

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2021

His Excellency Nayib Armando Bukele Ortez  
President of the Republic of El Salvador

Dear President Bukele:

As longtime friends of El Salvador, we write to express our deep concern regarding the recent attack against Doctors Without Borders staff in San Salvador, as well as the killing of two individuals returning from a political rally. We urge you to fully cooperate with the Attorney General's independent investigations of these violent attacks and to use the influence of your office to pursue peace, justice, and unity.

According to reporting of the incident, two Doctors Without Borders ambulance team members were detained in the early morning hours of January 31st while en route to respond to an urgent call. The doctor and nurse assistant were forced out of the vehicle, threatened, and assaulted by an armed group. The assault led Doctors Without Borders to temporarily suspend its operations in El Salvador. The organization had been doing vital work helping provide medical care, mental health care, social work, nursing services, and sexual and reproductive health care to areas affected by violence in El Salvador since 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made the organization's work more critical. We stand in solidarity with the brave staff from Doctors Without Borders and other leading humanitarian organizations who work every day to save lives.

The attack on the Doctors Without Borders ambulance occurred the same day as a separate armed attack in front of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) office in San Salvador that killed two and wounded five other people. With congressional and municipal elections occurring later this month, we wish to echo the words of Attorney General Melara in calling for a peaceful campaign season.

As members of the United States Congress, we know too well what can happen when political leaders respond to warning signs of violent unrest with vitriolic messages of misinformation, division, and fear. The insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6<sup>th</sup>, which was provoked and incited by former President Trump, provided a stark example of the dangers of reckless, undemocratic leadership that runs counter to the rule of law.

As President of El Salvador, we urge you to use the power of your office not to stoke divisions in the interest of political gain, as former President Trump did, but to convey messages of peace and unity. With elections rapidly approaching, we implore you to unambiguously call for an end to violence, to express your full commitment to using the Salvadoran Government's resources to

ensure the safety of humanitarian workers operating in the country, and to advocate for the full autonomy and independence of Attorney General Melara to thoroughly investigate these attacks and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Albio Sires". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norma J. Torres". The signature is cursive and somewhat compact, with a distinct loop at the end.

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Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress