

## Mara Salvatrucha Links, Articles and Books

### Reports and Articles

#### **Central America and Mexico Gang Assessment (April 2006)**

[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin\\_america\\_caribbean/democracy/gangs\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/democracy/gangs_assessment.pdf)

This work appears to be a very complete report on gang violence in Mexico and Central America. It has country profiles, discussions about the cost of violence and much more. This report is very long.

#### **CRS Report for Congress; Gangs in Latin America (May 2005)**

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22141.pdf>

This short article provides a good overview of the problem and national, interregional attempts to address the issue of gang violence. It really articulates how gang violence also begets more violence in non-gang parts of society. There is some discussion of prevention and rehabilitation programs.

*Gangs and crime in Latin America: hearing before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, One Hundred Ninth Congress, first session, April 20, 2005*

<http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS66666>

This report lays out reasons for the explosion of gang violence and the importance of lowering gang crime in Latin America. It also discusses steps that the US is taking to fight the problem. Mara Salvatrucha is specifically mentioned. Report includes testimony from experts on the topic. However, this report suggests tightening US' borders against illegal immigration as a major solution.

#### **“Lost and Found (El Salvador)”**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/childrensrights/teaching/lost.shtml>

This is a curriculum to explore the implications of Articles 9 and 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child through the experiences of children in El Salvador.

#### **How the Street Gangs Took Central America (May/June 2005)**

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050501faessay84310/ana-arana/how-the-street-gangs-took-central-america.html>

This article talks about the US has “exported” its gang problem to Central America. The gang was grown in Los Angeles, and members were deported back to Central America, spreading the problem. So far, the governments have yet to sufficiently deal with the problem. Preview is free, full article for a charge.

#### **Gangs, Terrorists, and Trade (April 2007)**

<http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/4144>

This article writes about growing danger of Mara Salvatrucha and other criminal groups in Latin America. It discusses the impact of the drug trade and neoliberalism. It makes interesting comparisons with Al Qaeda. The article has some policy suggestions for the US foreign policy.

### *News resources*

#### **LA's deportees send crime rate soaring in El Salvador (March 2000)**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/GWeekly/Story/0,,230942,00.html>

Youth and children are attracted to gangs in Central America since the lifestyle provides a sense of power and access to material goods and drugs. Exporting gang members fails to deal with the problem.

#### **Gato and Alex- No Safe Place (June 2000)**

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20000710/hayden>

This lengthy article provides harrowing accounts of two young immigrants who joined street gangs in LA for honor and other reasons. After running into trouble with police, both were exported. Eventually, they worked to put together an organization to rehabilitate youths. However, the upswing in hysteria over gangs lead to a "dirty war" against inner city youths.

#### **From San Salvador's streets to a study program (April 2001)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0419/p7s2.html>

Privately funded Don Bosco Poligono program has been successful in rehabilitating at risk youths or former gang members. The program has trained youths to become businessmen.

#### **El Salvador's teenage beauty queens live and die by gang law (November 2002)**

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,837018,00.html> This excellent article discusses the lives and culture of young gang members in El Salvador. It really demonstrates how young people join these gangs to find family, sense of belonging that society has denied or cannot provide them.

#### **Central America takes harder line against gangs (July 2004)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0706/p07s02-woam.html>

Legislation has been passed throughout Central America to deal with growing gang violence. Rehabilitation has been an effective means of inserting former gang members into society.

#### **Marked men with no place to hide (August 2004)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0818/p12s01-woam.html>

Anti-Gang legislation in Honduras has made a significant dent in ending gang violence but at a cost. Some legislation, including the anti-tattoo law, prevents the rehabilitation of former gang members into society. Many remain in-between gang and the outside life.

#### **Combining El Salvador's gangs (March 2004)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3553529.stm>

This article talks to former gang members about their experiences in the gang. Most former members have killed someone. Drug use was pandemic and tattoos symbolized membership in the gang.

**Honduras police find severed head (April 2004)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3613943.stm>

**Gangs in Honduras release a wave of terror through gruesome reminders like a severed head.**

El Salvador's reformed killers (May 2004)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from\\_our\\_own\\_correspondent/3694869.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/3694869.stm)

This reporter talks to a former MS member and his process of reformation. He now works to help kids avoid his fate in gangs and prison.

**Guards accused over Honduras Fire (May 2004)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3724221.stm>

Guards are accused of letting gang members in a prison die from a fire.

**Marked for death, the tattoo gang kids (September 2004)**

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1297490,00.html>

Death squads have been murdering street children and gang members through Honduras. Little is being done to stop the violence

**Gang linked to Honduras massacre (December 2004)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4124133.stm>

This is the article that reports the infamous bus massacre. The M-18 used AK-47 rifles to kill 28 bus passengers. The people responsible claim they belong to an old rebel faction that has not been active since the 1980s. The gang protests the legalization of the death penalty.

**Gang life tempts Salvador teens (January 2005)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4201183.stm>

Young men explain their attachment to the Mara Salvatrucha because it provides them with a sense of family and order.

**FBI confronts new gang threat (February 2005)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0224/p01s02-woam.html>

FBI and other police agencies are stepping up their methods to deal with the growing threat of MS.

**Mexico suffers as US 'exports' its gangs (February 2005)**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianweekly/story/0,,1409962,00.html>

US export of gangs has led to increased gang violence in Mexico and Central America. The mere threat of gang violence causes some institutions, like schools, to shut down.

**For Salvadoran gangs, jail is a revolving door (March 2005)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0301/p06s02-woam.html>

This article discusses the significant problems in Salvadoran legal and police system. Even though harsh laws have been passed that arrest people suspected of gang involvement, the justice system is not strong enough to deal with the problem. Jail sentences are not long

enough. Intelligence sharing between the US and Central American countries has not been sufficient.

**US raids target cross-border gangs (March 2005)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4351423.stm>

The US has arrested 103 members of MS-13 in an attempt to crack down on this growing gang.

**Letter from El Salvador: At the Edges of Empire (June 2005)**

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050711/davis>

This highly charged article gives an overview of history and the many problems of present day El Salvador.

**In Guatemala, a rise in vigilante justice (October 2005)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1006/p06s01-woam.html>

Citizens and police officers are responding to violent gangs with violence.

**The Fight Against MS-13: Dan Rather on Difficult Fight Against Dangerous Gang (December 2005)**

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/12/01/60minutes/main1090941.shtml>

This article specifically looks at the brutal murder of Brenda Paz, a MS-13 gang member, who had provided information to the police.

**LA's latest export: gangs (February 2006)**

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0210/p15s01-altv.html>

A National Geographic Channel documentary explores how LA has exported gangs to Central America.

**The Most Dangerous Gang in America (March 2006)**

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7244879/site/newsweek/>

This article talks about the growing threat of Mara Salvatrucha in the US. It is present in 33 states and considered to be the "fastest-growing, most violent and least understood of the nation's street gangs." There is great regional diversity in the gang's tactics and rackets in the US. This loose nature of the organization has made it difficult to target.

**Guatemala troops to tackle gangs (April 2006)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4955096.stm>

Efforts have been stepped up in Guatemala to address rising violence around the gangs. Recent violence occurred when a mob burned three houses and nearly lynched three people suspected to be members of a gang.

**Plea for gang violence crackdown (February 2007)**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6338609.stm>

Los Angeles and Latin American governments meet to fight back against gang violence in their respective countries and cities.

**Timeline: El Salvador (February 2007)**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country\\_profiles/1220818.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1220818.stm)

This site provides a timeline of El Salvador stretching back to the Spanish conquest.

**Gang Mayhem grips LA (March 2007)**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,,2036589,00.html>

LA gangs have started to target racial groups to “ethnically cleanse” parts of the cities. Many people call the upswing in race crimes as evidence of a race war in LA.

**News Resources: NPR**

**More Gangs Going Global (February 2005)**

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4509988>

This audio clip discusses how gangs are becoming less localized and developing connections with other gangs and branches elsewhere.

**The International Reach of the Mara Salvatrucha (March 2005)**

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4539688>

This story provides a general overview of the problem in the US and Central America. It notes how some Central American countries are trying to stop the violence through harsh laws. The US has amplified the problem by deporting gang members to Central America.

**Latino Street Gang Mara Salvatrucha (April 2005)**

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4606846>

This audio clip records Reporter Mandalit del Barco exploring the government’s fight against this dangerous gang.

**Removing His Tattoos, But Gang Scars Remain (May 2007)**

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=10131827>

This article is about one man’s efforts to leave his life in a gang behind. It discusses briefly the effect that the participation of a parent in a gang has on children.

**PBS: Curriculum Units and Supplementary Information**

**Wide Angle: “18 with a Bullet”**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/classroom/5lp2b.html>

This provides a series of links about 18 with a Bullet, and other information about El Salvador.

**Video: 18 with a Bullet**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/elsalvador/index.html>

This companion article to a video provides information about the relationship between gangs in Latin America and the state. It argues that this is the rise of New Medievalism. It includes a timeline.

### **Transcript of Interview with Anne W. Patterson, former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/elsalvador/transcript.html>

This is an interview with the former US ambassador to El Salvador about the video about gang violence in Central America. She sees the disintegration of the family, lack of employment, legacies of the civil war, and proliferation of weapons as causes for increasing gang violence.

### **For Teachers: Conflict: Gang Violence from LA to El Salvador**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/classroom/5lp2.html>

This site has a curriculum for teachers to teach about gang violence in Central America. This coincides with the video.

### **Gang Crackdowns (April 2006)**

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/youth/jan-june06/gang\\_4-24.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/youth/jan-june06/gang_4-24.html)

This is an interview with a Police Officer from the LAPD, and civilians discussing gang violence.

### **Enemies of War: El Salvador**

<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/enemiesofwar/elsalvador.html>

This website has a series of articles about El Salvador including work on the civil war and progress afterwards.

### **Books and Articles about Gangs in the US**

Cummings, Scott and Daniel J Monti. *Gangs: The Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

This book has a series of articles about myths about US gangs, solutions, public hysteria, racial attitudes of gangs and much more.

Kontos, Louis, David Brotherton and Luis Barrios. *Gangs and society: Alternative Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

This book has many articles about youths, gangs, and even Latino communities.

McAlister, Alfred. *Juvenile violence in the Americas: Innovative Studies in Research, Diagnosis and Prevention*. Washington, D.C.: Pan American Health Organization, 2002. In Spanish and English.

Spergel, Irving A. "Youth Gangs: Continuity and Change." *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 12. (1990), 171-275.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0192-3234%281990%2912%3C171%3AYGCAC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>

This lengthy article explains that youths join gangs because they serve to fill vacuums in social, economic and family problems. This article also has some policy recommendations to mollify the problem.

Triplett, W. "Gang crisis." *CQ Researcher*. Vol. 14, (2004). 421-444.

<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre2004051400>.

This article discusses the rising gang violence in the US.

Vigil, James Diego. *Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California*.

Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.

----- . *A Rainbow of Gangs: Street Cultures in the Mega-City*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2002.

This book looks at the stories of gang members from numerous ethnic groups in the US. It should provide an interesting cross section of experiences.

### **Street Gangs Resource Center- Los Angeles and California**

<http://www.streetgangs.com/>

This site has a lot of links to articles about gangs including Barrio 18 and M-13. It has links to DVDs, photos, laws, rehabilitation groups and much more.

### **Youth Gangs: Going Beyond the Myths to Address a Critical Problem**

[http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/training/gangs/problem\\_pg3.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/training/gangs/problem_pg3.html)

This site provides some handy information about the myths about gangs in the US, why youths join gangs and means to address the gang problem