

Rights Action

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December 2023

GUATEMALA Electoral coup d'etat: 'Death by a 1000 cuts'

In September, we reported on the transcendental victory of the Semilla Party in the Guatemalan Presidential elections of August 20, 2023.

Since then, it is hard to overstate the corruption and tenacity of the longtime U.S., E.U., Canadian-backed traditional elites in Guatemala, known as the Pacto de Corruptos (Covenant of the Corrupt), who are using every corrupt strategy they can come up with to try and block President-elect Bernardo Arevalo and VP-elect Karin Herrera from taking power on January 14, 2024.



"The government can't combat corruption because corruption is the government"

The traditional elites are also playing the long game, implementing measures to handcuff the incoming government, if they even take power in January. The Pacto de Corruptos remain in control of the armed forces (police and military), the legislative branch of government, and judiciary. They are busy appointing "their people" to as many offices (courts, prosecutor's offices, government offices, ministries, etc.) as possible. They passed a derisive national budget for the incoming government

and are trying to ram an Amnesty Law through Congress to end all pending crimes against humanity trials, and release from jail former military and police found guilty of these crimes in the few trials that were completed.

President Arevalo & Semilla Party win Guatemalan elections Will U.S., Canada & "international community" accept it?

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/september2023newsletter>

Similarly, they are rushing organized crime trials through the Supreme Court and Constitutional Court, either to have the charges dropped or to overrule guilty sentences against members of the traditional elites of Guatemala ... many being the same elites with whom the U.S., Canada, E.U. and global companies and investors have long maintained full political and business relations!

Guatemala Election Watch alerts

www.rightsaction.org/emails

The long game objective of the traditional elites is to ensure that even if the President and VP-elects take power, they will not be able to bring about any of the desperately needed social / political / economic / legal reforms the country needs.

The Real and Indigenous Face of Guatemala's Past, Present and Future

As important as any aspect of this struggle for democracy in Guatemala is the resurgence, yet again, of the Indigenous peoples (mainly Mayan, also Garifuna and Xinka) who are now at the forefront of the struggle to ensure that President Arevalo and VP Herrera take power in January, and then to ensure that Guatemala maps out a transformational social, economic, political and legal model going forward. We recommend reading "We have not been resisting for 63 days. We have been fighting for more than 500 years" (<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/guatemala-election-watch-44>).

Stay tuned. This defense of democracy struggle is not over.

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Speakers: Invite us to give presentations about these issues

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Form your own group or join one of our educational-solidarity delegation seminars to Guatemala and Honduras to learn more about these issues and struggles

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HONDURAS

Working to dig country out of pit of institutional corruption and impunity

Just as the August 20, 2023 elections in Guatemala represent a monumental shift in Guatemala, with countless obstacles and challenges to come, today, tomorrow and in the future, the November 2021 election of President Xiomara Castro in Honduras represented a desperately needed change, ousting the military-backed, corrupt, drug-trafficking regime that was led for close to 13 years by former President Juan Orlando Hernandez and the National Party.

“A triumphant day. A day of many tears”

End of U.S./Canadian-backed Narco-regime in Honduras

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/a-triumphant-day-a-day-of-many-tears>

Today, the government of President Castro is working hard to dig the country out of the deep pit of institutional corruption and impunity left behind by over 12 years of U.S. and Canadian-backed Narco-Dictatorships. This is extraordinarily difficult work, on the best of days, and will take much longer than one 4-year Presidential term.

Drug-trafficking trial of U.S./Canadian-backed “democratic allie”

On February 5, 2024, former Honduran Narco-Dictator Juan Orlando Hernandez (“JOH”) goes on trial in New York City for overseeing a massive government and military-backed drug trafficking cartel.

U.S. & Canada-backed Honduran Narco-State on Trial in New York

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/>

[us-canada-backed-honduran-narco-state-on-trial-in-new-york](https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/us-canada-backed-honduran-narco-state-on-trial-in-new-york)

Rights Action is supporting an upcoming campaign spearheaded by Karen Spring of the Honduras Solidarity Network and Honduras Now podcast. From 2008-14, Karen worked with Rights Action, spearheading our work in Honduras. Karen will attend and report on the “JOH” trial in New York, as part of an education/ activist campaign to “put the U.S., Canada and international community on trial” for close to 13 years of unconditional support for the Narco-Dictatorship.

To follow and get involved in this campaign

Karen Spring: Karen@hondurassol.org

<https://www.hondurasnow.org/>, <https://twitter.com/HondurasNow>

Justice for assassination of Berta Cáceres?

Rights Action is heartened that Honduran authorities recently issued an arrest warrant for Daniel Atala, one of the alleged masterminds and financiers of the killing of Indigenous rights, anti-imperialist, feminist, environmental defender Berta Cáceres, shot and killed in her home in La Esperanza, late on March 2, 2016, by a team of paid assassins.

**Capture order issued for alleged mastermind & financier of assassination of Berta Caceres
Legacy of U.S. & Canadian-backed Narco-Dictatorship
in Honduras**

[https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/
capture-order-issued-for-assassination-of-berta-caceres](https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/capture-order-issued-for-assassination-of-berta-caceres)

Daniel is a member of the oligarchic Atala Zablah family that has immense economic and political power in Honduras. They control FICOHSA Bank and are heavily invested in construction, finance, and sports. They are part of the traditional oligarchic elites that orchestrated the June 28, 2009 military

coup, resulting in 12 years and 7 months of repressive, corrupt rule by the military-backed, drug-trafficking regime of President JOH and the National Party.

Not only did the U.S. and Canada legitimize the 2009 coup, but they – and countless global companies, banks and investors – maintained economic, military and political relations with the JOH / National Party regimes throughout this period, referring to them as “democratic allies”.

Stay tuned. The struggle for justice against the masterminds and financiers of the assassination of Berta just took a major step forward. The stakes and risks get higher.

GUATEMALA TO GAZA Denouncing Israel’s military campaign of ethnic cleansing in Palestine

Rights Action is horrified by the Israeli government’s military ethnic cleansing campaign in Gaza resulting, to date, in the deaths of over 20,000 Palestinians, the vast majority being civilians, and the forced displacement of close to two million more.

Similar to our long-term work related to Guatemala and Honduras, Rights Action denounces the policies and actions of the governments of the U.S., Canada and E.U. providing unconditional military, economic, political and ideological/media support for Israel.

With a daily kill rate of over 300 people per day since October 7, 2023, the targeting of Palestinian civilians is reminiscent of the worst months of genocides and systemic massacres against mainly Mayan people in Guatemala in the early 1980s. Equally similar to Guatemala’s systematic destruction of hundreds of rural villages, Israel is targeting and destroying residential homes, buildings and infrastructure necessary for daily life, rendering Gaza impossible to return to.

“From Guatemala to Palestine–No More Genocide”.

Mayan land and rights defender Lolita Chávez sent a message of support to Palestinian people, denouncing Israeli government for what it is doing now in Palestine, and what it did in Guatemala during the years of genocide: <https://twitter.com/festivalesgt/status/1723622671563296989>.

During the worst years of U.S.-supported genocides and systematic massacres, Israel provided training and weaponry to the Guatemalan regimes, some of which is summarized in a series of Rights Action commentaries.

Rights Action commentaries
<https://rightsaction.org/emails>

Rights Action echoes calls around the world for (a) an immediate ceasefire, (b) the immediate provision of massive relief to close to two million Palestinian victims of Israel’s bombing and forced displacement campaign, and (c) a negotiation process – for as long as it takes – to resolve all current and historic issues.

Complicit role of media

To understand how distorted/manipulated much of the corporate and government funded media is in the U.S. and Canada, we urge people to also get their daily news on Democracy Now (<https://www.democracynow.org>) and Al Jazeera News (<https://www.aljazeera.com>).

Accountability in the U.S. and Canada

No different than our long-term work in Guatemala and Honduras, though desperately needed right now, Rights Action supports calls for citizen mobilization and activism in the U.S. and Canada to try – once again – to hold our governments politically and legally accountable for our policies and actions in support of Israel’s mass killings and destruction in Gaza.



RightsAction

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YOUR FUNDS AT WORK **Supporting uphill struggles in** **Guatemala & Honduras**

As of December 15, Rights Action has sent over \$250,000 of your donations and grants (Where Your Donations Go: <https://rightsaction.org/where-your-donations-go>) to democracy, human rights and justice struggles, land, territory and environmental defense struggles, and emergency response work, primarily in Honduras and Guatemala, as well a few similar projects in El Salvador, Argentina & Mexico.

Most of this work and struggles are long-term, uphill battles – resisting and confronting the interests, impunity and corruption of their own traditional elites, usually in partnership with the US, Canada and EU and a range of “international actors” (World Bank, transitional companies, banks and investors).

