

SOA: SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

What is the School of the Americas?

Since 1946, the SOA has trained 64,000 Latin American soldiers and police in counterinsurgency techniques, psychological warfare, military intelligence, and interrogation tactics. SOA graduates target educators, union organizers, religious workers, peasant organizers, student leaders, and others who work for the rights of the poor. They have tortured, raped, "disappeared," assassinated, and massacred thousands of Latin Americans.

SOA victims include:

- Cleveland's church women in El Salvador
- Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador
- Indigenous communities in Guatemala
- Peasant communities in Colombia
- Resistance movement leaders in Honduras

The SOA (now called WHINSEC) has been operating on US soil since 1984. It's time to end the violence and close the SOA!

Victories for Close the SOA movement!

Delegations of activists from IRTF's partner SOA Watch have been meeting with heads of state throughout this hemisphere since 1997.

Across the hemisphere:

- February 2004: Venezuela stopped training soldiers at the SOA
- April 2006: Argentina stopped sending soldiers to the SOA
- February 2008: Bolivia followed suit
- June 2012: Ecuador
- September 2012: Nicaragua

In the US:

- September 2012: SOA Watch met with White House staff
- April 2013: federal judge ruled in favor of SOA Watch: the Pentagon must release the names of all SOA/WHINSEC graduates! The Obama Administration is currently appealing this case
- 2014: The bill to close the SOA/WHINSEC gained momentum with more than 50 cosponsors
- 2015: SOA Watch continues to make connections between US-sponsored violence at home and abroad; connecting SOA violence to the root causes of migration, as well as the continued militarization of police in the repression of organized communities in cities across the US and the Americas

EL SALVADOR

During the 1980s, the US government funded the war in El Salvador to the tune of \$1million per day. By the time the war ended in 1992, more than 70,000 civilians had been disappeared, tortured, or assassinated. The United Nations commissioned a report called the "Truth Commission." It found these graduates of the SOA responsible for several of the most horrendous human rights crimes, including:

- 3 of the 5 soldiers who raped and killed four US church women
- 2 of the 3 who assassinated Archbishop Oscar Romero
- 10 of the 12 soldiers who massacred more than 900 people at El Mozote
- 19 of the 26 soldiers who massacred six Jesuit priests and two women at the University of Central America

COLOMBIA

Colombia receives more US taxpayer money for military training than any other country in the Western Hemisphere. It also has the worst human rights record in the hemisphere. SOA-trained soldiers collude and collaborate with illegal paramilitary forces to harass, torture and kill human rights defenders and peasant farmers.

HONDURAS

SOA-trained army officers led a military coup d'état in 2009 that ousted the democratically elected president. Since then, hundreds of pro-democracy movement leaders and activists have been disappeared, tortured and killed.

IRTF (InterReligious Task Force on Central America) calls together people of northeast Ohio to walk in solidarity with oppressed peoples in Central America and Colombia to achieve peace, justice, human rights, and systemic transformation through nonviolence.

www.IRTFcleveland.org