



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

El Salvador

El Salvador – SLV39426 – Effectiveness
of the Police – Residency Rights of
Salvadorians
28 October 2011

1. Could you please provide information on the effectiveness of the police in El Salvador (a) generally and (b) in relation to crimes against women?

General Indicators of Police Effectiveness

Sources consulted consistently report that there are limitations on the effectiveness of the Salvadorian police, the National Civilian Police (Policia Nacional Civil de El Salvador, or PNC). As one of the top 10 most violent countries in the world, crime is pervasive in El Salvador. In March 2011, the US Overseas Security Advisory Council highlighted obstacles facing the PNC:

The PNC is still in the development stages of becoming a modern and effective police force that can protect the public. While several of the PNC's investigate units have shown great promise, routine street level patrol techniques, anti-gang, and crime suppression efforts remain somewhat ineffective.¹

According to the US Department of State, during 2010 'inadequate training, insufficient government funding, lack of uniform code of evidence' and 'outright criminality interfered with the PNC's effectiveness'.² The abovementioned US Department of State report indicates that some PNC officers engage in criminal activities, such as unlawful killing:

During the year [2010] the Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights (PDDH) received eight complaints of alleged unlawful killings by the National Civilian Police (PNC)... The PNC Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reported that through December, 20 PNC officers were accused of homicide and that PNC officers had killed 14 persons.³

Similarly, in 2010 Freedom House noted that the PDDH 'continues to report cases of torture and abuse by police officers'.⁴ Several news reports were found which comment on criminal activities undertaken by PNC officers. On 13 October 2011, *In Sight*⁵ reported that the number of PNC officials removed from the police force due to fraud, bribery, sexual assault, association with criminal groups and abuse of authority, is set to exceed the 274 officers

¹ Overseas Security Advisory Council. 2011, *El Salvador Crime and Safety Report*, 3 March, p. 7 <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportPDF.aspx?cid=10561> - Accessed 24 October 2011

² US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 6 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

³ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 1 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

⁴ Freedom House 2010, *El Salvador: Countries at a Crossroad* <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/ccr/country-7817-9.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

⁵ *In Sight* provides research, analysis and investigation of organised crime in Latin America and the Caribbean.

removed in 2010.⁶ On 25 April 2008 the *Inter-Press Service*⁷ reported that ‘over the past 10 years, dozens of police officers have been arrested and convicted of robbery, kidnapping, homicide, and belonging to death squads’.⁸

Sources consulted also report that corruption exists within the PNC. In 2011 the US Department of State reported that during 2010, ‘isolated instances of corruption’ existed within the PNC.⁹ Freedom House corroborated this in 2011, noting that in 2010 law enforcement officials in El Salvador had been criticised for corruption, including reported links to unofficial death squads and vigilantes.¹⁰ News reports indicate that corruption exists at all levels within the PNC, from senior officials to low-ranking officers:

- On 27 November 2009 *La Pagina*¹¹ reported that the former director of the PNC, Ricardo Menesses, resigned over allegations of embezzlement, bribery and involvement with two criminal gangs.¹²
- On 24 August 2008 *ABC News* reported that the Police Chief of El Salvador resigned after local media accused two of his close advisors of corruption and having links to drug traffickers.¹³
- On 25 April 2008 *Inter-Press Service* reported that some police officers collude with the Salvadorian mafia, including Sergeant Nelson Arriaza, who was sentenced to thirty years in prison in January 2008 for heading a band of ‘hired killers’.¹⁴

Reports indicate that the El Salvadorian Government is introducing measures to improve the general effectiveness of the PNC.¹⁵ In 2008, *Decree No. 518 Police Disciplinary Law* was introduced to reduce corruption and misconduct in the PNC. This legislation stipulates what

⁶ Cullinan, J. 2011, ‘On Average, 1 Salvadorian Police Officer Arrested Each Day’, *In Sight*, 13 October <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/el-salvador-criminal-groups/perrones-el-salvador/item/1698-on-average-1-salvadoran-police-officer-arrested-each-day> - Accessed 24 October 2011

⁷ The *Inter-Press Service* is a global news agency. It aims to provide independent news and analysis.

⁸ Gutierrez, R. 2008, ‘Gangs are ‘Perfect Scapegoats’ Say Experts’, *IPS*, 25 April <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42129> – Accessed 24 October 2011

⁹ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 6 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

¹⁰ Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World: El Salvador* <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=8032&year=2011> – Accessed 24 October 2011

¹¹ *La Pagina* is a Salvadorian news service which provides information and views on politics, sport and society in El Salvador.

¹² Mariner, J. 2009, ‘Ex Director de la PNC Ricardo Menesses Renuncia Obligado por Cancilleria’ (‘Former Director of the PNC Ricardo Menesses Resignation Forced By Chancery’), *La Pagina*, 27 November <http://www.lapagina.com.sv/nacionales/22589/2009/11/27/Ex-director-de-la-PNC-Ricardo-Menesses-renuncia-obligado-por-Cancilleria> - <http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eotf=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lapagina.com.sv%2Fnacionales%2F22589%2F2009%2F11%2F27%2FEx-director-de-la-PNC-Ricardo-Menesses-renuncia-obligado-por-Cancilleria> – Accessed 24 October 2011.

Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

¹³ ‘El Salvador’s Police Chief Resigns Over Corruption Claims’ 2008, *ABC News*, 24 August <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2008-08-24/el-salvadors-police-chief-resigns-over-corruption/486578> - Accessed 24 September 2011

¹⁴ Gutierrez, R. 2008, ‘Gangs are ‘Perfect Scapegoats’ Say Experts’, *IPS*, 25 April <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42129> – Accessed 24 October 2011

¹⁵ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *Police Corruption and Government Measures to Fight Corruption [SLV103498.FE]*, 14 June, European Country of Origin Information Network http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/142234/242848_en.html - Accessed 24 October 2011

constitutes criminal police misconduct and sets out subsequent sanctions including suspension without pay, demotion and dismissal.¹⁶ It is unclear whether this legislation has reduced corruption and misconduct levels within the PNC, however action is being taken against PNC officers who engage in such behaviour. For example, the abovementioned *In Sight* article from 13 October 2011 indicates that the number of PNC officers removed from the police force due to misconduct has increased between 2010 and 2011.¹⁷ Further, the US Department of State noted that during 2010, 1,127 police officers were sanctioned in response to complaints filed in 2010 and prior years.¹⁸ It notes that during 2010, PNC officers received human rights awareness training. According to the US Department of State, 1,302 PNC officers received such training in 2010.¹⁹

Police Effectiveness in Relation to Crimes against Women

The effectiveness of the PNC in relation to crimes against women is limited. Violence against women in El Salvador is pervasive and is increasing. According to the Institute of Forensic Medicine, the number of violent crimes against women has increased from 260 in 2004 to 579 in 2009.²⁰ On 21 March 2011, the UN Development Programme identified El Salvador as having the highest rate of murdered women in the world.²¹ In 2011, Radhida Manjoo, the Special Rapporteur of the UNHCR on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences for El Salvador, reported that the inability of the PNC to adequately address crimes against women has led to an ‘environment of impunity’ where confidence in the justice system is low.²² Manjoo notes that:

The pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes in the law enforcement and justice system, coupled with a lack of resources and insufficient knowledge on existing applicable legislation, has led to inadequate responses to cases of violence against women and the persisting social acceptance of such acts.²³

¹⁶ *Decree No. 518 Police Disciplinary Law 2008*, Global Legal Information Network

<http://www.glin.gov/view.action?glinID=203491> - Accessed 24 October 2011; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *Police Corruption and Government Measures to Fight Corruption [SLV103498.FE]*, 14 June, European Country of Origin Information Network http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/142234/242848_en.html - Accessed 24 October 2011

¹⁷ Cullinan, J. 2011, ‘On Average, 1 Salvadorian Police Officer Arrested Each Day’, *In Sight*, 13 October <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/el-salvador-criminal-groups/perrones-el-salvador/item/1698-on-average-1-salvadoran-police-officer-arrested-each-day> - Accessed 24 October 2011

¹⁸ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 6 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

¹⁹ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 7 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

²⁰ Manjoo, R. 2011, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador’, 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 8 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

²¹ UN News Centre 2010, ‘El Salvador: UN Rights Expert Hits Out Against Rise in Killings of Women and Girls’, 24 March <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34177&Cr=&Cr1=> - Accessed 25 October 2011; Stone, H. 2011, ‘El Salvador Sees Epidemic of Violence Against Women’, *Insight*, 23 May <http://insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/960-el-salvador-sees-epidemic-of-violence-against-women> - Accessed 25 October 2011

²² Manjoo, R. 2011, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador’, 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 1 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

²³ Manjoo, R. 2011, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador’, 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 16 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

In regards to domestic violence, Manjoo found that:

The testimonies of victims of domestic violence who attempted to find access to the legal system show that, unless violence results in serious physical injuries, the police, prosecutors and justices of the peace tend to minimize offences in the belief that domestic violence is a private matter. As such, they discourage victims from pursuing cases and promote conciliation, thus returning victims to situations of abuse.²⁴

Similarly, in 2011 the US Department of State reported that during 2010 ‘laws against domestic violence were not well enforced, and cases were not effectively prosecuted’.²⁵

The abovementioned report by Manjoo notes that the ability of the PNC to effectively protect women against crimes is also undermined by poor investigation standards, and in some cases, an unwillingness to adequately investigate crimes committed against women.²⁶ The report notes that:

The Office of the Procurator for Human Rights noted that the majority of the 2,660 cases of murder of women recorded from 2001 to May 2009 remain under investigation and unpunished. Relatives of victims of brutal murders referred to instances where their requests for investigation were treated with disregard and indifference by police and prosecution and judicial authorities.²⁷

Reports also indicate that there have been incidents of members of the PNC committing violent crimes against women.²⁸ According to the US Department of State, during 2010 the PDDH reported allegations that women were raped by male guards in pre-trial detention centres and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reported three complaints of rape by PNC officers. The US Department of State report notes that all three PNC officers were sanctioned.²⁹ Further information on the type of sanctions imposed could not be found.³⁰

The Salvadorian Government, however, is taking steps to improve the ability of the PNC to effectively address crimes against women. The abovementioned report by Manjoo notes that the PNC has introduced a program to train officers on gender equality and women’s human

²⁴ Manjoo. R. 2011, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador’, 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 16

http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

²⁵ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 18

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

²⁶ Manjoo. R. 2011, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador’, 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 16

http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

²⁷ Manjoo. R. 2011, ‘Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador’, 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 16

http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

²⁸ UNHCR 2010, ‘Violence Against Women and Girls: Significant Challenges in El Salvador’, 22 March

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=9937&LangID=E> - Accessed 25 October 2011

²⁹ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 4

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

³⁰ Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal tribunal databases, the CISNET database, Factiva database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

rights.³¹ During 2010, the PNC also collaborated with NGOs and other organisations to address violence against women through education, increased enforcement of the law and NGO support programs for victims.³² An article by the UN Office at Geneva from 12 October 2010, states that the Salvadorian Government is developing an education campaign for women and children to improve their access to the justice system, particularly for victims of domestic violence.³³ It is also noted that in October 2010, El Salvador passed the *First Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence Against Women 2011*. This legislation aims to uphold the rights of women by punishing all forms of violence against women. Under the new legislation, penalties for existing crimes will be strengthened and new crimes will be defined. The law is expected to come into force in 2012.³⁴

2. Can you please provide information about the rights of residence of Salvadorian citizens in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, in particular whether there are any restrictions or applications required?

No information was found about the permanent residency rights of Salvadorian citizens, specifically, in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. It is noted that in June 2006, El Salvador entered into the Central America 4 Border Control Agreement (CA4) with *Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala*. This agreement allows citizens of the four countries to travel freely across the land borders amongst these countries without completing entry or exit formalities in immigration checkpoints.³⁵ It is unclear, however, whether the CA4 agreement allows Salvadorian citizens to reside permanently in Guatemala, Honduras or Nicaragua or if it only relates to temporary travel. The only reports found which discuss the CA4 agreement, do so in terms of its implications for American and UK citizens. For example, the US Embassy in Nicaragua notes that under the CA4 agreement:

Visitors will only be allowed to remain 90 days total in these countries and will need to request a extension of stay at any of the Immigration Office in the 4 countries if they plan to stay over 90 days.³⁶

³¹ Manjoo. R. 2011, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences: Addendum – Follow up Mission to El Salvador', 14 February, United Nations General Assembly – Human Rights Seventeenth Session, European Country of Origin Information Network website p. 15

http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1316709773_g1111237.pdf - Accessed 24 October 2011

³² US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 18

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

³³ UN Office in Geneva 2010, *Human Rights Committee Considers Report of El Salvador*, 12 October

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/629A191A9B7BF59BC12577BA004226FA?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/629A191A9B7BF59BC12577BA004226FA?OpenDocument) - Accessed 25 October 2011

³⁴ The UN Secretary-General's Database of Violence Against Women (undated), *Law for Life Free of Violence Against Women (2011)*

<http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/searchDetail.action?measureId=49703&baseHREF=country&baseHREFId=472> – Accessed 25 October 2011; US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 March, p. 18 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160164.pdf> - Accessed 24 October 2011

³⁵ US Embassy in Nicaragua (undated), *Immigration Laws* http://nicaragua.usembassy.gov/immigration_laws.html - Accessed 26 October 2011; US Passport Service Guide (undated), *Foreign Entry Requirements: Haiti to Jordan* <http://www.us-passport-service-guide.com/foreign-entry-requirement-HIJ.html> - Accessed 26 October 2011

³⁶ US Embassy in Nicaragua (undated), *Immigration Laws* http://nicaragua.usembassy.gov/immigration_laws.html - Accessed 26 October 2011. Also see: Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011, *North and Central America and Caribbean*, 20 October <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/north-central-america/guatemala> - Accessed 26 October 2011; US Passport Service Guide (undated), *Foreign Entry Requirements: Haiti to Jordan* <http://www.us-passport-service-guide.com/foreign-entry-requirement-HIJ.html> - Accessed 26 October 2011

It is unclear, however, whether this 90 day restriction also applies to citizens of the four countries who are party to the CA4 agreement (including El Salvador). No sources were found which offer further clarification.³⁷

No information was found about whether Salvadorian citizens are subject to special restrictions, application processes or exemptions when applying for permanent residency in *Costa Rica and Panama*.³⁸ An overview of the processes required to apply for permanent residency in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama is provided below.

Guatemala

Those wishing to live permanently in Guatemala must apply for a permanent resident visa. The only source found which discusses permanent resident visas in Guatemala is the General Directorate of Immigration³⁹ website. Based on an informal translation (using the Google Translation service) of the Spanish-language information contained on this website, the following categories are eligible for permanent residency:

- a) Pensioners or annuitants
- b) Investors
- c) Spouse (with at least one year of marriage) and children under age or unmarried
- d) The spouse, minor children, parents of foreign nationals, when those not appropriate Guatemalan nationality in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala [sic]
- e) Temporary residents
- f) Religious Temporary Residents
- g) Qualifiers demonstrating outstanding performances in the fields of science, technology, arts and sport⁴⁰

Documents which must be attached to the application form include a copy of the applicant's passport and evidence of lack of criminal record in the last five years.⁴¹

³⁷ Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal tribunal databases, the CISNET database, Factiva database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

³⁸ Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal tribunal databases, the CISNET database, Factiva database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

³⁹ The General Directorate of Immigration is the Government body responsible for providing managing, and providing information on, migration in Guatemala

⁴⁰ General Directorate of Immigration (undated), *Residentes Permanentes (Permanent Residents)* http://www.migracion.gob.gt/es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=81&Itemid=120 - http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=en&ie=UTF8&prev=t&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=es&tl=en&u=http://www.migracion.gob.gt/es/index.php%3Foption%3Dcom_content%26task%3Dview%26id%3D81%26Itemid%3D126&usg=ALkJrhKjHeqIymwsPAzmK9tsNGXLIM2Q - Accessed 26 October 2011. Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

⁴¹ General Directorate of Immigration (undated), *Residentes Permanentes (Permanent Residents)* http://www.migracion.gob.gt/es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=81&Itemid=120 -

Honduras

Persons wishing to live permanently in Honduras must apply for permanent residency. According to the Embassy of the United States in Honduras, the following categories can apply for permanent residency:

- a) Renters
- b) Pensioners
- c) Investors
- d) Spouses, underage children or overage dependents, and parents of the above categories.
- e) Family ties (parents, grandparents, siblings of Honduran citizens)
- f) Marriage
- g) Change of Immigration Status
- h) Special cases (refugees, asylum cases, stateless)⁴²

Applicants for permanent residency must be filed by a local attorney with the Ministry of Government and Justice.⁴³ Valid identification and photographs must be provided when applying for permanent residency.⁴⁴ Once an applicant for permanent residency has been approved, a residency licence is issued. This must be renewed annually.⁴⁵

Nicaragua

Persons wishing to permanently live in Nicaragua must apply for a residency permit.⁴⁶ The Embassy of the US in Nicaragua indicates that there are subcategories of permanent residency

http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=en&ie=UTF8&prev=t&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=es&tl=en&u=http://www.migracion.gob.gt/es/index.php%3Fopcion%3Dcom_content%26task%3Dview%26id%3D81%26Itemid%3D126&usg=ALkJrhKnjHeqIymwsPAzmK9tsNGXLM2Q - Accessed 26 October 2011. Please note:

Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

⁴² Embassy of the United States in Honduras (undated), *Citizen Services*

http://honduras.usembassy.gov/acs_hondresid.html - Accessed 25 October 2011

⁴³ Embassy of the United States in Honduras (undated), *Citizen Services*

http://honduras.usembassy.gov/acs_hondresid.html - Accessed 25 October 2011

⁴⁴ Secretary of the Interior and Justice (undated), *Requisitos Para Obtener Su Residencia Como: Inmigrado Art. 40 Del Reglamento De La Ley De Migracion Y Extranjeria (Requirements for Residence As: Immigrants (Art. 40 of Regulation of the Migration and Immigration)*, Embassy of the United States in Honduras website –

http://honduras.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/acs_documents.pdf -

[http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-](http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eof=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fhonduras.usembassy.gov%2Froot%2Fpdfs%2Facs_documents.pdf)

[8&layout=2&eof=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fhonduras.usembassy.gov%2Froot%2Fpdfs%2Facs_documents.pdf](http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eof=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fhonduras.usembassy.gov%2Froot%2Fpdfs%2Facs_documents.pdf)

Accessed 25 October 2011. Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

⁴⁵ Embassy of the United States in Honduras (undated), *Citizen Services*

http://honduras.usembassy.gov/acs_hondresid.html - Accessed 25 October 2011

⁴⁶ Embassy of the United States in Nicaragua (undated), *Immigration Laws*

http://nicaragua.usembassy.gov/immigration_laws.html - Accessed 26 October 2011

with varying requirements.⁴⁷ No sources were found, however, which clarify what these subcategories are.⁴⁸ The process of applying for permanent residency includes completing an application form and being interviewed by Nicaraguan Immigration. Various documents are required including a birth certificate, criminal record and health record. If approved, a ‘guarantee deposit’, equivalent to the value of an airline ticket to the applicant’s country of origin or of previous residence, must be paid.⁴⁹

Costa Rica

Persons wishing to reside permanently in Costa Rica must apply for a permanent resident visa.⁵⁰ According to the Embassy of Costa Rica in Canada, permanent residency may be granted to the following categories of persons:

- a) Foreigners related, in first degree, (such as spouses, parents, children and siblings) to a Costa Rican citizen. Foreigners marrying Costa Rican citizens will have to prove veracity of marriage for three years before acquiring a Costa Rican Permanent Legal Status. During these three years a temporary legal permanence will be given, once the application has been approved.
- b) Permanent Residency as an Annuitant Pensioner (“Pensionado”). The applicant must prove an Income of US\$1.000 per month generated by a pension plan abroad.
- c) Permanent Residency as an Annuitant Resident (“Rentista”). The applicant must prove an Income of US\$2.500 per month.
- d) Permanent Residency as an Investor (“Inversionista”). The applicant’s investment in Costa Rica must be no less than US\$200.000, unless it is in an industry considered highly desirable by the Costa Rican Government, in which case the investment amount may be reduced to US\$50.000.
- e) Permanent Residency as an Immigrant maybe possible for those foreigners wishing to reside permanently in Costa Rica but who do not qualify under any other specific Immigration categories described above.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Embassy of the United States in Nicaragua (undated), *Immigration Laws* http://nicaragua.usembassy.gov/immigration_laws.html - Accessed 26 October 2011.

⁴⁸ Nature of the research conducted included a foreign language search of internet sources. Internal tribunal databases, the CISNET database, Factiva database and publically available documents on the internet (including the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, European Country of Origin Information Network and Refworld) were also searched.

⁴⁹ Embassy of the United States in Nicaragua (undated), *Immigration Laws* http://nicaragua.usembassy.gov/immigration_laws.html - Accessed 26 October 2011; Wood, R. & Berman, J. 2006, ‘Living Abroad in Nicaragua’, Transitions Abroad Website http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/living/livingabroadin/living_abroad_immigration_and_visas_in_nicaragua.shtml - Accessed 26 October 2011

⁵⁰ Embassy of Costa Rica in Canada (undated), *Immigration Process* <http://www.costaricaembassy.com/services/immigration.htm> - Accessed 25 October 2011; Costa Rican Department of Immigration (undated), *Residencias (Residences)* <http://www.migracion.go.cr/extranjeros/residencias.html> - <http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=es&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.migracion.go.cr%2F> - Accessed 25 October 2011. Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

⁵¹ Embassy of Costa Rica in Canada (undated), *Immigration Process* <http://www.costaricaembassy.com/services/immigration.htm> - Accessed 25 October 2011

Applications for permanent residency must be lodged with the General Directorate of Immigration and Alien Status.⁵² Various documents are required to apply for permanent residency, including birth and marriage certificates.⁵³

Panama

An informal translation (using the Google Translation service) of the National Immigration Service (the Servicio Nacional de Migracion or SNM) of Panama website indicates that there are 19 types of permanent resident visas in Panama. The only country identified as being given preferential treatment is Italy.⁵⁴ The SNM website lists these 19 categories of permanent resident visas as:

1. Panama Convention Italy
2. Permanent Resident Permit Under Economic Solvency for Opening Time Deposit
3. Permanent Resident Permit a Forest Investor
4. Permanent Resident Permit as a Retired Annuitant
5. Permanent Resident Permit Self Economic Solvency
6. Permanent Resident Permit for Financial Reasons
7. Permanent Resident Permit for Economic Solvency Real Estate Investment
8. Permanent Resident Permit for Investment Economic Solvency Mixed (Fixed Term Deposit and Real Estate)
9. Permit Application for Permanent Resident Dependents
10. Application for permanent residence permit for refugees
11. Permit Application for Permanent Resident Married to Panamanian As
12. Application for Permanent Residence Permit and Investor Call Center Commercial Use (Call Center) For Export

⁵² Costa Rican Department of Immigration (undated), *Residencias (Residences)*

<http://www.migracion.go.cr/extranjeros/residencias.html> -

<http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=es&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.migracion.go.cr%2F> -

Accessed 25 October 2011. Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

⁵³ Embassy of Costa Rica in Canada (undated), *Immigration Process*

<http://www.costaricaembassy.com/services/immigration.htm> - Accessed 25 October 2011

⁵⁴ Under the ‘Panama Convention Italy’ category of permanent visas, permission is granted to aliens of Italian nationality who wish to take up residence indefinitely. National Migration Service (undated), *Servicio Nacional de Migracion (National Migration Service)* http://www.panamatramita.gob.pa/guiaGob_det.php?idInst=SNM -

[http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-](http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eotf=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.panamatramita.gob.pa%2FguiaGob_det.php%3FidInst%3DSNM)

[8&layout=2&eotf=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.panamatramita.gob.pa%2FguiaGob_det.php%3FidInst%3DSNM](http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eotf=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.panamatramita.gob.pa%2FguiaGob_det.php%3FidInst%3DSNM) - Accessed 25 October 2011 Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

13. Application for Permanent Residence Permit as Investor of the Film and Audiovisual Industry
14. Application for Permanent Residence Permit as Macro-Company Investor
15. Application for Permanent Residence Permit as Investor Special Economic Area Panama-Pacific
16. Application for Permanent Residence Permit as an investor in the Export Processing Zones
17. Application for Permanent Residence Permit and Pensioners
18. Application for Permanent Residence Permit and Permanent Staff Hired by the Panama Canal Authority
19. Application for Permanent Residence Permit and Permanent Staff Employed by the Developer, the Operator or the Area Agency within the Panama-Pacific (10%) of ordinary workers⁵⁵

The application process, including restrictions, forms and required documents varies between each of the 19 different types of permanent visas. An explanation of the requirements for each of the 19 permanent residence visas is provided on the [SNM website](#).⁵⁶ The *Gray and Co. Lawyers*⁵⁷ website provides general information on the type of documents required when applying for a permanent resident visa. These include a certified birth certificate, marriage certificate and police records.⁵⁸

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⁵⁵ National Migration Service (undated), *Servicio Nacional de Migracion (National Migration Service)* http://www.panamatramita.gob.pa/guiaGob_det.php?idInst=SNM - http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eotf=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.panamatramita.gob.pa%2FguiaGob_det.php%3FidInst%3DSNM - Accessed 25 October 2011 Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained. Also see: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *Panama: The Requirements and Procedures to Reacquire Permanent Resident Status by Immigrants from Countries Requiring Authorised Travel Visas, Such as the People’s Republic of China*, 21 October, Refworld website <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic.463af2212.469f2de62.4e4385d32.0.html> - Accessed 25 October 2011

⁵⁶ National Migration Service (undated), *Servicio Nacional de Migracion (National Migration Service)* http://www.panamatramita.gob.pa/guiaGob_det.php?idInst=SNM - http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=es&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&layout=2&eotf=1&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.panamatramita.gob.pa%2FguiaGob_det.php%3FidInst%3DSNM - Accessed 25 October 2011 Please note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a professional translation should be obtained.

⁵⁷ *Gray and Co. Lawyers* is a legal firm which provides legal advice on Panama’s immigration procedures and requirements.

⁵⁸ Gray and Co. Lawyers (undated), *Relocation to Panama* <http://www.lawyers-abogados.net/en/Services/Immigration/relocation-panama.htm> - Accessed 25 October 2011

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