

# *El Salvador's FMLN Warns U.S. to Stop Supporting Right-Wing Youth*

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San Salvador, March 2 (RHC)-- El Salvador's ruling Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, the FMLN, warned the U.S. embassy in San Salvador to stop supporting the country's right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance, ARENA, party.

Socialist FMLN leaders accused the U.S. of meddling in the country's affairs by supporting ARENA youth working to destabilize the incumbent government, La Pagina reports. Last month, for example, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Jean Manes appointed Erick Ortiz, a far-right ARENA youth leader, to head a new U.S.-Salvadoran youth council in the country.

"An embassy cannot do political work," FMLN Secretary General Medardo Gonzalez reminded the U.S. embassy, HispanTV reports. "We consider that it is an attitude of intrusion, of interference, we should not politically accept this type of interference."

Gonzalez also presented evidence of "clear coordination" between the U.S. embassy and ARENA to recruit Salvadoran youth for anti-government, anti-socialist campaigns. Criticizing U.S. double standards on national sovereignty, Gonzalez said the North American country wouldn't like it if El Salvador or any

other country “started creating agencies to proselytize American youth toward socialism.”

Manes, who has served as the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador since 2015, frequently calls on private companies and institutions affiliated with ARENA to “be part of the change” and to “raise the voices of optimism.” “Change” and “optimism,” for Manes, means rolling back the country’s socialist gains and implementing neo-liberal economic policies which have impoverished El Salvador for decades.

Since the FMLN took power in 2009, El Salvador has increased government spending on healthcare, education, housing, and free programs for youth at risk of joining gangs. The socialist party has also implemented heavy regulations on multinational corporations seeking cheap labor and commodity exports.

Earlier this month, the Salvadoran government demanded that Canadian-Australian mining company OceanaGold pay a \$8 million fine for failing to adhere to environmental standards. ARENA, promoting “economic freedom” and environmental deregulation, sided with OceanaGold against paying the fine. The FMLN and the multinational giant are still in arbitration.

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