

Guatemalan Presidential Candidate Jimmy Morales Linked with War Criminals More elections, No democracy

- Below, a Telesur article: “Guatemalan Presidential Candidate Linked with War Criminal”

A new factor in Guatemalan politics, that the Presidential candidates will have to deal with, is an engaged and enraged public that, tired of generations of corruption and impunity, forced President (and former General) Otto Perez Molina and Vice-President Roxana Baldetti to resign – both are now in jail on corruption charges.

An old factor in Guatemala politics, that the engaged and enraged Guatemalan people will have to deal with, is the historic role of CACIF (Guatemala’s “Chamber of Commerce”, the Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras), that represents the economic interests of Guatemala’s racist, exploitative elites, and the historic role of the “international community” – particularly the U.S. and Canadian governments and businesses, the U.S. military, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank – that have long maintained profitable military, economic and political relations with Guatemala’s corrupted elites and political rulers.

Stay tuned, stay informed, stay involved.

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Guatemalan Presidential Candidate Linked with War Criminal

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<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Guatemalan-Presidential-Candidate-Linked-with-War-Criminal---20150906-0023.html>

Sources say a high-level party ally of leading candidate Jimmy Morales served as a military commander during a Guatemalan genocide. As polling stations closed on Sunday evening, Guatemalans rushed to cast their vote in order to elect their country's next president in the midst of widespread public frustration with the ruling political establishment.

As the country awaits the results, the Guatemalan media outlet Nomada revealed that current presidential candidate Jimmy Morales, from the National Convergence Front (FCN), is closely linked with Edgar Justino Ovalle, a former general during the country's horrific period of genocide of the 1980s.

Ovalle, who is responsible for having placed actor and comedian Jimmy Morales as presidential candidate, was identified as a high-ranking commander over a specialized military unit in Guatemala's Quiche region, according to declassified documents from the National Security Archive.

During the one year period from 1981-1982 that Ovalle headed military operations, the government carried out 77 massacres in the region of Quiche, the declassified documents reported.

In an interview with Nomada, Ovalle was questioned about his role as the commanding officer over the military unit, in which he responded, "I have never heard of it. I was never there." "Maybe you should ask the United States because I have no idea," he added.

However, the records released by the Washington, D.C.-based National Security Archive indicate that Ovalle also leads the military base known as Military Zone 21 in Coban, which is where wartime victims were buried in mass graves.

During the country's 36-year internal armed conflict that led to acts of genocide, the base at Coban was a center of military coordination and intelligence.

A U.N.-backed truth commission found that some 200,000 people were killed, and tens of thousands tortured or disappeared during the civil war, with the military held responsible for 93 percent of the human rights violations committed over that period. Some of the worst of the violence took place under "The General," Efraín Ríos Montt.

The links between Morales and Ovalle raise further questions regarding the legitimacy of the political representatives governing the country. Ovalle and his FCN party chose Morales to be the presidential candidate because everybody else in the front are too closely connected to the Rios Montt era and they needed a fresh face with “no apparent connection” to corruption or the “obscure past” of Ovalle and other FCN leading politicians, news website CONGUATE reported.

Also, Morales himself has been linked to former President Otto Perez Molina and former Vice President Roxana Baldetti, both of whom are in jail in connection with a massive corruption scandal. CONGUATE added, “Perez Molina and Baldetti would be the most benefited with Morales’ election.” Perez Molina, himself is a former head of military intelligence (D-2) during the civil war.

In fact, Morales, who is currently leading the Guatemalan presidential results with just over 25 percent of the vote, is likely to continue the political and economic policies of his recently ousted predecessor Perez Molina, who in 2013 was accused of ordering soldiers to burn and pillage a village in a municipality in Quiche and then execute the local inhabitants in 1982.

The allegations stem from a 2013 testimony by former military mechanic, Hugo Reyes directly implicating in Perez Molina in human rights violations during the Guatemalan genocide as part of the Rios Montt trial.

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“As courageous Guatemalans take to the streets and demand justice for these corrupt, repressive leaders, and demand serious reform to how their country operates, who will hold to account the “international community” that for decades has maintained military, political and economic relations with Guatemala’s elite sectors, participating in and benefitting from the corruption and impunity?” (Grahame Russell, Rights Action)

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