed either by filling metal containers if the water source is close, or by collecting water from a public tap or stream in 50-gallon barrels set on carts. Water is also transported by women in "cántaros" (traditionally carried on the head).

#### N. Transportation

##### Roads:

In 1986, the road network totalled 12,146 km, of which 306 km were part of the Pan-American Highway, and a further 8,399 km were paved or all-weather roads.

The country's highway system is well integrated with its railway services but has deteriorated (accounted for by poor repairs and the destruction of bridges). Roads include the Pan-American Highway (306 km) and "El Litoral", a new coastal highway (310 km) with interconnecting roads; paved highways (1,700 km); improved roads (2,827 km) and dry-weather roads (3,872 km).

##### Railways:

There are about 600 km of railway track in the country. The main track links San Salvador with the ports of Acajutla and Cutuco and with San Jeronimo on the borders with Guatemala. The International Railways of Central America run from Anguiatu on the El Salvador-Guatemala border to the Pacific ports of Acajutla and Cutuco, and connects San Salvador with Guatemala City and the Guatemalan Atlantic ports of Puerto Barrios and Santo Tomas del Castillo. Railway connections with Guatemala have been interrupted temporarily.

Two private railroad firms merged in 1975 to form the government-run FENADESAL (Ferrocarriles Nacionales de El Salvador). All track is 0.914 meter gauge, single-track (narrow gauge and light weight). In 1981, FENADESAL operated 19 locomotive and 660 units of rolling stock.

##### Ports:

El Salvador is served by two ports, Acajutla and Cutuco. These are operated and administered by the Port Authority, CEPA.



Cutuco handles principally coffee and cotton and is accessible only by rail. Acajutla is the main port and also serves Guatemala. It is located about 85 km southwest of San Salvador.

**Airports:**

The El Salvador International Airport began operating in January 1980, replacing the former international airport located at Ilopango (the Ilopango Airport is now a military airbase). It is located in Comalapa, south of the capital. Because of the small size of the country, there are no other major or secondary airports, only numerous small grass landing strips, both private and military, throughout the country.

**Airlines:**

AESA: Aerolineas de El Salvador, provides a cargo and mail service between San Salvador and Miami.

TACA International Airlines provides passenger and cargo services to Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, and the U.S.

The international airport of El Salvador, located near the coast, is served by Continental Airlines (USA), TACA International Airlines (El Salvador), LACSA (Costa Rica), COPA (Panama), SAHSA (Honduras), Pan Am (USA) and Emerald Airlines (USA). Passengers generally travel to El Salvador from the United States and Europe via Miami, New Orleans, Guatemala or Mexico City, while those coming from South America make their connections in Panama.

**O. Communications**

Daily papers in San Salvador are Diario de Hoy and La Prensa Gráfica. Diario Latino and El Mundo are afternoon papers which do not appear on Sunday. There are provincial newspapers in Santa Ana, San Miguel and elsewhere. El Salvador News Gazette is a bilingual weekly newspaper (Spanish and English). Semana is a weekly magazine for El Salvador and Central America.

**Television:**

Six television stations provide programming to approximately 400,000 receivers. The two government stations are educational. There are four commercial stations.

Radio: In 1986, there were an estimated 1,200,000 radio receivers. While there is only one public station, "Radio El Salvador", many commercial stations also exist. The guerrilla group, ERP, operates its own station, Radio Venceremos, and the FPL operate Radio Farabundo Marti.

Telephone: The Administración Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (ANTEL) maintains over 65,000 lines with automatic central switching. It provides services to all 262 municipalities but guerrilla sabotage has caused serious damage and the service to many communities is continually interrupted.

Overseas calls to foreign countries can be made easily and quickly except during peak weekend hours.

Telex: Telex services with the rest of the world are available through the National Telecommunications Administration (ANTEL).

Mail Services: Sea mail to and from Europe takes from one to three months. Air mail to or from Europe takes up to one month.

Further Reading:

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## II. Infrastructural Resources of El Salvador as Concern Refugees

### A. Health System

#### Structure:

The health sector comprises the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSPAS), the Salvadorian Social Security Institute, the Salvadorian Red Cross, the Health Services of the Ministry of Defense and Public Safety, the Ministry of the Interior, the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, and the Military Hospital.

There are two providers of health services in El Salvador: the Salvadorian Social Security Institute (ISSS) and the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSPAS). The Ministry of Health is responsible for the Government's health policy. The country is divided into five health regions and all facilities are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. With the assistance of WHO/PAHO, the Ministry of Health of El Salvador has adopted a plan of action emphasizing primary health care as the means for attaining the goal of health for all by the year 2000.

#### Existing Health Services:

The health situation in El Salvador reflects the unstable situation, precarious conditions of health services, and inadequate sanitation. Most health units do not have adequate facilities, and about 25 per cent of the health posts in the country are closed.

Public health services in 1989 were provided through: 14 hospitals, 13 health centres, 116 health units, 186 health posts, and 27 community posts and four dispensaries. Coverage is being extended through the services of rural health assistants, traditional birth attendants, and rural nutrition centres.

In addition, there are many private hospitals and clinics in the country, most of which are located in the capital.

Hospitals located in the major cities of each department provide both in-patient and out-patient care. Health units, health posts, and community health posts provide service to out-patients exclusively. Only the health units have permanent doctors and nurses. Health posts are visited one to three times weekly by doctors and nurses and are attended by auxiliary nurses other days.

Health posts are located in small towns throughout the country. Community health posts, located in marginal urban communities, are visited two or three times weekly by a doctor, nurse, and auxiliary nurse.

Distribution of health services is heavily skewed in favor of urban areas. In 1984, the capital of San Salvador had 36% of the Ministry's hospitals, more than 50% of the country's hospital beds, and more than 70% of the doctors. In 1983, there were approximately 300 rural health workers, covering 10% of the rural population. These workers are trained to provide basic medical care and to teach health education. They promote use of latrines, nutrition for pregnant women and infants, and family planning.

Medical Supplies: The country's chemical and pharmaceutical industry has undergone considerable development in recent years. Private enterprise has the technological capacity to manufacture about 95% of the products on the World Health Organization's list of essential drugs.

The surveillance board of the pharmaceutical industry is responsible for drug control. However, regulatory law is outdated. There is no national policy on health research, although there are isolated research projects on essential drugs, food and nutrition, and malaria.

Cold Chain: UNICEF has assisted in the development of an efficient cold chain. The network consists of a walk-in-cooler (located at the airport), petroleum and gas-powered cold boxes, vaccine carriers, ice packs and thermometers for health units throughout the country.

Source: UNICEF, El Salvador.

## B. Transportation Resources

Road Network: El Salvador has a good road system that is well-integrated with the railway service. It has, however, suffered deterioration through lack of maintenance and conflicts that have destroyed a number of bridges.

The Pan-American Highway bisects the country, running east-west for 525 km. It is the most heavily travelled road as it connects the major cities of Santa Ana, San Salvador, and San Miguel. The second major road is the littoral highway, which parallels the coast. Seven paved, all-weather roads connect these two main highways. The highway running north from San Salvador to the Honduran town of Nueva Ocotepeque, however, is not much used: guerrillas are active in the area and the road is in poor repair.

The road leading from the Honduran border to San Salvador is all tarmac, but with many deep potholes. The first 35 km of the highway are also very mountainous with several steep inclines.

Railway Network:

The rail network comprises 602 km of main track, connecting the capital with all principal cities. It also connects with the railroads of Guatemala, reaching Guatemala City as well as Puerto Barrios on the Atlantic coast. All track is 0.914 metre gauge, single track (narrow gauge and light weight). In 1981, the Government-run Ferrocarriles Nacionales de El Salvador (FENADESAL) operated 19 locomotives and 660 units of rolling stock.

Port Facilities:

Acajutla

Acajutla is a major Central American port serving the western part of El Salvador. It has road and rail connections to San Salvador and Santa Ana. On an open bay, Acajutla is a direct docking port with eight berths spread along three piers.

Largest Vessel:

Maximum 250 metres length overall; maximum 12 metres draught.

Installations:

Pier A is 800 m. long and 37 m wide. Water depth varies between 10 and 12 m, and the altitude of the pier deck above mean water level is 6.7 m. The two berths of this pier are capable of handling general bulk and liquid cargo because there are two 3-tonne capacity electric cranes and pipelines installed on the pier. There is a transit warehouse with a potential area of 4,500 square metres.

Pier B is 360 m long on the north side and 336 m long on the south side, and 28 m wide, medium water depth varies from 10 to 12 m;

altitude of the pier deck is 4.8 m above mean water level. Although its four berths handle general cargo and containers, the pier is mainly used for bulk cargo, for which it has a mobile crane and a conveyor belt system.

Pier C was built as an extension of Pier A to function mainly as a breakwater. It has facilities for the docking of tankers up to 40,000 deadweight tonnage. It is 301 m long and 19 m wide. It has two berths, mainly for liquid cargo, but also for bulk and general cargo. Because of its location, medium water depth reaches 13.5 m, the deepest of all the piers. Deck altitude is 5 m above mean water level.

Storage Facilities:	The land facilities include: warehouses for general and containerized cargo, with a total covered space of 34,420 m, including a covered transit warehouse of 4,500 m at pierhead and two paved storage yards of 10,000 m. Warehouses for bulk, with a total covered space of 7,540 m and 30,000 tonne capacity. Also 30,000 m container yard, 36,000 m vehicle yard and 14,500 m general cargo yard.
Cranes:	Two 30-tonne container straddle carriers, four mobile cranes of 3/4.75/30- and 60-tonne capacity and two electric cranes of 3-tonne capacity. Available: fork lift trucks, tractors, and trailers.
Container and Roll On/Off Facilities:	For vessels with their own cranes or ramps there is a 30,000 m container yard, two 30-tonne straddle carriers, 10 chassis, and seven terminal tractors.
Ore and Bulk Cargo Facilities:	A finger pier is equipped with a unit for loading and unloading bulk cargo with a maximum capacity of 500 tonnes per hour for fertilizer and 400 tonnes per hour for wheat. The unit is connected to a system of belt conveyors with a capacity of 500 tonnes per hour. There is a warehouse for sugar of 12,000 tonne capacity, an import warehouse for grains and fertilizer of 18,000 tonne capacity, and private warehouses with 15,000 tonne capacity. Bulk unloading is possible at pierhead by means of six sets of marine legs at a rate of up to 100 tonnes per hour each.
Bunkers:	Not available.
Airport:	El Salvador International, 129 km.
<u>Cutuco</u>	El Salvador's second port, located in the Gulf of Fonseca, is 3.2 km from the town of La Union and 252 km by railroad from San

Salvador. The railroad has exclusive and direct access to its berths. The port serves the eastern part of the country, primarily handling coffee and cotton exports.

**Approach:** Situated in the Bay of Fonseca, Cutuco has a good natural harbor about 5 km wide and 9.15 m deep at the entrance with strong tidal currents.

**Largest Vessel:** Maximum 180 m length, 2.9 m breadth and 9.1 m depth.

**Accommodation:** There is a modern concrete pier with two berths for the handling of general, dry bulk, and liquid bulk cargo. Depth at north side berth is 9.14 m mean low water at its outer end, 7.31 m mean low water at its inner end; length is 152 m. The south side berth has a 7.62 m mean low water at its outer end, 6.70 m mean low water at its inner end, and a length of 174 m.

**Storage Facilities:** Six export warehouses, one of them being used for transit cargo, with an area of 2,230 m<sup>2</sup>, the other five totalling an area of 20,343 m<sup>2</sup>. There is also an import warehouse owned by customs with an area of 3,600 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Cranes:** No cranes, vessels use own gear.

**Ore and Bulk Cargo Facilities:** Fertilizers imported in bulk and unloaded by tarpaulin slings. Two plants receive and bag cargo.

**Airport:** El Salvador International, 150 km.

**Airport Facilities:**

#### AIRPORT CHARACTERISTICS

Aerodrome	Elevation	Runway Dimensions	Runway Surface	Aircraft Capacity
El Salvador	31 m.	3,200x45 800x20	High Strength of Pavement	B707- 300c DC10
Ilopango (military base)	624 m.	2,240x45	High Strength of Pavement	B707- 300c DC10

**Source:** Airport Characteristics Data Bank, Caribbean and South American Regions, ICAO, Montreal, 1985.



Note: Because of the small size of the country, there are no other major or secondary airports, only numerous small grass landing strips, both private and military, throughout the country. For further details, contact Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal.

### C. Communications

Telephone Service: Like the rest of the national public utilities, the local telephone service has suffered considerably from guerrilla sabotage. Thus, the telephone service is often interrupted in the areas where such damage occurs. Good long-distance connections, either by direct dialling or through the operator, can be made with North and Central American countries and with Europe. Connections with South America are less reliable.

Telex Service: Cable service with the rest of the world is available through the National Telecommunications Administration (ANTEL).

### D. Water Resources

Overview: The ongoing conflict, earthquakes and storms have damaged the country's water services. Approximately 80% of the losses have occurred in the Central Zone (around San Salvador) and in areas of conflict.

National Water Authority: In urban areas, the "Administración Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados" (Administration of Water Supply and Sewage - ANDA) provides water and sewage services to towns with over 2,000 people.

ANDA, the Department of Rural Water Supply (DAR) under the Ministry of Health and Social Services, and the Directorate for Community Development (DIDECO) provide these services to the rural areas through PLANSABAR (Plan Nacional de Saneamiento Basico Rural).

NB: A private potable water company called "Agua Cristal" is found in San Salvador. The Agua Cristal company maintains a large supply of potable water which can be transported in

water trucks or in plastic containers of various measures.

Water Supply:

Only 47.8% of El Salvador's total population has access to some means of safe water supply, with 66.8% of urban residents covered as against 34.1% in rural zones.

Two types of water sources are considered as potentially suitable to provide the quantity of water needed for the water supply systems in the rural returnee settlements: surface and groundwater.

The demographic explosion, poor conservation methods and agricultural and industrial pollution have led to the disappearance of clear surface water. Consequently, ANDA and PLAN SABAR have been forced to draw exclusively from groundwater sources. Insufficient water flow and frequent breakdowns in supply, as a result of electric power cuts, increase the risk of contamination and the incidence of water-borne diseases. About 29% of the urban population and 41% of the rural population have access to potable water, either through house connections or public standpipes.

Surface Water:

Surface water is usually heavily polluted and requires purification prior to use. In an emergency a rapid filtration system, using portable filtration tanks, is generally the quickest method. This solution is adequate for the life span of the filtration tank - generally six months, provided the water is clear. As a long-term solution, the slow-sand filter, which requires no pumps or chemicals, is the best method of purification. However, spring catchments in mountainous areas, such as those found in the Central American region, are clean and may be developed by gravity pipelines.

Groundwater:

Groundwater quality is in general suitable for all uses. Some constituents, such as boron, iron, sulphur and silica, are typical of volcanic regions, but their concentrations are still acceptable and have no harmful effects. Temperatures of some spring waters are high (30° - 40°C).

The chief use of ground water is for community water supplies both in the metropolitan area of San Salvador and in rural areas.

Limited ground-water availability may be expected to lead to an increased use of treated surface water in community water-supply systems. Nevertheless, ground-water commonly represents the most economic and the best source of good quality water.

In emergency situations, if the only water source in the area is found to be deep-level groundwater, there are two options:

- 1) Develop deep groundwater sources, if available. This method is extremely costly and the water could perhaps still require treatment;
- 2) Water can be transported to the area in tanks by truck. In this case, storage facilities must be quickly developed. However, this method is also extremely costly.

Note: For a more thorough discussion of water supply in emergencies, refer to the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies, chapter 9, Geneva, 1982.

Equipment/Parts  
Procurement:

One of the constraints to the development of water resources in El Salvador is the procurement of equipment and spare parts. All equipment must be procured from international sources. The following types of equipment are likely to be required for water supply systems in El Salvador:

- Portable filtration tanks.
- Handpumps, or Monopumps are recommended.
- Mobile tanker lorries of about 30,000 litres capacity for distribution to areas where no water source is available or easily accessible.
- Storage tanks of about 14,000 litres capacity. Rubber tanks must be ordered abroad but can be airlifted easily.
- Metallic or concrete tanks can be made locally although raw materials are not always available.
- Storage containers of 10 litre capacity for individual transporting and storage.

- Well digging equipment, buckets, and eventually deep-level well drilling equipment (drilling rig, deep well pumps with fuel and/or generator, and distribution systems).
- Other miscellaneous items include: generator sets; distribution piping; casings; sedimentation tanks with coagulation facilities; collapsible water bladders and chlorination systems.

#### E. Storage Facilities

Commercial warehouses for grains are readily available throughout the country. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock maintains open and closed warehouses and silos. Major coffee and sugar producers have warehouses on their grounds. Ports and railway centres also have warehouse space.

The port at Acajutla has warehouses for general and containerized cargo, with a total covered space of 34,420 m, including a covered transit warehouse of 4,500 m at the pierhead and two paved storage yards of 10,000 m.

Warehouses for bulk have a total covered space of 7,540 m and 30,000 ton capacity. Also 30,000 m container yard, 36,000 m vehicles yard, and a 14,500 m general cargo yard.

The port at Cutuco has six export warehouses, one of them being used for transit cargo, with an area of 2,230 m. The other five total an area of 20,343 m. There is also an import warehouse owned by customs with an area of 3,600 m.

Source: Ports of the World, (Lloyds of London, 1988.)

Each of the mass returnee settlements has a dry warehouse of approximately 400 m. In addition, there are larger buildings (schools, churches, etc.) in the settlements which would be appropriate for dry storage in an emergency.

Note: Further information on supply storage can be found in the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies, chapter 5.

### III. Description and Requirements of Affected Populations

#### A. Nicaraguans - General

Housing Customs: The traditional housing of the rural poor is mainly of two types. The small rancho, common in the Pacific lowlands, has walls of poles (sometimes mud-covered) or cane, and often a straw roof distinguished by its four sheds. There are usually two rooms: a dormitorio for sleeping and a "salita" (living room) which may also include a kitchen area.

In the highlands, a rectangular canol-type house is the common dwelling of the poor. Additions ("barjareque") with single shed roofs are attached to the short sides of the house and sometimes to the back. Walls may be of poles, cane or board or of poles or cane covered with mud-straw mix; roofs are frequently of tile. The main house consists of one or two rooms. The urban poor live in crude shelters constructed with concrete floors and foundations, wood siding, and tile or zinc roofs. Lower middle-income families live either in housing of wood, concrete block, or wood and block combinations, or they live in dwellings of "taquezal", timber frame walls of widely spaced posts connected by double lathing filled with stone and mud balls and plastered with stucco when dry.

Food Preferences: The staple, maize, is used in several forms: mature and dry ("maiz"), fresh and green ("elote"), and immature ("chilote"). Corn flour ("masa") is used in the preparation of tortillas and tamales. Rice, sorghum, wheat (in urban areas), and small amounts of barley are other preferred grains. Beans (red kidney preferred, dried black, and white) are the ubiquitous accompaniment to maize in rural areas. Consumption of plantains, potatoes, cassava, some sweet potatoes, and yams is more localized. Meat consumption is generally low; fish is eaten almost exclusively in coastal areas. Tomatoes and onions are widely used, but overall consumption of vegetables is low. Fruits are consumed in small quantities in season.

Health Status: Prominent health problems are enteric diseases, pneumonia, tetanus, measles, tuberculosis, malaria, chagas disease, and leishmaniasis. Poor sanitation, inadequate

nutrition, and lack of health care contribute to communicable diseases and a higher death rate.

B. Nicaraguan Refugees in El Salvador

There were some 530 recognized refugees in El Salvador at the end of 1989, primarily from Nicaragua.

Refugees from Nicaragua started to arrive in El Salvador soon after the fall of the Somoza regime in 1979. However, the bulk of those with refugee status, or considered to demonstrate it by the UNHCR Office, arrived between 1985 and 1987. They are mostly young males between the ages of 14 and 26, currently residing in the states of San Miguel and La Unión.

UNHCR's Office in El Salvador keeps in touch with and has records of the Nicaraguans in the country. About 85% of them live in the eastern part of the country, in San Miguel and La Unión, the states closest to Nicaragua. About 22% of them live in urban areas (the cities of San Miguel and La Unión). The majority of the refugees can be considered rural because of both their origins and their current residence.

Less than 10% are children (12 years or younger), given that family units are exceptional. The Nicaraguans in these areas have living patterns similar to those of the local population. They get their meagre incomes from labour activities such as fishery and agriculture. Their housing, health, and educational conditions are comparable to these of poor Salvadorians.

Ethnically, all the Nicaraguan refugees can be considered as "ladinos". Besides the Nicaraguan refugees, there is also an unknown number of Nicaraguans residing in El Salvador under diverse legal conditions. Most of them have not requested assistance from international organizations or humanitarian agencies. There is no government or NGO assistance programme for Nicaraguan refugees other than a World Vision International project which sporadically provides emergency aid to those in the eastern part of the country.

### C. Salvadorian Returnees

**Overview:** In 1989, 3,158 Salvadorians repatriated to El Salvador. Of this number, 1,000 repatriated spontaneously. In 1988, 3,224 refugees returned. In addition to the weekly and mass repatriations by land from Honduras, UNHCR also assists air repatriations from Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Mexico, Belize and Panama.

**Food Preferences:** Basic staples for the rural population include corn, sorghum, rice, and black or red beans. These account for approximately 60% of caloric intake, which is supplemented by bread, fruit, fish, and vegetables. Meals tend to be vegetarian and high in starch content, with meat, poultry, and dairy products having only a minor part of the diet. Eating habits in the cities follow the same general pattern.

**Previous Occupational Activities:** Most of the Salvadorian returnees are from rural areas. Many of the returnees, however, have acquired valuable trades or skills (carpentry, tinsmithing, teaching, health promotion, etc.)

**Religion:** Predominantly Catholic, although there are some Protestants and Evangelists.

**Social Structure:** The majority of returnees are families of more than six members. Among them a high percentage of women and children are found.

**Water & Sanitation:** Recent data shows that only 47% of El Salvador's total population has access to potable water, with 56.8% of urban residents covered against 34.1% in rural zones.

House connections to water in the capital San Salvador have been estimated at 76.9%, 46.9% in other urban areas and 5.4% in rural regions.

The continuing conflict, together with natural disasters, (tropical storms and earthquakes), caused severe damage to the country's water supply system in the 1980s. Approximately 89% of the estimated losses occurred in the Central Zone, around San Salvador and in the areas of heavy conflict.

An estimated 46.9% of the urban population is served by sewage systems and 32% by septic

tanks and latrines. About 67.2% of San Salvador's inhabitants have household disposal systems as against 32.7% in other urban areas. Only 25.7% of the rural population is catered for. In both urban and rural areas, sanitation is poor and sewage untreated.

Note: See Part I, Basic Facts, for additional information on the people of El Salvador.

D. Displaced Persons

Within El Salvador, there is a large group of displaced people, which is currently estimated at more than 400,000 persons. In 1987, some 396,000 displaced persons were assisted by the National Commission of Assistance to the Displaced Population (CONADES) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The displaced are for the most part located in the departments of San Salvador, Usulután, San Vicente, Morazán, La Paz and San Miguel.



#### IV. Institutional Resources/Programmes

##### A. Relief Machinery of the Government of El Salvador

###### Policy Towards Refugees:

The Government of El Salvador has acceded to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, but it has yet to legislate for their implementation. Accordingly, representations to the Government are concerned with bringing about the appropriate legislation, as well as with preserving the refugees' right to work, to social security and to freedom of movement throughout the country.

Until the first semester of 1988, the Government required an asylum seeker to carry a provisional credential for two or three months before receiving refugee status and concomitant Refugee Identity Card. This was intended as a means of verifying his/her intent to remain in the country. After discussions with UNHCR regarding the immateriality of this fact to eligibility determination, the Immigration Department agreed in June 1988 to immediately furnish Refugee Identity Cards to asylum seekers which UNHCR considers "Special Cases" (those where the determination is patently positive). The remainder of the cases require further consideration and if without any other valid documentation receive a provisional credential until their status is determined.

Eligibility determination and the consequent documentation are the two major components of refugee protection in El Salvador.

In February 1989, at the request of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had been receiving all Nicaraguans after their release from a security check upon their entry into the country, UNHCR took charge of receiving all those intending to request asylum.

###### Policy Towards Returnees:

A Tripartite Commission, composed of the Honduran and Salvadorian Governments and UNHCR, was established in April 1986 to seek durable solutions for the Salvadorian refugees in Honduras, formulating programmes aimed at facilitating voluntary repatriation and the repatriates' reintegration in their places of origin. The Government office dealing with refugee matters is the Salvadorian Department of Migration, a dependency of the Ministry of the Interior. UNHCR supervises the Salvadorian repatriation process and retains a legal advisor who provides legal assistance and supervises the documentation of

B. UNHCR Presence (as of December 1989)

Office of the UNHCR Chargé de Mission in El Salvador

Mail Address: c/o UNDP  
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98-1810  
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24-0407

Telefax: (503) 23-4492

Chargé de Mission: Mr Roberto Rodriguez-Casasbuenas

Protection Officer: Mr Ramón Cadena Ramila

Assistant Programme Officer: Ms Stephany de Hemptine

Working hours: Monday-Friday  
0800- 1230  
1330- 1630

C. United Nations Agencies

FAO: The Food and Agricultural Organization assists the Salvadorian government in agrarian reform and rural development. Soil conservation and forestry development are also areas of focus.

UNDP: The United Nations Development Programme provides technical assistance in administration, transportation, agriculture, and planning.

UNESCO: UNESCO activities focus on literacy, bilingual education, and reconstruction of schools damaged by the recent earthquake.

UNICEF: UNICEF programme activities focus on child survival, qualitative improvement of basic education and integrated child care, support to cooperatives for food production, and literacy. In 1986, supplementary funds enabled the extension of the country programme to displaced persons.

WHO/PAHO: The World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization provide technical assistance in improving health care and living conditions. Among its activities are projects to eradicate malaria and improve rural water supply.

D. Voluntary Organizations

The Asociación Salvadoreña de Apoyo Integral (ASAI) as the implementing agency for all UNHCR's programmes carries out projects (food, transportation, health, domestic needs, legal assistance, education and income-generation) designed to assist in the local settlement of refugees and the re-integration of returnees.

A number of non-governmental organizations are involved in humanitarian and development activities which benefit directly or indirectly refugees, repatriates or displaced persons. Activities include projects in health, nutrition, agricultural development, food distribution, and literacy.

These organizations include: CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Comité Evangélico Salvadoreño (CESAD), DJC (Desarrollo Juvenil Comunitario), Fundasal (Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo y Vivienda Mínima), ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), International Rescue Committee, Lutheran World Relief, Médecins sans Frontières, the Mennonite Central Committee, Project Hope, Save the Children, and World Vision.

E. Other Organizations

One thousand families have received assistance from the EEC to facilitate their return from Honduras. The project, which in the future will assist an additional 900 returnees, helps returnees resettle in their home villages and become self-sufficient through the re-establishment of farm production.

Annex I

A. UNHCR Assistance Activities

Population of Concern and Developments

Refugees: According to UNHCR figures, the refugee population in El Salvador, at mid-1989, numbered 530. Approximately half of the refugees receive some form of UNHCR assistance. The living conditions of the refugees, most of whom are of rural or semi-rural origin, are comparable to those of low-income nationals.

Returnees: There were more than 13,000 returnees living throughout El Salvador at mid-1989. Approximately half of these are "mass returnees" who, once repatriated, receive UNHCR assistance only in the form of documentation activities. All other assistance activities for mass returnees are undertaken by ecumenical organizations. The remaining "individual returnees" receive UNHCR reintegration assistance in the form of food, domestic goods, health, documentation, income-generation and legal assistance activities.

Aims and achievements of past assistance programmes

Refugees: Emergency and legal aid were given to a limited number of refugees through a care and maintenance programme.

Returnees: Reintegration assistance has been provided to over 9,000 mass and individual returnees through a Trust Fund programme, especially in the form of transportation assistance, housing materials, agricultural goods, tools, household goods and documentation.

Outline of Current Programme

Refugees: Through a local settlement programme, current assistance activities attempt to facilitate the local integration of refugees in El Salvador and provide emergency and legal assistance to new arrivals.

Returnees: Current reintegration activities for returnees include transportation, accompaniment and documentation of all repatriates along with food, health, domestic needs, income-generation, housing and legal assistance for individual returnees.