

Guatemala Human Rights *UPDATE*

Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA

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RIGHT TO LIFE AND HUMANE TREATMENT

PNC Reports 2006 Homicide Statistics

01.06.07 The Criminal Investigation Division (DINC) of the National Civil Police (PNC) reported that in 2006, 5,530 men and 569 women were murdered. The number of men killed in 2006 increased by twelve percent over the 4,887 recorded for 2005. The PNC number of women killed decreased from 586 in 2005 to 569 in 2006. Gad Echeverria, spokesman for the Mutual Support Group (GAM), reported that the PNC data matched GAM's findings. Other sources sight the PNC number of women killed during 2006 at 589.

Minister of the Interior Carlos Vielmann, in response to the release of the PNC statistics, stated that overall acts of crime had decreased in comparison to prior years. He also commented that, despite an increase in homicides, at least one thousand of those murders could be contributed to gangs, organized crime, drug cartels, and other criminal groups. In order to counteract the problem, Minister Vielmann said that the Anti-Homicide Unit of the DINC had to be strengthened.

PNC Reports 2006 Crime Statistics

01.10.07 Director of the National Civil Police (PNC), Erwin Sperisen, released the 2006 crime and homicide statistics for 2006, citing a decrease in overall crime but an increase in homicides. The PNC recorded a drop in the crime rate by 7.4% in 2006 from 2005. In 2006, 30,857 cases of crime were reported, down from 33,328 cases recorded in 2005. However, according to the PNC, homicides increased in 2006 by 9.3%. In 2006, 5,885 homicides were logged, up from the 5,336 cases documented in 2005. Despite the increase in homicides, the authorities

decided to dismantle the Crime Scene Protection Unit. The task of the Unit was to arrive immediately after a murder and preserve the evidence.

Out of the 1.28 million vehicles registered in Guatemala, 5,766 vehicles were stolen in 2006, of which 1,338 were recovered. That rate of auto theft is down from 2005 when 7,264 vehicles were stolen, of which 1,197 were returned.

The PNC reported detaining fewer individuals in 2006, but noted that a majority of the arrests were linked to court cases, whereas in 2005, the PNC arrested 49,957 individuals, and only a small percentage of those were linked to a court proceeding. The number of bank robberies remained at about the same rate from 2005 to 2006. In 2006, similar to data from 2005, 3,814 illegal firearms were seized, most of them hand guns.

The PNC director stated that the rate of crime dropped because police officers are becoming more professional and advanced, the police officers are receiving better instruction, the number of police units has increased, and the mobilization of police officers in Guatemala City and the rest of the country has become easier.

Ecumenical Forum Expresses Concern Over Violence

01.10.07 During a press conference, the Ecumenical Forum of Guatemala expressed its concern regarding the increase of violence in Guatemala. The religious leaders called on the government to protect citizens from further bloodshed. They stated that among the victims, boys, girls, men, and women have been affected, including entire families that have been massacred. The Forum highlighted the murder of thirteen women in the first ten days of 2007, with more than forty corpses taken to the Judiciary Morgue during that time period.

Armando Guerra, representative of the Forum, declared that every Christian should condemn the rise

of organized crime, observing that organized crime uses violence and penetration into State institutions as an attempt to gain more wealth and power regardless of the costs. He added that the expansion of gang activity is disturbing as well, not only because of the physical, moral and economic damage it inflicts, but also because of the government's inability to halt it and to keep thousands of youth from participating in it.

Two Environmentalists Attacked and Threatened

Environmental activists Carlos Albacete Rosales and Piedad Espinosa Albacete, a married couple, were the subjects of an alleged attempt on their lives as they returned home from the Guatemala City Airport in a taxi at 12:20am. As they approached their neighborhood, they said a car pulled out behind them and followed them until overtaking their taxi and making a 180-degree turn a few meters further on, partially blocking the road.

According to Amnesty International, at least three men then got out of the car and drew handguns. They were wearing black woolen hats and dark-colored bulletproof vests, dressed in black clothing similar to that used by the police but without the identifying insignia. They began to shoot, forcing the taxi driver to accelerate in order to escape. They continued shooting from behind once the taxi cleared them, but did not pursue it any further.

Carlos Albacete was slightly injured during the attack. Bullets were also left lodged in the taxi's bodywork, and a six bullet holes were counted. Amnesty International reported that when police arrived to investigate the incident, they allegedly failed to place the recovered bullets in evidence bags, putting them directly in their pockets instead.

On January 12, Carlos and Piedad Albacete stated they received an anonymous phone call at their home and were later followed by a black car with tinted windows while driving to a relative's house.

Both Carlos and Piedad Albacete work for the Guatemalan environmental organization *Tropico Verde* (Green Tropic), which strives to protect the Mayan Biosphere Reserve, a nature reserve in the northern department of Petén. During the last four years *Tropico Verde* has been active in denouncing the usurpation of land by cattle ranchers and alleged drug traffickers inside the Reserve. According to Amnesty International, Carlos and Piedad Albacete, their colleagues, and *Tropico Verde* have received past threats, acts of intimidation, and attacks.

LAND RIGHTS

Mining Company Evicts Families in Izabal

01.09.07 The National Indigenous and Campesino Coordinating Committee (CONIC) reported that on January 8, 430 police officers and roughly 200 military personnel arrived in the communities of La Unión and La Pista, located in the municipality of El Estor in the eastern department of Izabal, to carry out an eviction order of 308 Maya Q'eq'ché families. On January 9, 175 more Maya Q'eq'ché families were evicted from the nearby communities of La Revolución and La Paz.

The Guatemala Nickel Company (CGN), a subsidiary of the Canadian Skye Resources Nickel Mining Company, pressed for the evictions. According to CGN officials, the families have trespassed and overtaken the company's land. Representatives from Rights Action, a human rights organization present during the eviction, reported that in September of 2006, hundreds of families previously living in the overcrowded town of Chichipate, located just west of El Estor, decided to reclaim their ancestral lands and make use of the deserted soil. Families stated that all they desired was enough land to support their families through subsistence agriculture. Several families assert they contain titles to the disputed parcels of land.

The evictions of La Unión and La Pista were purportedly carried out in a mostly confined manner. However, according to CONIC, the major calamity came the following day, during the eviction of the 175 families of La Revolución. Helicopters allegedly hovered at low altitudes so as to intimidate the community members. Police trucks purportedly lined the roads dawning four or more fully armed, black-clad police officers. Rights Action reported that CGN security guards traveled in a white pickup, wearing company t-shirts, while other security guards were positioned on the cliffs along roadsides.

CONIC officials stated that instead of sending the Public Prosecutor to read the eviction order, squads of riot police entered La Revolución, moved up the river that runs through the center of the community, and encircled the area. Surrounded by police, roughly fifty individuals waited for the Public Prosecutor to arrive and decree the eviction. According to CONIC, when the Prosecutor did arrive, an alleged two-dozen CGN contracted employees began to set houses on fire across the river. The

Public Prosecutor tried to call the employees to make them stop, but said that his cell phone had no signal. Eighteen homes were burned to the ground. Once the Public Prosecutor stopped the employees from burning houses, he ordered that the remaining homes in La Revolución and the nearby community of La Paz be dismantled.

Similar evictions have taken place before. In November 2006, the National Civil Police (PNC) arrived in Chupón and La Revolución - without an eviction order signed by a judge, required by Guatemalan law, or the presence of the Public Prosecutor - and began to violently expel families, causing injury to several people.

CONIC representatives expressed their frustration that the Guatemalan government continues to disenfranchise Mayan communities and farmers and, instead, favor large transnational corporations that extract Guatemala's natural resources, which results in poverty, hunger, and unemployment. CONIC demanded that the Government terminate the evacuations and repair the damage caused to the affected communities.

RIGHT TO JUSTICE

Congressmen Accused of Taking Public Funds

01.10.07 The daily newspaper, *Prensa Libre*, reported that congressmen Joel Martínez, Edwin Martínez and Gumercindo Donis received several checks, summing more than one million quetzals (US \$130,000), destined for public works projects in the southern coastal department of Santa Rosa. Through an investigation, *Prensa Libre* gained access to bookkeeping documents that allegedly cited the diversion of funds.

The National Fund for Peace reported that the non-governmental organization, Family Development Association (ADEFAM), had failed to carry out the construction of a school, a community center, and a park in Cuilapa, Santa Rosa, assigned to ADEFAM by the government. That report spurred the Public Prosecutor (MP) to begin an investigation into the money trail, which discovered that ADEFAM allegedly used public funds to write several checks to the three legislative representatives. *Prensa Libre* reported that the congressmen had endorsed and deposited all the checks. Despite the mounting evidence against the congressmen, the MP decided to commence with preliminary hearings.

Merchants Report Military Robbery

01.11.07 Guatemalan merchants Dina Elizabeth Quiché Hernández, Marta Hernández, Mario Escobar Girón, and Esaín Rolando López Martínez reported that Mexican military officers illegally confiscated their goods while they were traveling to sell poultry to the Mexican border communities of Chicomuselo and La Concordia, as they had done for years. According to the victims, they were intercepted by eight Mexican military officers assigned to Military Zone No. 36, in Tapachula, Mexico.

The soldiers allegedly forced them to unload eighteen boxes from the van, which held 883 chickens valued at over 4,000 Mexican pesos. Assuming it was a routine check, the vendors were surprised when they were told they were free to go but had to leave the boxes at the checkpoint. Escobar Girón reported that the soldiers, calling them "illegals", threatened that if they argued or protested, they would be arrested. The vendors decided to leave out of fear of what the military officers might do to the women in the group. The merchants demand that the Guatemalan government request restitution.

Presidential Candidate Illegally Used Public Resources

01.08.07 In violation of the Guatemalan Electoral Code, the Grand National Alliance (GAN) presidential pre-candidate, Alejandro Giammattei, allegedly used public funds and resources for electoral propaganda. Alejandro Giammattei, former director of the penitentiary system, used Santa Catarina Pinula's Municipal Palace and municipal conference room to hold a meeting with GANA leaders and announce his official candidacy for the presidency.

Both Article 223 of the Guatemalan Electoral Code and Article 18 of the Ethics and Responsibilities Law for Representatives and Public Employees specifically cite that State representatives and public employees are not allowed to use public goods, resources, or property for personal or third party use.

In response to accusations of the illegal use of public resources, Mayor Antonio Coro declared that any political party could use the municipal conference room but not the Municipal Palace because the municipality does not own the latter. He commented that those attending the campaign event did not meet in the Municipal Palace, but rather drank coffee and enjoyed the view of the park from the Municipal Palace.

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Casa Alianza Reports Drug Use Among Minors

01.05.07 *Casa Alianza* concluded, through its investigation of drug use among minors, that most minors that use drugs start between the ages of nine and ten, first roaming the streets and consuming alcohol. Afterward, the investigation found, the minors advance to all types of drugs, and in some cases become distributors. The investigation reported that in extreme situations, some female minors, desperate to fund their habit, turn to prostitution, while some male minors commit crimes in order to get money to buy drugs.

MIGRANT RIGHTS

Immigrants Report Abuse During Raids in the US

01.12.07 Several Guatemalan immigrants, who were picked up during a raid at the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Nebraska, stated that authorities abused them during the raid. Wilfrido Cotón, one of the seventy Guatemalans captured during the raid and deported back to Guatemala, said that immigration authorities beat several undocumented workers that had hidden during the search. He stated that the police forced them to lie on the floor for about twenty-four hours while they questioned the workers. Then, he reported, the police chained their feet, waists, and hands and transported them to Atlanta, Georgia. Cotón commented that the authorities treated them worse than criminals. The company's plants in five other states were similarly raided.

Edgar Franco, another deportee, reported to the Associated French Press that when immigration officials picked him up, he was cuffed and treated like a pig for more than eight hours. He stated that as a result of the rough handling, his hands swelled and his arms became numb, all of which now require medical treatment. Franco said that he loves the US, and since his wife and two children, both born in the US, reside in America, he will re-immigrate by any means necessary.

José Castro, one of the 641 migrants deported during the first weeks of 2007, stated that when US immigration authorities captured him, agents took more than \$5,000 from him and never returned it. He added that the prison conditions are degrading.

Monsignor Alvaro Ramazzini, president of the Guatemalan Episcopal Conference, and Patricia

Bezares, from the Council for Development Research, both stated that the increase in deportations from the US would exacerbate poverty and the demand for state services. Ramazzini added that the US anti-migration policy results in disintegrated families, where parents are sent back to their countries of origin while their children remain in the US.

Foreign Affairs Minister Protests Abuse of Deportees

01.12.07 Minister of Foreign Affairs Gert Rosenthal lodged a letter of protest to James Derham, US Ambassador to Guatemala, over the treatment of Guatemalan deportees. Several deportees have complained about being treated poorly during police raids or at detention centers. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Marta Altolaguirre stated that there was evidence of US deportation centers illegally confiscating the possessions of deportees. Altolaguirre expressed her concern over the behavior of US immigration authorities. She found the procedures to be in violation of international standards for the treatment of immigrants.

During the first weeks of January, US immigration authorities deported 532 Guatemalans that had been arrested during police raids in December 2006. In 2006, the US deported 18,305 Guatemalans, surpassing previous records. In 2005, 11,512 Guatemalans were deported, while in 2004, 7,094 Guatemalans were expatriated.

Remittances Increase in 2006

01.10.07 Statistics from the Bank of Guatemala indicated that as of December 2006, remittances sent back to Guatemala by immigrants grew to more than 3.609 billion quetzals (roughly US \$469 million). That amount for 2006 increased by 617 million quetzals, or 21%, from the Q2.99 billion registered for 2005. The data revealed that the amount of family remittances is almost equal to the revenue generated from Guatemalan exports, which is 3.8 billion quetzals.

According to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) 2006 survey on family remittances, roughly 1.2 million Guatemalans live in the United States. Of that number, 37.7 % live in Los Angeles, 10.2 % in New York, 8.1 % in Florida, and the remainder in Washington DC, Virginia, and other cities throughout the US. The same IOM study indicated that roughly 8,000 Guatemalans live in Mexico and a little over 7,800 live in Canada.

Victor Lozano, representative of the IOM, commented on the effect that the phenomenon of immigration could have on remittances during 2007. He stated that despite 150,000 Guatemalans attempting to enter the US each year, only one third make it. The IOM estimated that in 2007, some 25,000 Guatemalans will be deported; only half of those that make to the US will actually stay. Lozano believed that the tightening of policies toward undocumented immigrants has resulted in unprecedented deportations of Guatemalans in the last few years.

Carlos González, associate researcher for the Economic and Social Research Institute of the Rafael Landívar University (IDIES), stated that in general, family remittances have a positive effect, especially in confronting the absence of employment in Guatemala; however, family remittances are not sustainable in the long-term, and Guatemala will need to generate other sources of income.

Guatemalan Deportees Receive More Assistance

01.11.07 The Inter-institutional Committee for Assistance to Migrants, representing nineteen governmental and civil society agencies, came to a consensus with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Migration Office (DGM) on four proposals to increase assistance to Guatemalans deported from the United States.

The four proposals included creating a shelter in Guatemala City for recent deportees, increasing the training of deportees so they can reintegrate back into the workforce, accelerating the integration of other Central American migrants into Guatemalan society, and consolidating endeavors done both by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the DGM.

Guatemala Unveils “Jobs for Migrants” Program

01.12.07 The Minister of Labor and the General Migration Office (DGM) unveiled the “Jobs for Migrants” program, originally designed by the non-governmental organization Development for a Culture of Peace, which plans to match deportees to job openings in Guatemala. The DGM stated that several deportees have returned from the US with specific trades and skills, such as cooks, taxicab drivers, carpenters, and familiarity of English.

The idea is to create a database of job openings and deportees looking for work. The program will set up kiosks throughout the country where individuals can voluntarily fill out an electronic form detailing

their work experience and interests and match those to available jobs. Several businesses have made requests to be a part of the initiative. The Ministry of Labor aims to provide 850 jobs a month exclusively for deportees.

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Health Care Stalemate Resolved

01.03.07 The Inter-institutional Board of Doctors and the Ministry of Health finally broke their stalemate over health care issues after six months of negotiations. The negotiating committee was disbanded after both parties reached a compromise over the demilitarization of hospital security and a Q156 million (roughly US \$20 million) increase in the 2006 health care budget. Throughout the national hospitals, outpatient services and hospital care returned to normal. The Human Rights Ombudsman Sergio Morales stated that he was satisfied with the brokered deal. It is generally agreed that the public health budget for 2007 will need to be increased from Q2 billion (US \$260 million) to Q3 billion (US \$390 million).

Fire Stations Close Due to Insufficient Resources

01.05.07 The Volunteer Firefighter Corps was forced to dismiss eighty-three rescue workers and close nine stations because of insufficient funds. The fire stations located in Guastatoya, El Progreso, San Luis - La Libertad, Petén, San Rafael Pie de la Cuesta, San Marcos, Malacatancito, Huehuetenango and Ixcán were all closed. The budget for the Corps, with 120 stations across the country, is Q32 million (US \$4.1 million). The Guatemalan Congress did not authorize the Corps' request for a budgetary increase of Q27 million (US \$3.5 million).

Apocalypto Film Stirs Controversy

01.10.07 Scholars and civil society leaders that work with the indigenous populations of Guatemala have deemed the film Apocalypto, directed by Mel Gibson, to be a distorted presentation of the decline of Mayan culture. Andrés Cholotío, of the National Council for Mayan Education, called the film discriminatory, stating that the Mayan people have made huge contributions to science and culture and at no time were they ignorant or savage. Ricardo Cajas, an indigenous leader who heads the

Presidential Commission Against Racism, said that the movie contributed to the demonization of indigenous cultures and was not historically accurate.

Gibson denied the accusations. He insisted that he did not distort the Mayan culture, that he had done extensive research into the Mayan tradition, that he employed the Yucateco language, that he based the script on the Popol Vuh - the Mayan spiritual book detailing the origins of the Mayan people - and that it is a story of action and adventure. Estuardo Zapeta, anthropologist and Mayan intellectual, opined that the film should not be censored because it does not present itself as a documentary and can be viewed for what it is, a fictional movie.

BASIC FREEDOMS

Quiche Communities Demand Withdrawal of Troops

01.09.07 The Ixil Regional Board of Survivors for Peace, made up of thirty-four organizations in the northern department of Quiché, issued an open letter to President Berger, presenting him with a series of petitions, one of which requested the withdrawal of troops from the community of Visán, located in the municipality of Nebaj, Quiché. The letter, in response to President Berger's visit to the region to deliver 377 civil war victims their compensation, argued that the military post was unnecessary since Visán is not a border town. The authors of the letter stated that in light of the human rights abuses committed by the army and the paramilitary forces during the internal conflict, the presence of the military is an offense to the victims and a contradiction to the Peace Accords.

The residents of the Ixil region not only demanded the troops leave, but also that the land the military detachment now occupies be dedicated to commemorating the signing of the Accords and to paying tribute to the victims of the confrontation. They proposed a monument in honor of the deceased, along with a museum in remembrance of the victims. Further requests are for the construction of a laboratory for the processing of natural medicine, the formation of a cultural center, and the establishment of an Ixil university.

LEGAL CASE UPDATES

Court Asked to Arrest Military and Civilian Personnel

01.04.07 The Guatemalan Fifth Sentencing Court

received another petition from the Spanish National Court for the arrest of five high-ranking members of the Guatemalan military and two civilians. It is the third time that the Spanish National Court has asked for their arrest. The new petition included generals José Efraín Ríos Montt, Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores, Angel Aníbal Guevara Rodríguez, Benedicto Lucas García and Germán Chupina Barahona and the civilians Pedro García Arredondo and Donaldo Álvarez Ruiz. They have been accused of genocide, torture and terrorism, among other crimes.

After receipt of the first petition, the Fifth Sentencing Court ordered the detention of four individuals, among whom only Chupina and Guevara were arrested. They have been detained at the Military Hospital due to health problems. The first petition did not mention Ríos Montt, since the initial court case only involved the burning of the Spanish Embassy. The second petition was issued in early December 2006, which included Ríos Montt and Lucas García. Nevertheless, the Guatemalan Constitution Court (CC) intervened and ordered the Fifth Sentencing Court to suspend the process. The third petition was received on December 28, 2006.

The Fourth Court of Appeals denied Chupina Barahona's son's request that his father be freed. The Court found that Chupina is being cared for and not mistreated.

Court Denies Mejía's Attempt to Halt Investigations

01.10.07 After seven months, the Court of Jurisdiction Conflict denied an attempt by General Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores to halt an investigation into reports that he committed genocide. That decision allows the Eleventh Court to hear testimony from five military personnel and two civilians whom the Spanish government has accused of genocide.

RIGHT TO A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

IDB Approves Loan for Mayan Biosphere Reserve

01.11.07 The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a loan of thirty million dollars to implement a sustainable development project in the northern department of Petén. Federico Franco, the vice minister of the Environment and Natural Resources, reported that the project will preserve the

Mayan Biosphere Reserve. He stated that in the next two months, the President will send the initiative to Congress for its approval. According to the Vice Minister, the plan, which will take six years to execute, seeks to improve accessibility to potential tourist spots for Guatemalans and foreigners.

Madre Selva Reports Pollution Due to Mining

01.09.07 The *Madre Selva* Collective measured high levels of pollution in the communities of Sipakapa, located in San Marcos, due to mining activities. María Eugenia Solís, the legal representative of *Madre Selva*, stated that the report was issued to the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and other governmental authorities in December 2006; however, the authorities have not responded and instead are trying to discredit the study.

Solís said that due to the mining activities of the Guatemalan Montaña Exploratory Corporation, a subsidiary of the Canadian multinational Glamis Gold, there was an increase in the metallic content of both the upper and lower Tzalá River, which passes through the villages of Sipakapa in San Marcos. She stated the high prevalence of metals in the water threatens the health of the residents and the environment.

Madre Selva presented the report to the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), the Ministry of Health, the office of President Berger, the Public Prosecutor (MP), and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH). Solís stated that to date, only the PDH had responded to the study.

Solís commented that the situation needs to be immediately investigated for the sake of the Sipakapa communities, and that the Guatemalan Montaña Exploratory Corporation needs to be held to international and domestic standards, signed into law by the Guatemalan Congress. She stated that the problem does not only affect Guatemalan communities. The Tzalá River merges with the Cuilco River, which flows into the Grijalva River in Mexico and crosses much of the Yucatan Peninsula on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. Solís reported that *Madre Selva's* study had been presented to the Mexican Embassy in Guatemala.

Flaviano Bianchini, an Italian expert, conducted the study, taking into account international standards set by institutions such as the World Bank's Environmental Agency for Mining Activity and the World Health Organization (WHO). He reported that acid refuse is one of the more dangerous side effects

of mining, causing long-term damage. The study showed that heavy ores such as copper, aluminum, iron and manganese found in water samples might be harmful to human health. Heavy ores are residual, and thus absorbed by plants that draw on the water. Later, the metals are ingested by animals and then consumed by human beings.

OTHER INFORMATION

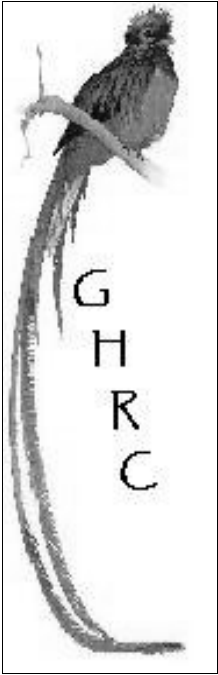
UN Warns Personnel Regarding Travel in Guatemala

01.03.07 Representatives of the United Nations in Guatemala issued a report in December 2006 warning its personnel and diplomatic corps about travel within Guatemala. The report prohibited its personnel from traveling at nighttime and recommended that female employees avoid trips outside Guatemala City unless they are escorted by more than one vehicle. The UN report concluded that kidnappings, gang activity, crime and drug traffic affect every sector of Guatemalan society. The UN advised visitors to take extra measures of caution while traveling in the country and to not to carry visible objects of any value such as computers, cameras or home appliances.

Only 319 Kg of Cocaine Confiscated in 2006

01.05.07 The Guatemalan government confiscated very few drugs in 2006. Efforts to fight drug trafficking were limited to arresting local dealers and carriers, and destroying the source of production. Not one drug lord was arrested in 2006 and only 319 kilograms of cocaine were confiscated. In 2005, five tons of cocaine were seized.

Data from the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) indicated that approximately thirty tons of cocaine, originating in Colombia, are transported through Guatemala each year. The DEA reported that over 1,000 Guatemalans participate in the business of transporting it through Guatemala. According to experts, the decrease in arrests does not indicate a decrease in drug trafficking, but rather the government's inability to uncover the new smuggling methods used by traffickers. Despite poor results, the Ministry of the Interior reported that they were successful in eradicating 17.5 million opium poppy plants and 84,000 marijuana plants during operations in San Marcos.



Founded in 1982, the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, humanitarian organization that monitors, documents, and reports on the human rights situation in Guatemala, advocates for and supports survivors of the abuses, and works toward positive systemic change.

Information in the UPDATE that is not gathered directly is culled from various sources, including the Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala, Casa Alianza, Albedrío, Amnesty International, Associated Press, Reuters, and Guatemalan news sources, such as Cerigua, Centro de Estudios de Guatemala, Incidencia Democrática, Prensa Libre, El Periódico, La Hora, and Siglo Veintiuno.

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