



SOA Watch

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[Your town] Residents to Join Thousands in Georgia Calling for Closure of Controversial Training Facility for Latin Americans

Graduates and Instructors of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) have been linked to Human Rights Abuses and Criminal Activity in the Hemisphere

[Your Town] – This weekend residents of the [your town] community will join thousands from across the nation at Fort Benning, Georgia to demand a dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy and the closure of the controversial U.S. Army's School of the Americas (SOA).

"Despite a shocking human rights record, this school continues to operate with US taxpayer money," said [local person going to Georgia]. "Closing the SOA would send a strong human rights message to Latin America and the world."

The SOA, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, made headlines in 1996 when the Pentagon released training manuals used at the school that advocated torture, extortion and execution. Despite this admission and hundreds of documented human rights abuses connected to soldiers trained at the school, no independent investigation into the facility has ever taken place.

Support for the School of the Americas, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, continues to erode. In 2007, Bolivian President Evo Morales announced that his government would cease to send troops to be trained at the School. The Latin American nation is the fifth country after Costa Rica, Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela to announce withdrawals from the school, citing its history of human rights abuses.

[Person's name] and [number of others traveling] others will leave for Georgia on [date of departure]. [Sentence about your local group]. Last November, 25,000 people gathered at the gates of Ft. Benning to call for the closure of the school, the largest demonstration yet in an 18-year history of opposition to the school.

["Insert quote here connecting struggle to close the SOA with a local struggle in your community," person going to Georgia.] OR [One or two closing sentences about your group: how many years you've traveled, how big you are, who's in it, etc].

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