

GUATEMALA – BEHEADINGS, “SHOCK TACTICS” & TERROR

June 13, 2010

RIGHTS ACTION: This is a nasty, nasty time in Guatemala. In April, we reported (http://rightsaction.org/Alerts/Guatemala_war_crimes_possibility_042710.html) that war crimes trials were finally moving ahead – however so slowly - in Guatemala. Since that time, there has been a huge backlash. On June 8, we reported (http://rightsaction.org/Alerts/War_Crime_Trials_Guatemala_061210.html) how war crimes cases (in the courts since the 1990s) are at risk.

Now, more beheadings ... in a country that made a gruesome terroristic art-form of beheading people in the 1980s.

- Please redistribute this information
- To get on/ off Rights Action's listserv: www.rightsaction.org
- What to do: see below

FOR MORE INFO: Annie Bird (202-680-3002, annie@rightsaction.org) & Grahame Russell (860-352-2448, info@rightsaction.org)

* * * * *

ORGANIZED CRIME, ETHICAL CRIMES, FINANCIAL CRIMES, HARD-LINE CRIMES

by Carlos Sánchez Alfaro

“A military command arrived in the community; a lieutenant wearing a Kaibil beret told the soldiers to take up their positions; they moved community members to the centre of the village. They took three men away and decapitated them. Then the lieutenant said: “This will happen to all those who become communists”. Then the soldiers went away, leaving the community in deep shock, overwhelmed with terror, fear and insecurity about what could happen tomorrow. All they want is to live in peace. In the meantime, the widows of the three decapitated men cry for the violent murder of their husbands and no one takes responsibility for this brutal act.”

These murders took place 28 years ago in a Mayan village in the Ixil Triangle [department of Quiché]. The army's objective in carrying out these operations was to terrorize and horrify people and create unease in the community. As the people themselves said, they wanted to “make every citizen feel that they are under the surveillance of a Kaibil.”

However, there are now similar operations in Guatemala City.

On June 10, 2010, we woke up to the full horror of “Shock Tactics”: three human heads were found in three different places; one in the Congress, one on the Tikal Futura walkway, and one in a fire station in Trébol.

We should point out that this is not the first time we have seen such a brutal response to events in our country by obscure, but very powerful groups. For example, in the past, we have seen simultaneous murders of bus drivers. But it has been several years since we have seen this level of violence.

Here are our thoughts on the situation:

First: The context in which this happened. Carlos Castresana resigned as head of the UN International Commission on Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), which surprised everyone. He had made a number of accusations, including those against recently appointed Attorney General, Conrado Reyes. The fact that these horrendous crimes took place after Castresana's resignation sends a clear message. The perpetrators of the crime know very well that to date, the work carried out by CICIG has been highly professional and accurate. The criminals therefore wanted to set a precedent by using collective fear and horrendous crimes to let it be known that they had "carte blanche to keep on creating a climate of violence and that, no matter how sharp the detective work is, they will never catch us."

Second: On the night of Wednesday, June 9, an investigation of the Paiz Valdez brothers went ahead, in connection with the Rosenberg case. A news broadcast from Guatevision, a TV channel owned by the high and mighty Prensa Libre, has been implicated in the case, apparently because of contradictions and certain connections that came to the surface after the Director of the TV station, which is owned by the national oligarchy, interviewed one of the fugitives involved in Rosenberg's murder. Needless to say, you will find no further development of this story in the Prensa Libre, on Guatevision, on the radio stations, or even in Siglo XXI (newspaper). Do you still have any doubts as to why?

Third: These particularly macabre murders required a complex set of logistics: Who would kidnap the victims? Where would they be murdered and decapitated? Who would deliver the heads to the various places for discovery? Who would coordinate the whole operation? Who choose the symbolic sites? Do you really believe that all of this is related to satanic rituals carried out by young gang members? Do you really believe that all of this was coordinated from the prisons? Who else could be behind this, given that it requires financial resources, personnel, arms and someone who knows how to implement Collective Shock?

Fourth: Since January 14, 2008, who has been selling the idea to the people that to maintain a favorable climate for "business", it is necessary to focus solely on security and that the kind of security required is repressive, military zero-tolerance security? Can it be that these murders are not connected to an early campaign by extreme right wing groups who are hoping that Guatemala will become a new Colombia, where Uribe-syle, hard-line USA-influenced policies will prevail from now on?

Fifth: Collective terror was used the by American Armed Forces during the Viet Nam war. It was directed at the civilian population, then later developed as a tactic and eventually put on the curriculum at the so called "School of the Americas". It was at that institute that Latin American military graduates, many of them Guatemalan, learned how to psychologically harass civilian populations, destabilize progressive governments and ambush and torture victims.

Sixth: In the words of Monsignor Romero [El Salvadoran Archbishop, assassinated in 1980] - we ask human rights organizations, we beg human rights organizations, we order human rights organizations to intervene, because Guatemala is taking the hard-line, the hard-line with the "Camisas Blancas" and with covert military coups.

* * *

WHAT TO DO

"There are no magic answers, no miraculous methods to overcome the problems we face, just the familiar ones: search for understanding, education, organization, action ... and the kind of commitment that will persist despite the temptations of disillusionment, despite many failures and only limited successes, inspired by the hope of a brighter future." (Noam Chomsky)

Since 1995, Rights Action has funded and supported countless Mayan and campesino-community based effort seeking justice for the crimes of the past and to create a country based on the rule of law and real democracy. Their efforts continue ... as will ours.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

To support community organizations working for justice, the rule of law and real democracy, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: <http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

* * *

DELEGATION TO HONDURAS, JUNE 26-JULY 4: First anniversary of June 28, 2009 oligarchic-military coup against the elected government (For information: annie@rightsaction.org)

- JOIN our listserv. Click: <http://www.rightsaction.org>
- JOIN our newsletter mail list. Send name and address to: info@rightsaction.org
- CREATE YOUR OWN email and mail lists and re-distribute our information
- RECOMMENDED DAILY NEWS: www.democracynow.org / www.upsidedownworld.org / www.dominionpaper.ca
- RECOMMENDED BOOKS: Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America"; Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States"; Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine"; Paolo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"; Dr Seuss's "Horton Hears A Who"

NEW BOOK: "CODE Z59.5: There Is Only One People Here", by Grahame Russell. Code Z59.5 is a series of diary excerpts (comments, facts, quotes, etc.) from the 1990s and 2000s, related to the author's work in Central America, Mexico and North America, in defense of human rights. TO ORDER: info@rightsaction.org

EDUCATION IN YOUR HOME COMMUNITY

Contact us to plan educational presentations in your own community, school, place of worship, home (info@rightsaction.org)

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO CENTRAL AMERICA

Form your own group or join one of our delegations to learn first hand about community development, human rights and environmental struggles (info@rightsaction.org)

FOR MORE INFO: Annie Bird (202-680-3002, annie@rightsaction.org) & Grahame Russell (860-352-2448, info@rightsaction.org)

