

Guatemala Election Watch #15 – August 7, 2023

Semilla Party campaign attacked by corrupt regime, taking on corruption in campaign platform!

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/semilla-party-attacked-by-regime-corruption>

13 days to August 20th run-off vote

Repeat of Honduras “elections”, November 2017 - ??

Investigators from Guatemala’s corrupted Public Prosecutor’s office (Ministerio Publico - MP) carried out yet another search of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), that oversees elections in Guatemala. (Prensa Comunitaria Km169: <https://twitter.com/PrensaComunitar/status/1687142595267371019>)

This time, they searched in the installations that house the TSE’s voting computers and servers. The MP claims they were following up on a complaint made by the VALOR party, headed by Zury Rios, daughter of former General Efraim Rios Montt, found guilty of the crime of genocide and other war crimes committed during the worst years of US-backed repression in the early 1980s.

In Honduras, on election day, November 27, 2017, the Libre party was winning the presidential elections by an almost insurmountable electoral count. Mid-voting, the election computer system “crashed”. When it came back on line, there was an approximate 5% point swing in the vote count, and narco-president Juan Orlando Hernandez’ National Party was winning the vote count.

Beyond all the violence, threats and intimidation that did not work against the voting public, the regime played it’s last card on voting day, and stole the elections through computer fraud. Soon after, the US and Canadian governments deemed the elections “democratic” and recognized the incoming narco-government of

Juan Orlando Hernandez, ... and Honduras's misery and violence continued for four more years.

Investigation into FundaTerror's possible illegal 'dirty campaign' against SEMILLA party

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) has opened an investigation into possible illegal campaigning, due to billboards that FundaTerror (FCT, Fundación contra el Terrorismo) paid for, attacking the SEMILLA party.

"Venezuelans also wanted a change, and in turn they had to change countries. Anything but Semilla", reads the billboard, that has the FundaTerror -FCT- logo on it. Ricardo Méndez-Ruiz confirmed that they paid for it. (<https://lahora.gt/nacionales/diego/2023/08/01/tse-abre-investigacion-por-posible-campana-negra-de-la-fct-contra-semilla/>)



FundaTerror was founded by Ricardo Mendez Ruiz, who has been sanctioned by the US government for being "implicated in actions detrimental to democratic processes or institutions, significant corruption or in the obstruction of investigations of such corruption".

His father, Ricardo Mendez Ruiz Rohrmoser, was the Commander of Military Zone 21, during the worst years of genocide and massacres committed by U.S.-backed military regimes in the 1970-80s.

In 2011-2012, the FAFG (Fundacion de Antropologia Forense) succeeded in exhuming the remains of 565 women and men, children and elders - mostly from Mayan villages - from mass graves located within the former military base #21. Until his death in 2016, Ricardo Mendez Ruiz Rohrmoser was implicated in the CREOMPAZ case as one of 17 Guatemalan army officers implicated in crimes against humanity.

Analysts denounce double-standard in Public Prosecutor's Office in SEMILLA investigation

The La Hora newspaper reports:

On July 12, the head of the Special Prosecutor's Office (MP) Against Impunity (FECI), Rafael Curruchiche, announced the suspension of the SEMILLA Party for alleged falsification of signatures during the legalization of the party, including deceased persons.

However, there are 18 similar complaints against other political parties that have had received little or no attention from the MP's office.

La Hora found at least 18 complaints were made to Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) from 2020-2023, related to political parties allegedly signing the names of deceased people as members of their parties. [...]

Analyst Renzo Rosal pointed out that, as mentioned in La Hora, there are reports of alterations of signatures by other political parties, which "have not advanced, while the case of Semilla "surprisingly" does. There is an evident bias of the MP in the case against the Semilla party." [...]

Manfredo Marroquin, of Acción Ciudadana, agreed that it is a selective case, since the Prosecutor's Office of Electoral Affairs has received hundreds of

denunciations, and not only in cases of party registration, but also about the use of public funds for campaigning, but coincidentally only in this case does the MP seem to be strongly determined to try to penalize the party, as well as its members.

"It is not strange, it is a case of selective justice", stressed Marroquín. [...]

For Eduardo Velásquez, it seems to be a case of selective persecution. "It could be that other parties have similar problems and they are not investigated, especially if they are parties that are linked to the 'covenant of the corrupt', as they are colloquially known."

(<https://lahora.gt/nacionales/diego/2023/08/01/tse-abre-investigacion-possible-campana-negra-de-la-fct-contra-semilla/>)

A Semilla party government will take on systemic corruption

The SEMILLA party has proposed 10 measures to combat corruption that is systemic and endemic in Guatemala. At a press conference, Semilla party candidates for President and Vice-President - Bernardo Arévalo and Karin Herrera – made these points:

- Creation of a specific anti-corruption cabinet
- Creation of an Anti-Corruption Surveillance Commission
- Creation of a new 'Open Government' plan
- Reforms related to transparency and probity (honesty and decency)
- The purging of 'ghost' employee positions on ministry payrolls
- Purging of harmful government contracts
- Recovery of control over ports
- Establishment of clear government anti-bribery policies
- Implementation of a support plan for transparent municipalities
- Reforms to Criminal Code to create legal figure of 'civil death' for those convicted of corruption

Prensa Comunitaria, August 2, 2023, <https://twitter.com/PrensaComunitar/status/1686857400731525120>

US and Canadian responsibility!

Rights Action reiterates that the US and Canadian governments, our companies and investors, have a significant measure of responsibility for what is occurring in Guatemala, given the past 69 years of full economic, political and military relations with repressive, 'open for global business', Covenant of the Corrupt regimes, always referred to as "democratic allies".

Electoral coup d'état in Guatemala A democracy and rule of law challenge for United States and Canada

By Grahame Russell, July 24, 2023

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/electoral-coup-detat-in-guatemala>

Rights Action calls for Americans and Canadians to share this information widely (including media outlets), and to contact your Senators, Members of Congress and Parliamentarian. Urge them to make public statements and bring all pressures to bear on the Guatemalan authorities to ensure that the electoral process proceeds transparently and peacefully to the August 20 run-off vote, and that the Semilla Party is allowed to participate fully with no further attacks of any kind.

- Senate: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>
- House: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- Parliament: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

More information

- Rights Action's "Guatemala Election Watch" alerts: <https://rightsaction.org/emails>
- Daily twitter feeds: Festivales Solidarios (@festivalesgt) / Prensa Comunitaria (@PrensaComunitar)
- Prensa Comunitaria's daily news: <https://prensacomunitaria.org/>

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