



PRESS RELEASE

Gathered together in the municipality of Arcatao in the department of Chalatenango on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th days of July 2016, representatives of solidarity organizations from the United States, Canada, and community leaders from the departments of San Vicente, La Libertad, Chalatenango, Cabañas, Cuscatlán and San Salvador. We declare the following:

1. The participants in this Sistering and Solidarity Gathering have more than 30 years of history walking together, accompanying one another in the different moments of social struggle for human rights, for dignity, for life, for peace, and for the construction of a more humane, just, and dignified world for the most vulnerable and unprotected populations, and again we ratify our commitment to solidarity and to accompanying the Salvadoran people.

2. We celebrate the changes and transformations achieved thus far as a product of these struggles: ending the war, building peace, and opening spaces for democracy and social participation that have enabled access to local power and involvement in building true processes for change, with deep citizen participation.

3. As a solidarity movement, we feel honored and proud to be a part of these struggles and transformations that have been led by the Salvadoran people and their organizations, who have worked tirelessly to transform the oligarchical power structures and build peace, justice, and dignity in the communities.

4. We are deeply concerned that now, 24 years after the signing of the peace accords and after having made significant strides in democracy building, we observe negative signs from powerful group in El Salvador that threaten democratic stability and the continuity of the changes made thus far in favor of the poorest.

5. Through our accompaniment of the Salvadoran communities during the armed conflict, we were able to witness firsthand the impacts of the interventionist policies by the United States government that left death and destruction in their wake. Now once again we call upon the U.S. government to respect the decisions and autonomy of the Salvadoran people, and to put an end to their interventionist programs that harm the culture and identity of the communities and produce irreversible damages to the environment.

6. We reaffirm that as peoples in solidarity we share common struggles between El Salvador, the United States, and Canada, and we recognize the strategic need to continue to join forces around these issues, which include:

- Respect for democratic processes and spaces
- Protection of natural resources as a right for all and not as a product for sale
- Construction of economic policy to benefit the majority
- International relations that respect the sovereignty and rights of peoples
- Food sovereignty

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