



## **Confronting Criminal Groups in El Salvador While Strengthening Rule of Law**

Wednesday, September 14, 2016  
10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.  
Woodrow Wilson Center  
*5th Floor Conference Room*

### ***Speaker Biographies***

**Douglas Meléndez Ruiz** was appointed Attorney General of El Salvador in January 2016 following a unanimous vote in Congress by all of the nation’s political parties. Prior to his appointment, Meléndez Ruiz worked for the Executive Autonomous Port Commission (CEPA) of El Salvador, first as their Legal Counsel and later as Legal Manager. Meléndez Ruiz was also Chief of the Control Division for the Ministry of Finance (2006–2007). From 1990 to 2006, he served as a prosecutor and as the head of several divisions of the Attorney General’s Office. In 2001, he founded the Anti-Corruption Unit, which he headed until 2002, when he was appointed Chief of the State’s Interests Division. During his years as a prosecutor, Meléndez Ruiz directed investigations and prosecutions for several notable corruption and organized crime cases. He also conducted trainings for new prosecutors and gave lectures and held training seminars on corruption, some of which were sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Meléndez Ruiz was part of the legal team that drafted reforms to the Code of Criminal Procedure, which reduced the power of police in the investigation of crimes and shifted this responsibility to prosecutors. Meléndez Ruiz graduated from the Universidad Las Americas in San Salvador.

**Mauricio Ernesto Ramírez Landaverde** was appointed Minister of Justice and Public Security in January 2016. He is a career police officer and has served as the Director of the National Civilian Police (PNC) from 2014 to 2016 and as the PNC Deputy Director from 2012 to 2014. During the Salvadoran Civil War, he led a cell of the Popular Liberation Forces “Farabundo Martí” (FPL), one of the five original founding organizations of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Subsequently, Ramírez Landaverde was demobilized and joined the newly created PNC through a quota system for former guerrilla and military forces. He graduated from El Salvador’s Police Academy in 2000. Ramírez Landaverde holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Universidad Centroamericana “José Simeón Cañas” and a Masters in Business Management from the Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador.

### *Commentator*

**Leonor Arteaga** is Senior Program Officer for the Impunity and Transitional Justice Program at the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF). She joined the DPLF team in January 2012. She is responsible for monitoring and undertaking legal analyses of high-profile criminal cases regarding grave human rights violations and truth and reparation initiatives across the region on the basis of international standards and best practices. She also oversees project planning and applied research on the fundamental obstacles and challenges to the fight against impunity in Latin America. In this capacity, she assists civil society groups and provides technical support. Arteaga earned her degree in law in El Salvador and has 15 years of experience in the field of human rights, both within civil society and as a civil servant in El Salvador. Before joining DPLF, she worked as the Deputy Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child and Youth at the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDDH). Arteaga also worked at the Association for the Search for Disappeared Children (Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas y Niños Desaparecidos), a Salvadoran organization dedicated to seeking truth and justice for the victims of the internal armed conflict, where she accompanied victims and families at the community level and litigated criminal cases on forced disappearances before domestic courts and the Inter-American Human Rights System. During this time, she was a member of the Working Committee for Historic Memory (Comisión de Trabajo Pro-Memoria Histórica) where she led a variety of initiatives regarding truth, memory, reparation, and justice with Salvadorian groups.

### *Moderator*

**Eric L. Olson** is the Associate Director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. His research and writing has focused on security issues and the impacts of crime, organized crime, and violence on democracies. He has also written about reform of police and judicial institutions as a vehicle for addressing the problem of expanding crime in the Americas. Among his most recent publications are, *“Crime and Violence in Central America’s Northern Triangle: How U.S. Policy is Helping, Hurting, and can be Improved.”* Prior to joining the Wilson Center he was a Senior Specialist in the Department for Promotion of Good Governance at the Organization of American States from 2006–2007. He served as Advocacy Director for the Americas at Amnesty International USA from 2002–2006. Prior to Amnesty, he was the Senior Associate for Mexico, and Economic Policy at the Washington Office on Latin America for eight years. He worked at Augsburg College’s Center for Global Education in Cuernavaca, Mexico from 1989–1993 where he was the program director. From 1986 to 1988, he worked in Honduras as a development specialist for several local non-governmental organizations. He has an M.A. in International Affairs from the School of International Service at American University, Washington, D.C.