



PEACEMAKER

Oscar Arias Sanchez

Óscar Arias Sánchez was President of Costa Rica from 1986 to 1990 and from 2006 to 2010. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 for his efforts to end the Central American crisis. He was also a recipient of the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism and a trustee of Economists for Peace and Security.

He was born in Costa Rica in 1941. When he was a child, Costa Rica became the first country to disband its standing army, allowing it to invest in education, healthcare and the environment. He was elected President in 1986 amid a civil war in neighbouring Nicaragua. As President, he took measures to deal with Costa Rica's heavy foreign debt and other economic problems, but his main interest was in trying to restore peace and political stability to the war-torn countries of Central America. In February 1987, he proposed a regional peace plan, the Arias Plan, that set a date for cease-fires between government and rebel forces, ensured amnesty for political prisoners, and called for free and democratic elections in those countries.

Although he and the leaders of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed this plan, it was never fully implemented, partly because of opposition from the United States. However, it laid the foundation for the peace process in Central America.

'Peace is a never ending process... It cannot ignore our differences or overlook our common interests. It requires us to work and live together.'

