

“A Peace Resembling War” in Guatemala

Commentary by Grahame Russell, Rights Action

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/a-peace-resembling-war-in-guatemala>

In Honduras and Guatemala, Rights Action supports community groups trying to oust corrupt, repressive regimes - “democratic allies” of the US, Canada and EU, World Bank and IMF, global companies and banks.

Below

- **A Peace Resembling War**, by George Lovell
- **Hope amidst the darkness: Victims continue to press for justice for wartime atrocities in Guatemala**, by [Jo-Marie Burt](#) and [Paulo Estrada](#)

As one corrupt, repressive, open-for-global-business regime is forced from power in Honduras, a similar regime remains entrenched in power in Guatemala.

May 2022 be a year when Hondurans begin to take back their democracy and rule of law, human rights and community well-being.

May 2022 also be a year to shine an even brighter light of condemnation on the exploitation, corruption and violence of the regime in power in Guatemala.



In a recent article, George Lovell sets out how the 1996 Guatemalan “peace accords” failed, or rather were never meant to be respected by the corrupt economic, political and military elites of Guatemala, and their “international community” partners.

A Peace Resembling War

By George Lovell, Active History, December 29, 2021
<http://activehistory.ca/2021/12/a-peace-resembling-war/>

Lovell writes:

“Under neo-liberal proclivities, widespread poverty and massive inequality, the primary reasons for [Guatemala’s State-repression against its own population] in the first place, remain unaddressed.

“Guatemala is not a poor country. On the contrary, it is rich in resources, natural and human. Guatemala has been made a poor country because the allotment of its resources, especially its land resources, is deformed by crippling geographies of inequality. Skewed patterns of land distribution lie at the heart of Guatemala’s woes. 90 percent of the total number of farms account for 16 percent of total farm area, while 2 percent of the total number of farms occupy 65 percent of total farmland. The best land is used to grow coffee, cotton, bananas, and sugar cane for export, not to feed malnourished local populations. Until this imbalance is redressed, problems will prevail.”



It is this neo-liberal economic order – kept in place through the corruption and violence of the Guatemalan elites and their partners in the mis-named “international community” - that lies at the heart of Guatemala’s systemic exploitation and poverty, racism and repression, corruption and impunity.

“Hope amidst the darkness”

Despite the violently entrenched neo-liberal order in Guatemala, courageous efforts continue to achieve justice for crimes against humanity of the past, and achieve full respect for all human rights.

In a recent article, Jo-Marie Burt and Paolo Estrada summarize a list of on-going war crimes and crimes against humanity trials making their way, painstakingly, through Guatemala’s corrupted and manipulated legal system.

**Hope amidst the darkness:
Victims continue to press for justice for wartime atrocities in
Guatemala**

by [Jo-Marie Burt](#) and [Paulo Estrada](#)
<https://www.wola.org/analysis/wartime-justice-guatemala/>

The efforts of the surviving victims, witnesses, lawyers and advocates, honest judges and prosecutors, are met at every step of the way by repression and corruption, racism and impunity.

The authors write: “In the midst of this hostile counter-offensive by the oligarchy, conservative politicians, and former military officials against the rule of law, judicial independence, and anti-impunity efforts, survivors, families of the victims, and civil society organizations continue to press forward in their demands for justice.”

From war crimes to organized crime networks

It is not only, as Jo-Marie Burt and Paulo Estrada explain, that the Guatemalan military, economic, political elites oppose efforts to seek justice for the crimes against humanity of the US-backed State repression of Guatemala’s mainly Indigenous population in the late 1970s, 80s and early 90s, but these same elite sectors are operating organized crime networks today that have infiltrated all branches and institutions of the government.

“Some of the post-conflict cases that are in the Guatemalan courts involve individuals connected to the [illicit networks](#) operating in Guatemala, revealing the deep connection between past and present crime in Guatemala.”

TESTIMONIO: Canadian Mining in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala

All of which brings this commentary full circle to our recently published book TESTIMONIO that - looking at four mining-harms resistance struggles across Guatemala – sets out the connections between the US-backed war crimes of Guatemala’s recent past, the succession of corrupt, repressive, open-for-global-business regimes in power since the signing of the “peace accords”, and the role of the governments of the US, Canada and the EU in ‘legitimizing’ these regimes and pushing for the endless expansion of the global neo-liberal economic model, including the past 20 years of the Canadian-dominated mining industry.

Testimonio book reviews, articles and commentaries
<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/testimonio-book-reviews-articles-commentaries>



**"CANADA IS
3 MINING COMPANIES
IN A TRENCH COAT
WEARING A STUPID HAT
AND CARRYING A GUN."**

- Alex Green, The Outline

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As the Honduran people begin the arduous work of beginning to fix all the harms done to people, the environment and society by the past 12 years and 5 month of brutal, US and Canadian-backed regimes, and as the Guatemalan people continue with the arduous and dangerous work of denouncing the corruption and impunity, exploitation and repression of the US and Canadian-backed regime in power in Guatemala, ...

... it remains the timeworn and on-going responsibility of Americans and Canadians – including our media, courts and political oversight bodies – to begin to hold our governments, companies and banks fully accountable when they maintain mutually beneficial, profitable political and economic relations with corrupt, repressive regimes, turning a blind eye to corruption and impunity, repression and exploitation.

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To support land and environmental defender groups and human rights and justice struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, and to provide emergency (COVID, hurricanes, political repression, etc.) relief funds, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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