

# *Pact between Salvadoran government and gangs denounced*

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San Salvador, May 20 (RHC)-- A report collected by local media in El Salvador shows that the current government of President Nayib Bukele had negotiated with the two main gangs in the country -- the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Gang 18 -- to reduce the number of homicides in the country; however, that pact came to an end at the end of March this year after failing to reach agreements between the parties, the truce ended with 87 murders as pressure from the gang members to the government.

According to the investigation, the Mara Salvatrucha-13 (MS-13) admitted to having killed 87 people between March 25 and 27 as part of their response to what they considered a "betrayal" by the Bukele government of the pact they had maintained for at least two and a half years.

The complaint says that the breaking point of the "truce" was the arrest of a group of MS-13 gang members who were traveling in a government vehicle, who had been given a sort of safe-conduct and were also being driven by a driver hired by the government, apparently to "dialogue."

After these arrests and imprisonments, the MS-13 gang gave an ultimatum to Bukele's government to release them, the deadline was 72 hours and the gang members' version, disclosed by the media, was accompanied by evidence, seven recordings in which the director of Tejido Social, Carlos Marroquín, talked to a gang leader about his actions in the government.

In the recordings, Marroquín blamed the captures of gang members on the Minister of Justice and Public Security, Gustavo Villatoro. The audios published and replicated by several media outlets were authenticated by technical expertise. The frequency analysis showed that the tonalities and frequencies of the recordings coincided in what the software showed as a similarity of 85 to 90 percent.

Some opposition deputies of the Legislative Assembly have reacted to the publication, and regretted that the government has negotiated with criminal structures, calling on the country's institutions to fulfill their role.

This is not the first denunciation of Bukele's government's complicity with Salvadoran gangs, which has always been rejected by the president.

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