

End of Repression

ONUSAL's military division successfully oversaw and verified the dissolution of the FMLN's military structure, destruction of its weapons and equipment, and its transition from a combatant force to a political party. ONUSAL encountered several problems along the way. It verified that the FMLN had destroyed or handed over all weapons in December 1992, when it formally announced the end of armed conflict.³⁶ But the accidental explosion of an undisclosed arms cache in May 1993 and the discovery of large quantities of weapons indicated that the FMLN had not handed in all its weapons.³⁷ Over the succeeding months, the FMLN informed ONUSAL of another 114 arms caches in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. These contained ammunition, rockets, grenades, and surface-to-air missiles. In total, the FMLN destroyed 10,230 weapons, 140 rockets, 9,228 grenades, 5,107 kilograms of explosives, 74 surface-to-air missiles, and more than 4 million rounds of ammunition.³⁸

Efforts to reform the armed forces were also largely successful, though there were notable challenges. Under ONUSAL supervision, the government demobilized the civil-defense patrols and reduced the size of the army from 40,000 to 28,000 soldiers. U.S. military advisers trained and assisted with restructuring. They helped develop a new training and doctrine command and provided technical advice on the reorganization of El Salvador's military college.³⁹ Instead of abolishing the national guard and treasury police, as stipulated in the Chapultepec agreement, the government incorporated those organizations structurally intact into the army and renamed them the National Border Guard and Military Police, respectively. They retained largely the same missions.

³⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (Onusal)," New York: United Nations, S/25006, December 23, 1992, pp. 282–285.

³⁷ Boutros-Ghali (1992; 1995, p. 2).

³⁸ Wrobel and Gaspar de Oliverra (1997, pp. 137–138).

³⁹ McCormick (1997, p. 297).