

By Ariel Gold and Rev. Graylan Scott Hagler

From [Fellowship Magazine](#) | Original Article

**To honor those who have died and suffered from the fires Biden nominee Elliott Abrams lit and fanned abroad, we must stop his appointment.**

It was a bright sunny March morning in 1980. Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero was saying mass at a church hospital in San Salvador when a bullet from a sniper rifle ripped through his heart. He stumbled and fell to the ground, dead.

Romero started life and ministry as a conservative. But, after his friend Rev. Rutilio Grande was assassinated to discourage other faith leaders from supporting Salvadorian peasants, Romero underwent a political and theological conversion. Picking up where Grande left off, Romero embraced a “theology of liberation,” a perspective that espouses G-d’s preference for the poor and oppressed. His visibility as archbishop elevated his voice and the credibility of his critique of the conditions faced by peasants in El Salvador.

A month before his assassination, Romero wrote President Jimmy Carter requesting a halt to U.S. military assistance to the Salvadoran government.

Over 250,000 people attended Romero’s funeral demonstrating the love of the Salvadoran people and echoing his demands for justice. Tragically, however, they were swimming against a historical current of meddling and manipulation which included murder, often orchestrated or at the very least condoned from the U.S.

Intentionally ignoring two U.S. embassy cables naming the general who ordered his personal bodyguard to carry out the assassination of Romero, in 1982, Elliot Abrams, the newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, said, “anybody who thinks you’re going to find a cable that says that Roberto d’Aubuisson murdered

the archbishop is a fool.” Thanks to Abrams and his ilk’s support, U.S. military assistance to the Salvadoran regime was dramatically increased that year. The following year, the U.S. gifted the Salvadoran military and government with U.S. advisors.

Last week, President Biden nominated Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell’s pick to join the State Department Bipartisan Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Elliot Abrams. If you’re not already outraged and infuriated, keep reading.

Under Abrams’ watch, over the 12 years of the Reagan/Bush Sr. administrations, 75,000 Salvadorians were killed. In the village of El Mozote, the army’s Atlacatl Battalion herded women and children into a church convent and opened fire with U.S.-supplied M-16 automatic rifles before burning the building down. [One hundred and forty children](#) , average age six, were killed. In 1994, with blood still dripping from his hands, Abrams referred to the U.S.’s record on El Salvador as a “fabulous achievement.”

In addition to supporting the Salvadorian junta, Abrams was a defender of the Guatemalan Montt regime which oversaw the [mass murder, rape and torture](#) of scores of Indigenous Ixil Mayan people in the 1980s. The Montt regime was so brutal that it was later classified by the United Nations as genocidal. From his conviction for lying to Congress during the Iran-Contra affair, to his roles supporting the Iraq war, scuttling the Iran nuclear deal, and attempting to orchestrate a coup in Venezuela as recently as 2019, one thing is clear: Abrams doesn’t have a diplomatic bone in his body.

Abrams epitomizes an extreme form of American biblical nationalism, dressed in the distortions of Christianity and Judaism that ironically echo the papal bulls of 1452. These papal decrees, known as the “Doctrine of Discovery,” codify the rights of white nations to acquire and dominate any lands they “discovered.” Similarly, Abrams speaks the language of the Global North proclaiming that their hegemony is the natural order of the world, as G-d wills it to be.

The Doctrine of Discovery inspired the Monroe Doctrine, which declared the “right” to exploit and plunder Latin America to be exclusive to the U.S. “We should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and

safety,” President James Monroe said. This served as a philosophical justification for the ideological boots Abram’s wore to stomp all over Latin America, the Middle East and other places. Abrams has left bloody footprints across the globe.

Steps have been taken over the past couple of decades to repair the damage done by Abrams and Co. in Latin America and other parts of the world. In December 2011, the El Salvadoran government [apologized](#) for the El Mozote [massacre](#) . In 2018, Oscar Romero was [elevated to the status of saint](#)

. Pope Francis said Romero “left the security of the world, even his own safety, in order to give his life according to the gospel.” And just a few months ago, on March 30, the Vatican, formally repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” and called it antithetical to the Catholic faith.

Justice is long overdue for Romero, the other Salvadorian faith leaders who were murdered in the 1980s, the children murdered in El Mozote, and the Ixil Mayan women raped by death squads in Guatemala. To honor those who died and continue to suffer from the fires Elliott Abrams lit and fanned in their countries, we must reclaim the name of G-d from the political and religious ideologies that twist it for hatred and violence. The first step we must take is to ensure that Abrams does not receive another appointment to another U.S. administration. The blood of his victims call out from the ground, and hearing their cries we are called to act and respond.