

Weekly report

October 5 to 11, 2026

English translation of the supplied Spanish report. The original document's arguments, figures, allegations and opinions are retained. Images are available in the original Spanish PDF.

Weekly commentary

From October 8 to 10, delegations of left-wing forces from around the world gathered in Mexico City for the 30th International Seminar, "Political Parties and a New Society," convened by Mexico's Labor Party. Among the speakers from El Salvador were two people whose presentations were clearly opposed in substance: the current FMLN secretary general, Manuel Flores ("El Chino"), and Katia Panameño of the recently organized Mothers for Freedom movement.

Chino Flores's speech was inconsequential, irrelevant and empty. He did not dare criticize Bukele in depth. He did not denounce the political persecution of journalists, rights defenders and anyone who criticizes the dictatorship. He offered no encouragement, nor even the slightest remembrance, to imprisoned veterans deprived of due process, contact with their families, medicines and medical care, held without evidence on false accusations. He did not denounce electoral fraud, the multiple violations of the Constitution, the dismantling of prosecutorial and other public institutions, or the destruction of health care, education and social programs that had reduced poverty, inequality and disease in the preceding decade. He offered not a shred of self-criticism about the FMLN's conspicuous absence from resistance to the dictatorship: a former vanguard of revolutionary struggle led by a lackluster militant and an even worse leader. We will not sully our pages with his words. Anyone who wants to be bored by his decadent, bland, sterile and complicit speech can find it on the seminar's website.

Much more relevant, illuminating, militant and moving was Katia Panameño's presentation, which deserves to be read, circulated and supported by those who reject fascism, corruption, illicit enrichment, political persecution, torture and murder. Katia spoke clearly and courageously, more than overcoming the complicit silence of someone supposedly heir to the militancy, solidarity, heroism and extreme sacrifice of Farabundo Martí's followers, which stood out and won worldwide admiration for more than two decades. These values come to the fore in Katia's words. Every sentence conveys not only the pain of the thousands of innocent people languishing in Bukele's dungeons. Her words also eloquently and courageously demonstrate the need to reject and fight authoritarianism, terror, fraud and the most despicable political ambitions. She made the denunciation silenced by the false follower of Farabundo who preceded her. The expressed need to organize and struggle to overcome the evil of neo-fascism was amply fulfilled by Katia's testimony, reproduced below.

Mothers for Freedom: a voice of denunciation

Katia Panameño, speaking from Mexico

In El Salvador, Nayib Bukele's government approved a state of exception in March 2022, arguing that it was fighting gangs. Since then it has been continuously extended 55 times, even though our

Constitution permits this exceptional measure for only 30 days. It has become one of the Salvadoran state's main instruments of control and security.

Although the government presents it as a security success, there is another reality: its application has been accompanied by serious human rights violations, arbitrary detention, restrictions on the right to a defense, torture and deaths in state custody. Some 92,000 people have been arrested, thousands of them innocent and without gang connections: men and women who contributed to society and community leaders reduced to a quota for filling prisons. Their families lack sufficient information about their legal status or health, have no communication with them and have not received even a single proof of life. People arrested four and a half years ago are still awaiting hearings to determine their legal situation. The state of exception cannot be assessed solely through official security figures. We must also ask about its human, social and political cost, and what happens when the state concentrates power and weakens fundamental guarantees for the population. We are told that the state of exception protects the people from gangs and terrorist groups. In reality, the government uses it to protect itself from the people, because the foremost terrorist is Bukele, who persecutes, exiles, criminalizes, sentences and tortures, and whose hands are stained with the blood of 571 of those arrested who have died in state custody.

Behind every detention is a humanitarian crisis and a family facing uncertainty, pain and often social stigma. Mothers, wives, sisters and daughters mainly assume responsibility for seeking information, navigating legal procedures and demanding justice. They also bear the economic cost for each detainee, whose family must provide food, clothes, medicine and hygiene supplies through a “package” costing as much as \$150, without even being able to verify that their arrested relative receives it. Every month, thousands of households must choose between eating and taking a package to their family member. Children grow up without their mothers or fathers. Older women are forced to resume mothering and become household providers. Girls and boys are born behind bars, facing emotional difficulties that mark their lives.

Mothers for Freedom emerged in response: a movement of women and relatives of innocent people detained under the state of exception. We organize to search for our loved ones, denounce rights violations and demand answers from the state. We are women who have turned pain and uncertainty into organization and peaceful resistance. We support one another, share information, make our cases visible and bring demands into public spaces and forums for denunciation.

Our struggle has profound political and human significance. We confront an official narrative that presents arrests as an unquestionable response and stigmatizes families who demand justice. Mothers for Freedom maintains that no person should be considered guilty without a fair process and no family should live without information about their loved ones' whereabouts, health or legal situation. Our organization demonstrates that, even amid fear and persecution, women can build spaces of solidarity and defend human dignity.

Mothers for Freedom sets out the following fundamental demands:

- Proof of life and verifiable information about detained people's situation and health.
- Visits and family communication, so mothers and other relatives can know about and accompany their loved ones.

- Respect for due process and the right to a defense, with effective judicial guarantees and review of detentions.
- Freedom for those arbitrarily detained and individual review of cases lacking sufficient evidence.
- Investigation of allegations of torture, ill-treatment and deaths in state custody, with justice and reparations for victims.
- Protection of affected children and families, recognizing the social and emotional consequences of detention.
- An end to the criminalization and stigmatization of mothers and relatives who denounce abuses and demand justice.

These demands are neither privileges nor political concessions. They are fundamental rights the state is obliged to respect and guarantee.

The Salvadoran situation requires attention and solidarity from social movements, human rights organizations, political parties and peoples defending democracy and social justice. We need to break the silence, counter disinformation and give a voice to families receiving no answers. International solidarity can help make allegations visible, strengthen support networks and build pressure for respect for human rights. Mothers for Freedom calls on sister organizations to learn about this reality, circulate our demands and accompany our peaceful struggle. We do not ask anyone to disregard the security problems El Salvador has faced. We demand that their solution not be built by sacrificing fundamental rights or turning thousands of families' suffering into a fatal and invisible cost.

Our struggle goes beyond our relatives' freedom. It is for human dignity, justice and our peoples' right to live without fear. When a mother demands to know where her child is, she asks for no privilege: she claims a right. And when women organize to defend life, justice and freedom, international solidarity must stand with them.

Bukele hands Chivo Wallet over to a US company

On May 20, 2026, the Salvadoran government transferred operational control and majority ownership of Chivo Wallet to Chivo LP, a US-based company controlled by The Fintex Group, Inc., operating as Linguard Labs, according to confirmation by the IMF. The new operator assumed governance and operations, including the ability to launch products and charge fees. The Strategic Bitcoin Reserve retained a non-influential minority stake and custody of the assets. What will happen to Chivo ATMs, their fees and users with money in the wallet remains unknown.

Chivo Wallet was created in 2021, when El Salvador made bitcoin legal tender to expand financial inclusion and reduce remittance costs. The government offered a \$30 bitcoin incentive, but the IMF warned about volatility. Usage has been minimal: digital wallets accounted for no more than 2% of remittances in recent years. The IMF required an end to public participation and the use of state funds. Linguard Labs promotes a new Chivo as national financial infrastructure approved in El Salvador, without further detail. Bukele recently created the Sivar app for remittances using stablecoins.

Source 1: <https://www.laprensagrafica.com/economia/gobierno-traslado-operaciones-de-chivo-wallet-a-una-empresa-de-estados-unidos-20261005-0085.html>

Why has Bukele postponed pension reform for a year?

Bukele postponed presentation of the reform to the Comprehensive Pension System Law until June 2027, and approval until September that year, although the IMF agreement originally set a February 10, 2026 deadline. The change was secured within an Extended Fund Facility program of up to \$1.4 billion. The IMF's official explanation was that the change aligns the proposal with its technical assistance recommendations and allows it to be presented together with other measures concerning the state's pension obligations, rather than separately.

However, economists and entities including EMFI, a London-based financial intelligence agency issuing economic reports, and Fitch Ratings, one of the world's three largest credit rating agencies assessing sovereign default risk, attribute the change to the February 2027 electoral calendar, because the reform entails unpopular measures such as increasing the retirement age or the required years of contributions.

"An increase in the retirement age or years worked would affect more than 600,000 workers, a figure with potential political impact. The new dates fall after the elections." — Patricio Pineda, Working Group for a Dignified Pension.

"This is a negotiation between the IMF and Bukele to avoid punishment at the polls, because affecting pensions is very bitter medicine." — Carlos Acevedo, former president of the Central Reserve Bank.

"The proximity of elections creates incentives to postpone or soften measures affecting workers; the real obstacle is the political timing." — EMFI, February 2026.

Source 2: <https://www.eldiariodehoy.com/negocios/por-que-el-gobierno-postergo-la-reforma-a-las-pensiones-hasta-dentro-de-un-ano/95685/2026/>

Bukele cuts pension funding for older people in extreme poverty

The 2027 budget proposal submitted by the Treasury to the Legislative Assembly cuts funding for the Universal Basic Pension, created in 2019 for people over 70 living in extreme poverty, with monthly payments of \$50. Funding falls by \$9.3 million, from \$24.8 million in 2026 to \$15.5 million in 2027.

Since 2019, the number of beneficiaries has also declined without an official explanation: from 37,868 in 2019–2020 to 28,529 in 2025–2026, a reduction of 9,339. This occurred despite substantial growth in the older population during the first decade of this century, associated with health reform programs reflected in increased life expectancy at birth.

With extreme poverty increasing, one would expect the number of older people in extreme poverty, and therefore recipients of the Universal Basic Pension, to rise. If the opposite has happened, with fewer older pension recipients, it is because funding has been reduced under the dictatorship or enrollment has been denied to people entering this group. Even with the decline, paying \$50 to 28,529 beneficiaries for 12 months would cost \$17.1 million, leaving the 2027 allocation \$1.6 million short.

Last May, administration of the pension was transferred to the Institute for the Administration of Veterans' and Former Combatants' Benefits (INABVE), which absorbed responsibilities from CONAIPD and CONAIPAM. Information obtained anonymously by La Prensa Gráfica indicates that INABVE has not updated the beneficiary database to expand coverage, while raising other allocations for people with disabilities by more than \$10 million beginning in 2027, compared with less than \$1 million previously.

Image caption in the original: Stories of survival: living without a pension or a fixed income in El Salvador.

Source 3: <https://www.laprensagrafica.com/elsalvador/programa-de-pension-basica-universal-recibira-9.3-millones-menos-en-el-presupuesto-2027-20261006-0053.html>

Human Rights Watch: mass trials are “a mockery of justice”

Human Rights Watch (HRW) denounced the mass trials of hundreds of people detained under El Salvador's state of exception, in force since 2022, being held beginning in 2026. HRW's Juanita Goebertus described them as “a mockery of justice.” HRW interviewed 15 lawyers and examined indictments involving more than 600 people and a ruling convicting 120, with no acquittals and sentences of 30 to 45 years.

More than 93,000 people have been detained. Some 120,000 are imprisoned, with overcrowding reaching 400%; at least more than 90% await trial, and at least 570 deaths in custody have been documented. HRW called for fair trials, individual assessment of evidence, limits on pretrial detention and secrecy, and an independent mechanism to review cases and free innocent people, prioritizing children (more than 3,000 are imprisoned), people with disabilities, pregnant people and those who are ill. HRW: a system designed to convict en masse, not to distinguish guilty from innocent.

Bukele's mass trials, as described in the report:

- Proceedings take place under judicial secrecy.
- Evidence is weak: unverifiable police reports and vague accusations involving unlawful association, coerced relationships, or relationships without gang connections.
- Prosecution witnesses are anonymous and protected.
- Defense witnesses are threatened.
- Defense lawyers have minutes for dozens or hundreds of defendants and cannot speak privately with them.
- Access to case files is denied.
- There are no acquittals; sentences range from 30 to 45 years.
- Judges are “faceless” and courts opaque.
- Habeas corpus petitions do not succeed.
- There is no judicial independence.

Source 4: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/10/07/el-salvador-mass-trials-a-mockery-of-justice>

Foreign investment in El Salvador continues to fall

In the second quarter of 2026, foreign direct investment fell 92% compared with the second quarter of 2025. This worsens the 40% decline in the first quarter. Investment accumulated over the first two quarters of 2026 amounted to \$226 million, 54% below the same period in 2025.

Foreign investment has fallen significantly during Bukele's governments. Last year it barely reached \$475 million, a 37% contraction compared with 2024. The official “economic miracle” narrative clashes with the reality of people struggling with high living costs and unemployment and with foreign businesses' preference for other Central American countries. In the first half of 2026, foreign investment in Costa Rica was \$2.74 billion, 12 times El Salvador's figure, excluding Heineken's historic purchase of FIFCO assets. Nicaragua received \$960 million, four times as much, and Honduras \$676 million, three times as much. Guatemala attracted \$530 million in the first quarter alone, twice as much.

César Villalona / Izcanal.

Source 5: <https://www.facebook.com/Izcanal/posts/sigue-cayendo-la-inversi%C3%B3n-extranjera-en-el-salvador%C3%A9sar-villalona2-de-octubre/1536043205217948/>

Government announcements about schools receiving work prove misleading

In 2026, field checks by Radio Izcanal in El Salvador, on September 22, October 6 and October 11, questioned official figures for the government's “Two schools a day” program and supposedly renovated schools. Various schools announced as rehabilitated in departments such as Usulután still have no actual work or have abandoned construction, forcing students to study in precarious conditions.

In Jucuapa, Usulután, for example, work has not started at School No. 978, announced on September 22 as part of the program; Special Education School No. 855, announced in July; or School No. 857 in El Nispero canton. Izcanal also confirmed that students in Joya Ancha Abajo, Santa Elena district, were removed from their school and continue attending classes in inadequate conditions, without confirmation of school repairs.

In Nueva Granada, seven schools were vacated and, nine months later, construction had still not started, according to information verified by Izcanal. These are Las Llaves, Las Isletas, Loma Grande, El Carrizal, Azacualpia de Joco, Azacualpía de Gualcho and Palomia de Gualcho. On October 3 the government announced it had “intervened” in 1,000 schools nationwide, but Izcanal's field verification contradicts this claim and asks: does “intervening” in a school actually mean rebuilding it and improving conditions?

Source 6: <https://www.facebook.com/Izcanal/posts/izcanalcomunitaria-1000-escuelas-intervenidas-reconstruidas-o-desalojadas0610202/1539959998159602/>

Source 7: <https://izcanal.org/anuncios-del-gobierno-sobre-escuelas-intervenidas-resultan-enganosos/>

Source 8: <https://www.facebook.com/lzcanal/posts/lzcanalcomunitaria-nueve-meses-despu%C3%A9s-de-los-desalojos-tres-centros-escolares-d/1545793474242921/>

IMF recommends charging the public for DoctorSV consultations

The IMF report on the second and third reviews of the Extended Fund Facility, approved on October 1, 2026, states that the DoctorSV artificial intelligence platform represents estimated spending of \$10 million a month, or \$120 million annually, equivalent to 0.4% of GDP. The IMF also recommends targeting fully free access to vulnerable people, introducing progressive copayments for other users and coordinating DoctorSV with other public health services to avoid duplicate spending.

The IMF recommendations reported by El Mundo focus solely on DoctorSV's high costs. This Weekly Report warns that the monetary recommendation will be completely useless and will only increase people's out-of-pocket health spending. It begins with a misleading comparison between health services at the start of the pandemic and the current situation, without mentioning the dismantling of the successful health reform implemented by former health minister Dr. María Isabel Rodríguez during the two previous governments. In particular, it omits that, between the beginning of the dictatorship and the arrival of the pandemic, Bukele had already:

- Dismantled or closed Community Health Teams (ECOS), or changed their functions.
- Defunded maternity waiting homes.
- Discontinued the Unified Health Information System.
- Interrupted referral and return arrangements between levels of care, including Ciudad Mujer.
- Ended public health activities such as school meals, local and regional health situation analysis, and work with and within communities against disease vectors such as mosquitoes and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Abandoned and eliminated sex education in schools to prevent teenage pregnancy.
- Stopped continuous household monitoring and updating of children's vaccination records.
- Ended household monitoring of older adults with chronic diseases, along with many other activities that promoted health and prevented illness.

All of this explains today's rise in diseases that had been controlled, such as dengue, Zika and chikungunya, and the reversal of achievements such as malaria eradication, the absence of all vaccine-preventable diseases, reduced maternal and infant mortality, increased life expectancy and many other indicators. Bukele intends to replace these with a robotic tool that costs more than all the staff dismissed to justify it. It allows him to award concessions for medicines, medical services, laboratory tests and other activities at will, multiplying his fortune and enriching his clan and circle at the expense of proliferating illness and death among Salvadorans.

Source 9:

<https://diario.elmundo.sv/economia/fmi-recomienda-copagos-progresivos-a-doctorsv-ante-costo-de-10-millones-mensuales>

Exclusionary economic growth hurts the poorest

Economist Rafael Lemus warned that, although the Central Reserve Bank reports good macroeconomic performance during the year, it does not reach Salvadoran families. Deterioration is visible in households taking on more debt, buying less food and avoiding eating out or recreational activities. For middle-class families, for example, available money no longer goes as far.

The situation is worse for lower-income households, particularly because the Basic Food Basket exceeded \$264. Many people without formal employment or with low incomes can barely cover basic food. According to Lemus, extreme poverty rose from about 360,000 to more than 500,000 Salvadorans. This is one of the most difficult problems, because people in that situation have fewer opportunities to raise their incomes.

He therefore questions measuring growth solely through GDP: aggregate figures do not show how benefits are distributed. There is “exclusionary growth”; what has increased is extreme poverty. Activities such as construction, tourism and remittance-driven consumption can raise growth without generating sufficient jobs or improving every household's income. The economy is uneven and not everyone benefits.

Source 10: <https://www.eldiariodehoy.com/negocios/el-crecimiento-economico-no-es-parejo-no-nos-estamos-beneficiando-todos-segun-economista/96164/2026/>

Rural crisis worsens with a \$37.5 million cut to the Agriculture Ministry

Speaking on YSUCA, César Villalona said that the proposed 2027 General State Budget allocates \$189.2 million to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG). Although this is slightly higher than the \$188.9 million approved for the institution in 2026, additions raised the current year's allocation to \$226.5 million. Comparing the \$189.2 million proposed for 2027 with the revised 2026 budget therefore shows a \$37.5 million reduction.

Of the 2026 allocation, \$60.9 million went to agricultural markets, supply centers and strategic markets. The source's sentence about the 2027 allocation for this component is incomplete. For the Agricultural Bonus (BAG), the proposal provides a \$7 million increase, from \$58 million in 2026 to \$65 million in 2027.

The proposed General State Budget for 2027 totals \$12.421 billion. Villalona indicates that eight of the 16 ministries face cuts, including MAG, with \$37.5 million less.

Source 11: <https://ysuca.org.sv/2026/10/presupuesto-del-mag-para-2027-tendria-una-reduccion-de-37-5-millones/>