



Educación fransforma

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¡Bienvenidos y Bienvenidas! Welcome to Guatemala, a resilient and diverse country brimming with life. Aristotle advises, "If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development." With this in mind, we invite you to embark on a brief journey through Guatemala's intricate history. As you explore these pages, let go of your preconceptions and watch Guatemala come to life.

Reach out and touch the vivid tapestry that is Guatemala. Observe and appreciate the country's unique and legendary beauty, but don't stop there. Accept the challenge to look beyond the breathtaking landscapes and rich culture. Look closer. Notice the holes, rips, and snags—tragedy, corruption, and injustice—that consistently work their way into the cloth of Guatemala's history. Run your fingers over these imperfections. They are as much a part of the weaving as the colorful strings and elaborate patterns, but the heart of the fabric is pliable and resilient.

Guatemala hasn't faded or unraveled over time because the threads of hope are always tightly woven in. We invite you to become an active participant in working for change, weaving threads of hope and peace, in Guatemala.

HOPE*

In the darkest, most sordid, hostile, bitter, corrupt and nauseating places, You do your work. That is why your Son descended into hell, in order to transform that which IS NOT and to purge that which BELIEVES ITSELF TO BE.

ESPERANZA

En lo más oscuro y sórdido, En lo más hostil y áspero, En lo más corrupto y asqueante, Allí obras Tú. Por eso tu Hijo Bajó a los infiernos, Para transformar lo que NO ES Y para depurar LO QUE CREE SER. ¡Esto es esperanza!

^{*}Julia Esquivel, 1994. Threatened with Resurrection: Prayers and Poems from an Exiled Guatemalan. Second Edition, p. 105-107.

Key moments of Guatemala's History

There is a book by Edelberto Torres Rivas, entitled "Interpretation of the Central American Social Development". It was published in 1991 and its main point is to analyze six decisive dates in the history of Guatemala. In order to understand the present historical reality,

1492, 1821

1871, 1920

1944 and 1963

However, we have added two more dates: 1996 and 2015.

The so-called discovery of America it was really an encounter between the European and the inhabitants of Abya Yala which is a Kuna's name for pre hispanic America meaning "our land". The Iberian kingdoms had been fighting the moors of northern Africa for 800 hundred years. Thus, they were far better prepared for war than the indigenous people of pre hispanic America. In 1821 the creoles started an independent movement in order to free themselves from taxes to the Spanish monarchy; but the harsh situation of indigenous and mestizo people did not change at all after the independence movement. By 1871 the mestizo group represented by the liberal and conservative parties took the power of the State and they decided a mestizo state that is very well in place today. From 1898 to 1920 which is one of the most bizarre periods in our history, the liberal dictator, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, ran the government with iron hand. Finally, in 1920 he was expelled from the country by the so-called unionist movement which was an alliance of different popular groups and some members of the economic elite. They wanted to make Guatemala a democratic nation so much for only good intentions, a coup d'état lead by their army put an end to the first attempt to have a democratic society in 1921. Again, in 1944 popular protest lead by their teacher's guild, some officers of the army, and just plain citizens began walking in the streets of Guatemala protesting the 14 years dictatorship and this movement generated the most promising period in the history of Guatemala, that is 1944 to 1954.

Six years later, 1960 an internal armed conflict began and lasted 36 years. It finished in 1996 after signing 12 peace accords. All the hostilities ceased and a new historical possibility came into being, especially after the outcome of the conflict: 250,000 dead, mostly non-combatant civilians; 50,000 "disappeared" and a very large number of persons in exile. In order to have a fair understanding

of the history of Guatemala, one has to deal with the main features of each of these historical phases, which will clarify what is going on right now.

The Spanish men that came to America with Columbus had one main interest: get rich, go back to Spain, buy a plot of good land, probably buy a nobility title, settled down to enjoy the good life. However, that dream was not easy to fulfill. So, for the Spanish conquistadors it became kind of difficult to go back to Spain, so they decided to stay here and to enslave the indigenous people. We have some exceptions of these cases in which the Catholic Church helped the indigenous but they were very rare cases that did not amount to a significant quantity.

In 1821, the independence movement was an unstoppable force throughout North, Central and South America. There were wars of independence in North America and South America. In Central America, however, everything was settled by a political transaction between economic and political groups, Spanish born in Spain and Spanish born in Guatemala made a deal from which both groups were going to get gains, and to keep the control of the State apparatus.

From 1492 to 1821 a new type of a Guatemalan grew to good numbers, the ladino population, a mixture of Indian and Spanish, and in latter times a mixture of Indian, Black and Spanish. Mainly the father was Spanish but absent, the mother was an Indian. The issue of identity became an essential part of being a Guatemalan and it was not settled until 1996. In 1871, the ladino took over the power of the State and they designed a ladino nation with a ladino constitution, a ladino by-laws, and the issue of land tenure and land ownership took a dramatic turn as the last communal lands were taken away from their indigenous rightful owners, this event gave birth to the Guatemalan oligarchy which is still very much in control today, and land tenure became the problem to solve in order to have a viable country. Guatemala is basically a forestall and agricultural country, so land tenure is decisive to decide to establish who has power and who has not.

From 1871 to 1944 there are seventy-three years of history that prepared the Guatemalan urban middle classes to demand a long-waited human rights and civil liberties, in October 20, 1944, after four months of popular unrest, the 14 years dictatorship was overthrew and a triumvirate of two army officers and a civilian man took charge until free democratic elections were going to be held in 1946 for the first time in our history. Also, in this occasion women were allowed to vote for the first time in our history.

A constitutional assembly was elected and they approved a new constitution, also established an election program to elect a president and a new congress. Free elections were going to be taken place for the first time in the history of Guatemala, this event of 1944 gave us our first democratically elected president,

Dr. Juan José Arevalo, a teacher, a college professor that pushed for a new labor code to promote and to regulate labor and capital relationships. He proposed the Social Security Institute, freedom of the press, freedom of political parties, freedom of association and a massive program to build modern schools, and to pass a new teacher's tenure system. Additionally, he granted autonomy to the National University, and also he created the humanities school within the National University of Guatemala. This government provided day-care center for working mothers. Again in 1951 we had a second democratic election. This time, Jacobo Arbenz was elected, and he had three main points in his presidential program:

- 1. To build a hydroelectric project to make electricity cheap and accessible to all citizens.
- 2. To build a road to the Atlantic coastal plains so that everybody could transport goods overseas.
- The 900 decree or Land Reform Law.

After a much heated debate, congress voted and approved the law. There is a book by an American scholar Piero Gleijeses called "Shattered Hope". Here Dr. Gleijeses gives a detailed description of the relationships of the Guatemalan and the US government between 1944 and 1954. The 900 decree caused too many misgivings in the private sector, which sought the help of the press to attack the government initiatives. The government was labeled subversive and inclined to communist ideas. The US Ambassador in Guatemala became very active in favor of the opposition and against the land reform program. The CIA prepared what they called "Operation Success" aimed to undermine the government and to join the initiatives in the direction of overthrowing the government. The land elite, the conservative archbishop, the very conservative protestant church, all came together and the government was overthrew on June 27, 1954.

The status quo held before 1944 came back into place immediately, and remains there until today. The democratic spaces opened by the period 1944-1954 were closed suddenly. The citizens were not able to exert their long-fought, long-won rights; so by November 1960, six years after the CIA intervention in Guatemala, a civil war broke out and lasted for 36 years.

In 1996, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity which comprised the four guerrilla groups and the government of Guatemala backed by the International Community signed 12 peace accords. Among them, and probably the most significant, "the right and identity of indigenous people"; the peace accords on human rights and the peace accord in socio-economic and agrarian reality. The 12 accords are quite accurate on the analysis of the reality of Guatemala, but they have not been implemented properly, in many cases, the causes of the civil

conflict are intact and present a latent threat to peace, especially to those who refuse to get into a great national dialogue to solve the perennial problems of our society.

Since 1985, we have had eight free elections every four years, we have elected eight presidents and vice presidents, even though the second elected president resigned in the midst of his term, accused of political corruption but the Constitution was able to keep the rule of law in place. Again, in 2015 the president and the vice president were forced to resign due to charges of blatant corruption; they are awaiting trial in prison today. The popular protest of 2015 that ousted the government showed an unknown will on the part of the common citizens since they were not to allow any longer corrupted politicians that used public resources under their own benefit. We have to recognize the role of the United Nations outfit called International Commission Against Impunity of Guatemala (CICIG), which leads the main efforts to eradicate corruption in the public spheres and has the support of most Guatemalans, even though some very conservative sectors have opposed the functioning of the International Commission against Impunity.

What we know as a democratic period began in 1985. Here we have had eight free democratically elected government every four years. It is safe to point out that the outcome of these new crusade against corruption was reflected in our last election of 2015. Jimmy Morales, a TV comedian, without political experience or expertise was elected president. His slogan was very catchy, "I am not corrupt, not a thief". The popular frustration, the lack of a better qualified candidate and the candid approach of Mr. Morales got him elected. He began his 4-year term on January 15, 2016.

However, in order to take this ship to a safe port there are some steps that need to be taken in order to diminish social conflictivity that is really engulfing the country. Here, some of the main issues: Landless peasants, low salaries, over exploitation of large areas of land on mining, palm tree and oil. Also, drugs, weapons and human trafficking, the precarious health system, the school system, citizen's security, infrastructure and mainly immigration to the USA. The reenactment of the Peace Accords, which became 20 years old in 2016, the civic lesson learned from the popular protest of 2015, both, should tell us that the new actions and political emergent groups cannot be manipulated anymore, and this is a sign that citizenry is maturing after all these years.

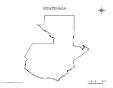
What are the real issues in Guatemala today?

1. Guatemala is a young country, and women and young people are in the leading areas of a new awareness. These two groups must be taken into account for the design and implementation of public policies that benefit the entire society.

- 2. The political party system, in their case, they have two options, they renewed in a radical way their proposal or they will perish.
- 3. The present government must be honest and fight corruption in order to contribute to change the old political ways that have caused so much damage since 1821;
- 4. The private sector has to come to terms with the demands of 80% of the population, 60% lives in poverty and 20% lives in extreme poverty, and the demands are not only political per se, they are life demands, they must comply with their fiscal responsibilities in order to help this country.
- 5. The civil society which emerged after the Peace Accords, they need to focus on public policies that are viable and that should be implemented in accordance with other sectors of society even with those that show no ideological affinity.
- 6. The religious sector must begin acting according to the real values and principles of their Christian heritage, they must stop competing for the souls of the Guatemalan people, and they should begin tending bridges among all groups in society.
- 7. We need to continue to support the work of the International Commission against Impunity of Guatemala until we, as a society, can take care of our decisive affairs of justice, security and the rule of law.

Guatemalans, as a society have the historical opportunity to keep their politicians honest, to implement the Peace Accords, to participate in a great national dialogue without hidden agendas, to learn from history not to make the mistakes of the past that cause so many tragedies, under development and political stagnation. In the specific case, of a Christian organization, such as CEDEPCA, we must keep advancing the Kingdom of God.

Geography



Guatemala is the third largest country in Central America, bordering Mexico to the north and west, Belize and the Caribbean Sea to the northeast, Honduras to the east, El Salvador to the southeast, and the Pacific Ocean to the south/southwest.

At just over 42,000 square miles (108,889 km2¹) this mostly mountainous, exceptionally bio-diverse territory compares roughly in size to the U.S. state of Tennessee or the Canadian island of Newfoundland.

Three tectonic plates run below Guatemala's surface, while above are 37 volcanoes, four of which are active: Fuego, Santiaguito, Pacaya y Tacaná². For its consistently moderate climate and immense biodiversity, Guatemala is known as the *Land of the Eternal Spring*.

Guatemala's estimated 16.2 to 17 million³ inhabitants (women 51.1% - indigenous 40-60%)⁴ make it the most populous of Central American countries. The capital, Guatemala City (elevation 5,250 ft), is currently the largest city in Central America, boasting over three million people in the metro area. Portions of the ancient Mayan city, Kaminal Juyu, *circa* 1200 BCE, are preserved near the central part of the city. The word "Guatemala" is derived from *Quauhtemallan*, the Nahua name for Iximché (capital city of the Kaqchikel Maya) and means "the place of many trees." Guatemalan place names ending in *tenango* (place of) and *tlan* (abundant or place) are Nahuatl in origen. Because of extensive contact between Nahua and Mayan people before the Spanish conquest, many Guatemalan places have three names.

¹ http://onu.org.gt/acerca-de-guatemala/ (consulted December 2017).

² https://canalantigua.tv/estos-son-los-4-volcanes-mas-activos-en-guatemala/ (consulted December 2017)

³ http://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/comunitario/poblacion-supera-los-171-millones (consulted December 2017)

⁴https://www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2014/02/26/L5pNHMXzxy5FFWmk9NHCrK9x7E5Qqvvy.pd <u>f</u>. Some consider that it's 40%, but according to different social organizations and analysts consider that the majority population must reach 60%.

Spanish is Guatemala's official language. In addition, there are **22 Mayan languages** plus **Xinka** and **Garífuna**, that are spoken in Guatemala⁵. About half of Guatemalans are indigenous Mayas living in all departments of the country. The Xinka are a Nahua people who live primarily in southeastern Guatemala near the Salvadoran border, and the Afro-Caribbean Garífuna people live on the Atlantic coast. The largest Mayan groups are the **K'iche'**, **Kaqchikel**, **Q'eqchi'** and **Mam**.

Ladinos are people of mixed race who no longer speak a Mayan language or practice Mayan customs. Since the Spanish invasion, official policy toward the indigenous population has ranged from extermination to assimilation. In practice, this means that determining who is indigenous and who is ladino is fluid and subjective. Guatemalans in general, whether ladino or indigenous, identify with the term "Chapin," a synonym for *guatemalteco*.

Cultural assimilation (from Mayan to ladino) promises increased economic opportunity to indigenous people who abandon their traditional language and cultural identity. For example, in traditional indigenous communities men speak more Spanish than women and most women wear traditional dress, called *traje*. In a racist society, many parents choose not to teach their ancestral tongue to their children, hoping to provide them more opportunity for economic advancement. In recent decades, many Mayan leaders have proposed the formal recognition of Guatemala as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual state. Some progress has been made in the legal and educational realms, but much remains to be done.



The human development index for 2015 is 0.492%, while for the year 2000 it was 0.421%.

⁵ https://www.oas.org/children/members/guatemala_idiomas.html (consulted December 2017)

⁶ Data was consulted in Spanish: Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2015/2016 [National Report of Human Development]. Guatemala. http://desarrollohumano.org.gt/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/INDH Completo digital-1.pdf. (Consulted December 2017).



Poverty is the reality for the majority of persons in the country. It is estimated that 67% of the total population live in poverty, and that 23% live in extreme poverty, with less than US\$3 per day. According to the national report on human development, poverty in Guatemala increased 7% from 2003 to 2013. There are clear contrasts in the city; one can see large, luxurious commercial centers, costly housing developments and, at the same time, view very poor neighborhoods or large settlements in which about 41% of the population live. Inequality is also evident in the following ways: 90% of the indigenous and rural population don't have access to having their basic needs met; 40% of the adult population has had no schooling and lives in precarious conditions; the poor non-indigenous adult population is 39% while the poor indigenous adult population is 73%. This poverty is called *multidimensional* and the deprivations are summed up in three principal dimensions: education, health, and income.



Despite efforts made by the Peace Accords of 1996 to give more funding and priority to education in Guatemala, the public education system is generally known to be under-staffed and under-funded. The first six years of education are mandatory and supposed to be guaranteed as free of charge, but teachers with few resources are often forced to require monetary and material donations from their students and students' families to keep the school running throughout the year. The estimate of school attendance for 2015 was 47.3% in the preprimary level; 82.3% in primary (grades 1-6); 44.9% in secondary or middle school (grades 7-9), and only 24.4% in "diversified" or high school. During the 2015 academic year, enrolled students reached a total of 4.1 million in all sectors, public and private. The primary reason for absenteeism and school desertion is poverty (63% desertion in diversified - high school - among the indigenous population). According to statistics, the number of registered teachers for 2014 was 253,578. The literacy rate of persons age 15 years or older, is 87.69%; 1,241,032 are unable to read or write. Finally, in higher education, 0.14% (24,442) of the total population graduated in 2013 from private institutions and the public university, and for the year 2015, 4,971 graduated from the public university. 7

⁷http://www.empresariosporlaeducacion.org/sites/default/files/Contenido/Recursos/Documentos/Documentos/20Guatemala/indicadores educativos de guatemala 2016 0.pdf (consulted December 2017).



The private sector in the area of health care is growing in recent years, since the public health system is at rock bottom; given this situation, very few people have access to dignified medical services. The national budget of the health sector in 2015 was Q10,158.4 million (\$1,384,000), of which only Q1,657.4 million were designated for the indigenous population, which is the majority in the country. Access to a public hospital in an urban area is 19.7% and 16.7% rural areas, while access to a private clinic is 28.3% urban areas and 15.4% in rural areas. Records show that, in 2015, only 42.5% of the population was able to cover their medical expenses.



Food security and income

The basic nutritional needs of Guatemalans are not met. According to statistics, 2015 reports show that 16% of Guatemala's citizens are malnourished, a rate worse than India. 46.5% of children (ages 3 to 59 months) are chronically malnourished. It is estimated that 58% of the indigenous population suffers from malnutrition. Among the causes of this malnutrition are the poor (bad) distribution, planning, and use of the land; the lack of public policies, and the unequal distribution of public resources.

Since Guatemala is a country that is primarily agricultural, and in which thousands of families depend on the cultivation of crops, it is highly vulnerable to the risks from the irregular rains and unusually high temperatures that kill crops and cause immediate food shortages, a sharp rise in unemployment, and disease. Particularly vulnerable are the rural poor who live in the most affected area, Guatemala's "Dry Corridor," consisting of 10 of the 22 departments (or provinces) highlighted below. The reports from the Ministry of Health also attribute the increase in preventable childhood diseases, malnutrition, diarrhea, and acute respiratory infections to the erratic rains, especially in the Dry Corridor.

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https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.STNT.ZS?end=2016&locations=GT-1W&start=1987&view=chart&year_high_desc=false (consulted December 2017)

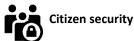
Minimum Wage vs. Cost of Basic Food Basket (BB) & Basket of Goods and Services (BGS)⁹:

Date	Cost of B.B.	Cost per	Minimum	Cost of	Cost of
	per day	B.B. per	wage per	B.G.S. per	B.G.S. per
		month	month	day	month
June 2015	Q113.52	Q3,405.60	Q2,644.36	Q207.15	Q6,214.60
			/ \$360.24		
June 2016	Q125.78	Q3,773.40	Q2,740.21	Q229.53	Q6,885.77
			/ \$373.30		
June 2017	Q145.05	Q4,351.35	Q2,893.21	Q264.68	Q7,940.42
			/ \$394.15		

(These amounts are based on an average-sized family of 5.38 people. The Basic Food Basket measures the cost of a family's basic dietary requirements and the Basket of Goods and Services measures the cost of food, health, housing, clothing, education, transportation, and leisure activities)

Minimum wage according to Ministry of Labor (2020)10

Economic activities	Cost per day per hour	Daily wage	Monthly wage	Bonification	Total
Non-agricultural	Q11.27	Q92.88	Q2,825.10	Q250.00	Q3,075.10
Agricultural	Q11.27	Q90.16	Q2,742.37	Q250.00	Q2,992.37
Exporting/Maquila	Q10.61	Q84.88	Q2,581.77	Q250.00	Q2,831.77



Safety and security have seen a worldwide decline over the last decade and 2017 was no different — this score fell more than in any other year of the Index. Unfortunately, Guatemala currently occupies the 108th position, among 148 countries¹¹, on the issue of security; Singapore is the best on these issues, occupying first place. Further, the *Technical Secretary of the National Security Council*¹² registered, in 2017, a rate of 26.8% homicides for every 100,000 inhabitants; for 2018, the rate was to 25.2%, a decrease of 1.6 points compared with the rate from January 2017.

⁹https://www.ine.gob.gt/ine/canasta-basica-alimentaria/ (consulted February 2020)

¹⁰ https://www.mintrabajo.gob.gt/index.php/dgt/salario-minimo (Consulted February 2020

¹¹ http://www.prosperity.com/rankings?pinned=GTM&filter= (consulted June 1, 2018)

 $^{^{12}}$ Statistics from the 2018 Report of the Technical Secretary of the National Security Council, Republic of Guatemala, p. 6



Source: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gt.html.
Page last updated January 2020

- Life expectancy at birth: 72.5 (70.3 years for men and 74.5 years for women.)
- Median age: 23.2 years
- Mortality rate: 4.7% deaths/1000 live births
- Birth rate: 23.3%
- © Open unemployment: 5% (8% women 3.7% men)¹³
- Economically Active Persons: 61.5%¹⁴
- Workers in the informal economic sector: 69.8%
- Population without life insurance: 73.3%
- Population without access to water: 13.5%
- Rural population without access to electricity: 30%
- Population without access to formal garbage collection: 61.7%
- Access to the use of contraceptives: 60.6% (2014-2015)
- The state invests Q0.45 in an indigenous person for each quetzal (Q1.00) that it invests in a *ladina/mestiza* person
- Only 14% of the schools provide bilingual classes (Spanish-Mayan language).

Government

Guatemala is a representative democracy. The country is divided into 22 administrative regions or provinces known as departamentos. Each departamento is divided into municipios, or municipalities, which are similar to U.S. counties. Guatemala has 340 municipios. The government functions through three branches: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. Executive power is held by a president who is elected by direct universal adult suffrage to a single term of four years. The President is assisted by a Vice President and an appointed cabinet. The unicameral legislature consists of departmental and national representatives also elected to four-year terms. Judicial power rests in a Court of Constitutionality, a Supreme Court and subordinate courts.

 $\underline{https://www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2016/09/22/PKdhtXMmr18n2L9K88eMlGn7CcctT9Rw.pd}$

¹³

<u>f. P.</u> Page 10. (consulted December 2017) ¹⁴ Ibid, p.45 (consulted December 2017)

The current government serves from January 2016 to January 2020. Guatemala's next general elections will be held on June 2019. It is estimated that 36 political parties will participate. The candidates who have participated in previous elections – Zury Ríos, Alejandro Giammattei and Sandra Torres – lead the political race¹⁵.



Alejandro Eduardo Giammattei Falla (born 9 March 1956) is a Guatemalan politician who is the incumbent president of Guatemala. He is a former director of the Guatemalan penitentiary system and participated in Guatemala's presidential elections in 2007, 2011, and 2015. He won in the 2019 election and assumed office on January 14, 2020. Giammattei became the presidential candidate for the Vamos party in the 2019 presidential elections. He lost the first round on June 16, 2019 with 13.95% of the vote, but won the second round against Sandra Torres on August 11, 2019 with 57.96% of the vote. On January 14, 2020, Giammattei assumed office as president of the Republic of Guatemala, succeeding Jimmy Morales.

Vice-President: César Guillermo Castillo Reyes (born March 17, 1966) is a Guatemalan lawyer and politician and the current Vice President of Guatemala. Castillo graduated as a lawyer from the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala in 1998 and then completed a master's degree in human rights at the Rafael Landívar University. Castillo was Deputy Minister of Labor from January 2004 to May 2005. He also served as a member of the board of directors of the Bar Association and Notaries of Guatemala. In 2013 he was appointed executive director of the Chamber of Commerce of Guatemala, leaving office in 2018. In the National Assembly of Vamos, he was elected candidate for Vice President and running mate of Alejandro Giammattei.



The Congress of the Republic of Guatemala (Spanish: *Congreso de la República*) is the unicameral legislature of the Republic of Guatemala.

The Guatemalan Congress is made up of 160 deputies who are elected by direct universal suffrage to serve four-year terms. The electoral system is closed party list proportional representation. 31 of the deputies are elected on a nationwide list, while the remaining 127 deputies are elected in 22 multi-member constituencies. Each of Guatemalas's 22 departments serves as a district, with

¹⁵ https://elperiodico.com.gt/nacion/2017/08/31/guatemala-tendria-36-partidos-politicos-para-laselecciones-de-2019/ (consulted November 2017) the exception of the department of Guatemala containing the capital, which on account of its size is divided into two (*distrito central and distrito Guatemala*). Departments are allocated seats based on their population size. The most prominent parties in 2019 are UNE (54 seats), VAMOS (16), and UCN (12 seats)¹⁶, all of which are identified as right of center on the political spectrum, with the exception of UNE, which is center left. The current president of congress (as of January 2020) is Alan Estuardo Rodriguez, of the Vamos party.



It is in charge of administering justice, with independence and power to judge. The Supreme Court is composed of 13 members, selected by Congress for a period of five years from a list submitted by the Bar Association, the deans of the law faculties, a university rector and the appellate judges. Each year, they choose a President among themselves who will supervise the trial judges in the country; the president up to 2019 is Silvia Patricia Valdés. The Judicial Branch functions by means of four (4) entities: 1) Supreme Court of Justice 2) Appeals Court 3) Trial courts 4) Justices of the Peace.

International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)

Guatemala's historically compromised judiciary system made significant strides during Colom's 2008-2012 presidency, due in large part to an international treaty signed in 2006 by the United Nations and Guatemala creating the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (Spanish acronym – CICIG). Amnesty International reported that, of 5,960 murders in Guatemala during 2011, only 1% resulted in a conviction. It was directed by Commissioner Iván Velázquez, the CICIG played an important role in the Guatemalan "coyuntura" (juncture or situation). In 2015, the CICIG exposed an investigation that implicated thenpresident Otto Pérez Molina and then-vice-president Roxana Baldetti; the investigation resulted in orders for pre-trial hearings for both leaders and in indignation on the part of the population, who demanded (and successfully obtained) both of their resignations. In 2016, new cases of corruption were revealed that implicated the son and the brother of the current president, Jimmy Morales, and later implicated the president himself. On January 7, 2019 the agreement between the United Nations and Guatemala was terminated by Guatemalan president Jimmy Morales, evoking CICIG's alleged participation in illegal acts, abuse of authority and acts against the constitution. The UN rejected this unilateral termination, and the country's highest law court ruled against the president's decision CICIG's term was scheduled to end in September 2019.

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¹⁶ http://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/fcnnacion-supera-a-diputados-transfugas-delider (consulted June, 2018)

Morales' decision, approved by the country's business elite, triggered an institutional crisis in Guatemala, as the Constitutional court sided with CICIG. Morales is being investigated concerning his campaign financing.

Femicide – Migrations – Child and Adolescent

Femicide¹⁷

Femicide is the systematic killing of women based solely on their gender. Femicide has been known to include rape, torture, and dismemberment before and after death.

According to information from the Guatemalan Public Prosecutor's Office, about 8,000 women and girls have been murdered from 2000 to 2014, many of them raped and mutilated, their bodies discarded in public places. **Fewer than 2% of cases have resulted in conviction**. This widespread impunity for femicide has undoubtedly created a climate that perpetuates violence against women. An average of 700 females are killed yearly. 2010 is by far the most violent year, in which the violent killing of 842 females was reported.

The largest number of violent deaths occur in women from 20 to 24 years of age; the second highest range is in women from 15 to 19 years. Guatemala is in first place, El Progreso second, Izabal third and Escuintla is in fourth place, in reports on the highest numbers of femicide cases in the country¹⁸. The government has pledged to help end violence against women, but independent studies have shown that investigators continue to mishandle evidence, contaminating crime scenes or failing to collect evidence. The police, prosecutors, and government officials tend to blame the victims for these murders, categorizing the victims as prostitutes, gang members, or criminals.

During 2016, 8,153 cases related to femicide were filed in courts at a national level, of which only 42% were moved on to courts for sentencing¹⁹. According to the Gender Equality Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean, 211 femicides were registered in Guatemala in 2016 and, according to some analysts, the government of Jimmy Morales, is the one that pays the least attention to women's issues. It is estimated that, during the current government, women

¹⁷ http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77421/1/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf

¹⁸http://www.albedrio.org/htm/otrosdocs/comunicados/GAM-Mujer2008-2016.pdf (consulted December 2017.

¹⁹ https://elperiodico.com.gt/nacion/2017/04/22/mujeres-son-las-principales-victimas-deviolencia-a-nivel-nacional/ (consulted December 2017).

have suffered a greater number of violent acts. During 2016, 739 women died from violent causes²⁰.

¿Why is there so much violence against women in Guatemala?

Guatemala's 36-year civil war resulted in the rape, torture, and murder of tens of thousands of women. Violence against women became a weapon of war. During the conflict, thousands of soldiers were trained to commit acts of gendered violence. They returned to civilian life without receiving any orientation that might challenge such brutal training. Government officials tend to attribute violence against women to gangs, noting that gang violence has grown dramatically over the past 15 years.

Experts are more prone to link the violence with patriarchy. As more women enter the workforce, men sometimes blame women for their unemployment. Men also resist changes in gender roles within the home. In 2008, 61% of femicides were the result of domestic violence. Guatemalan women are also susceptible to less blatant forms of violence, such as unequal pay and lack of access to education, healthcare and family planning.

In June of 2012, the Nobel Women's Initiative and the Just Associates (JASS) released a report investigating violence against women in Guatemala. The report, co-authored by Nobel Peace Laureates Rigoberta Menchú Tum and Jody Williams, concludes in short: the civil war's legacy of violence and impunity in Guatemala, increased militarization in recent years, land and resource conflicts, and the influence of foreign governments and businesses are all major contributing factors to the ongoing violence specifically directed at women. The report also states that **femicide in Guatemala has "reached crisis dimensions."** Source: Women Confronting Violence in Mexico, Honduras & Guatemala. Nobel Women's Initiative, JAAS. June 2012.

A recent Amnesty International report plainly states, "The [Guatemalan] government typically fails to conduct investigations or prosecute the perpetrators of women's murders." Without a doubt, Guatemala's current femicide crisis leaves much work to be done for Guatemala's social movements, which are increasingly led by women.

18

²⁰ http://www.albedrio.org/htm/otrosdocs/comunicados/GAM-Mujer2008-2016.pdf (consulted December 2017).



- **1946** Guatemalan women gain the right to vote and to be elected.
- 1956- First woman is elected to Congress.
- **1985** Constitutional amendment guarantees equality to men and women in all spheres of life.
- **1996** Congress passes a law protecting women from physical and psychological violence in their homes.
- **2006** Congress revokes 1877 law which had allowed husbands to bar their wives from seeking employment outside the home. The 2006 law also requires that rape and other sexual violence be punished. Previously, a rapist could avoid sanctions if he agreed to marry the victim.
- **2008** Law against **femicide** provides mechanisms, not yet fully implemented, for eliminating violence against women.
- 2012- A staggering 99% of femicide cases still go unprosecuted, according to a 2012 report by MADRE to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations
- 2015- Law prohibiting marriage of minors younger than 18 years of age
- 2016- Women participating (as judges) in the justice courts: 46.7%²¹
- **2016** Approval of Law calling for immediate search for disappeared women
- 2017- Women elected to parliament (congress): 12.7%
- 2020 Women elected to parliament (congress): 21 (13%) ²²

Additional Statistics on Women²³:



- Population of NON-remunerated working women: 14.2%
 Fertility rate (births per woman): 2.72 children born/woman (2020 est)
 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gt.html
- Guatemala occupies 105th place out of 145, in Gender inequality on a global level
- Only 0.7% of women occupy positions as managers or directors

²¹ https://oig.cepal.org/es/paises/15/profile (consulted November 2017).

²² http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3153/ (consulted February 2020).

²³ Data taken from http://www.albedrio.org/htm/otrosdocs/comunicados/GAM-Mujer2008-2016.pdf and http://desarrollohumano.org.gt/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/INDH Completo digital-1.pdf (consulted November and December 2017).

- For each Q1 received (earned) by a man, a woman receives an average of Q0.78
- 1 out of every 5 adolescents between 15 and 19 years, is already a mother or is now pregnant

Childhood and adolescence

"Children and adolescents" is another sector of the population that is essentially marginalized. Very few public policies exist in favor of this population, and the possibilities for development for the great majority of children and youth are very limited. In a country where the majority are poor, children are the most vulnerable to the consequences of this poverty. They are exposed to suffering, mistreatment, labor exploitation, family disintegration, sexual abuse, etc. Keeping all this in mind, and adding that adolescents are the most likely to get involved in gangs or criminal groups, and that these make up the majority of the total population, public investment in this sector is very low: daily investment in children and adolescents in Guatemala is 0.17%. Add to this that utilization of these funds up through 2013 was at 86.5%²⁴. More than 3.7 million girls and boys live in poverty, and 1.6 million are in vulnerable conditions.

According to several organizations, the situation of children and adolescents worsened during the previous government (2012-2015), and during the first two years of the current government, their situation seems to have deteriorated even more.

"During the year 2016, five persons under 11 years of age committed suicide. During the first semester of 2017, there was a series of events that underline how the state and the society themselves conceive of childhood and adolescence in Guatemala: the fire in the "Virgen de la Asunción" Safe Home in which 41 girls and teens were burned to death, death of Brenda Domínguez who was run over while she was demonstrating for her right to an education... and the death from malnutrition of Mavélita Interiano, who was under protective orders so that the State would guarantee her right to live." – (*Report: situation of children and adolescents, Guatemala 2016-2017*, Office of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Guatemala).²⁵

²⁴ Icefi / Plan Internacional en base a Institutos de Estadística (consulted December 2017).

²⁵ Informe: situación de la niñez y adolescencia, Guatemala 2016-2017, Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala

Additional Statistics 26:

- 4 out of every 10 inhabitants in Guatemala, are under 14 years of age
- 4 of every 10 poor persons are girls, boys, and teens under 15 years of age
- 6 of every 10 children live in extreme poverty
- 73,000 adolescent girls between 10 and 17 years of age reported pregnancies in 2015
- In 2016, Q6.53 was invested on each child, the equivalent of US\$0.87
- Public and private education allows only 5 out of 10 children and adolescents, from 0 to 20 years, to have access to education.
- 850,000 children work in Guatemala, which converts the country into the one with the highest child labor rate in the region.
- The minimum authorized age to work is 14 years



There are many migrations in Guatemala, not only to other countries (primarily the U.S.), but also within the country, from rural areas to urban areas. The majority of the persons who migrate are poor and the reasons for migrating are many, but essentially migration is due to unemployment and lack of a minimum level of social guarantees. This converts into a dream: to be able to count on sufficient income to live a dignified life, to count on minimum social guarantees or safety nets, and for the family to be able to enjoy that security/safety both inside and outside the country.

Central American migration has grown rapidly in recent decades, but more than two in five Central American immigrants lack legal immigration status, while about one in ten live in the United States under temporary humanitarian protection.

The vast majority of undocumented Central American immigrants going to the U.S. are 15-45 years old and 60% are between 25 and 40 years old. 80.0% of men and 65.0% of women find employment in the United States, especially in the states of California, Nevada, and Arizona, where they make up approximately 10% of the work force. These undocumented immigrants are most likely to hold

²⁶ Major reference: Ibid. (consulted December 2017).

jobs in farming, building/grounds maintenance, construction, food preparation/service, production, and transportation/ material moving.

In order to arrive in the US, undocumented immigrants usually pay a *coyote* (human trafficker) between US \$5,000-\$10,000, plus an additional \$1,500 to cross the border. During this journey, migrants passing through Mexico are known targets of **kidnapping**, **abuse**, **robbery**, **and sexual assault** by police and organized gangs, and women have an 80% chance of being raped. Because these migrants are traveling without legal travel documents, they are often too afraid to report the crimes against them, so the vast majority of the assaults go undocumented, and the offenders go unpunished.

Despite these incredible risks, approximately **6,000-12,000 Guatemalans risk their lives each year to reach the United States**, where the need for seasonal unskilled labor is almost constant. By moving to the United States, the annual income of most workers rises by 250%, after taking into account the cost-of-living differences between the two countries. With this huge increase of income, approximately 98% of undocumented immigrants send money home, known as *remittances*. This money is usually used to supplement daily household budgets (especially for food) or for home-improvement back home. **49.4%** of **remittances** are used to **supplement household budgets**, mainly for food; 20.4% are spent on **other goods and services**; 12% are **invested or saved**; 11.8% percent goes toward **education and health**. Around 1,860,287 Guatemalans abroad sent remittances in 2016. The approximate number of persons receiving remittances was 6,212,099, of which 45.0% were **men** and 55.0% were **women**. The **average Guatemalan** in the U.S. sends home \$379 per **month**; in 2018 a total of US\$ 9,287,000.8 was calculated in remittances.²⁷

Undocumented immigrants residing in the United States have few options for entering or residing legally. They are, therefore, subject to deportation. A total of 105,512 Guatemalans were deported from the United States and Mexico in 2019²⁸.

The options for working in the United States legally include obtaining a green card, a temporary work visa under H-2A or H-2B visa programs, or applying for political asylum/refuge.

The Immigration Act of 1990 set the overall yearly number of green cards at 675,000 with set quotas for family-sponsorship, skilled employees, and lottery. The cap for H-2B temporary work visas (for seasonal nonagricultural workers) is set at 66,000 and the H-2A work visas (for seasonal agricultural workers) have

http://igm.gob.gt/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/INFORME-ESTAD%C3%8DSTICO-CUANTITATIVO-ANUAL-GUATEMALTECOS-DEPORTADOS-2019.pdf (consulted February 2020)

22

²⁷ http://www.flacso.edu.gt/dialogo/?p=1837 (consulted February 2020). Guatemala en Cifras 2019, BANGUAT.

no cap, but strict requirements, making them extremely difficult to obtain. The roughly 150,000 legal work visas available to foreign-born people seeking to work in the U.S. simply do not accommodate the nearly 8.3 million jobs being filled by undocumented immigrants (who make up 5.4% of the total U.S. work force). This often makes undocumented immigration seem like the only option to foreigners seeking to work for a better life in the United States.

Most proponents of immigration reform suggest that the best option would be a widespread visa program for workers to legally come to temporarily hold jobs in the U.S. for 9-12 months. To give an idea of how pressing of an issue immigration has become, in the first half of 2012 alone, lawmakers in 41 states enacted 114 bills and adopted 92 resolutions that addressed immigration: legal immigrants, migrant and seasonal workers, refugees, and undocumented immigrants.

During the government of Barack Obama, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created in 2012; DACA protected undocumented people who had arrived in the U.S. during their childhood. Nevertheless, during the **first month** of the Obama administration, 32,419 persons were deported and 2.9 million total persons were deported during the entire Obama administration, the largest statistical number of all U.S. presidential administrations²⁹.

With the arrival of Donald Trump to power, migration policies are in danger of becoming even less favorable toward immigrants. From the beginning of his political campaign, Trump indicated that an important agenda item is control of migrations to the United States. In the development of the first two years of his government, these promises are becoming a reality. Trump's declarations about building a wall on the border with Mexico, and the intention of expelling the so-called "dreamers" (800,000 young people who arrived without documents in their early childhood) has now been initiated with the action of ending the DACA program; all this has created a great deal of worry for thousands of families and their governments.

23

²⁹ http://www.excelsior.com.mx/global/2017/02/21/1147798. (consulted December 2017).

Economic Key

Guatemala's economic indicators:30

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 2.31% in 2018	Exports: \$10,969.7 - 2018
GDP per cápita: 2018 - \$4,534.8 million	Key Exports: Clothing, Banana, Coffee, Sugar cane, Edible fats and oil
Composition of GDP by sector (by each Q100) Commerce – Q22.68 Industry – Q18.33 Mining – Q1.45	Imports: \$17,734.3 – 2018
External debt: \$8,224.6 million in 2018	Telephones ³¹ : 2,436 million Landlines in 2018 20.4 million cell phones in 2018 (Yes! There are more cell phones than people in Guatemala)



Environment

At only 14 degrees latitude, Guatemala lies within Earth's belt of tropical climates. Yet its elevated mountainous regions create temperate and cool climate zones, all of which create some of the greatest bio-diversity in the world (e.g., biologists estimate over 1,000 orchid species).

Colorful forest-covers host many endangered species, like the resplendent Quetzal bird, and play vital roles such as soil retention, mitigation of flooding and droughts, and protection of fresh water flows for human populations. Due to factors mostly in the last 50 years, though, (e.g., war, displacement,

³⁰ https://www.banguat.gob.gt/indicadores/indicadores economicos cortoplazo.pdf. (Consulted December 2017).

³¹ https://www.prensalibre.com/economia/telefonia-en-2018-se-registraron-471-mil-nuevas-lineas-moviles-segun-la-sit/ (consulted February 2020)

unsustainable export-based agriculture, illegal logging, single-crop agriculture, narco-ranching, etc.) forest cover has been reduced by over two thirds.

Threats to Ecological Integrity:

Displacement during the internal conflict forced many indigenous communities into fragile ecological zones such as the cloud forests of higher elevations. Acquiescence to global market forces increased the concentration of land ownership and further displacement of *campesinos* (peasants). Currently, 57% of the land is controlled by less than 2% of the producers.

An emerging agricultural development is the expansion of sugar cane and African palm tree cultivation for the production and export of bio-fuels, primarily for the European market. Land for sugar cane has almost doubled since 1995 to 241,000 hectares, making Guatemala's production of this crop the fifth largest on the planet. At 2015, the area cultivated with oil palm trees is estimated at 130,000 hectares, up from the reported 31,000 in 2005. Palm trees are now the fifth most important monoculture in Guatemala, following coffee, sugar, cardamom and rubber. Agricultural industry further concentrates plantations into even larger holdings, furthering the loss of biodiversity as well as eliminating plots for local communities' cultivation of food. Additionally, it is estimated that the water use for these export crops, primarily African Palm, banana and sugar cane, currently accounts for 70% of Guatemala's total water consumption.

Mining of metals such as gold, silver, mercury, copper, cobalt, chrome, iron, nickel, titanium, lead and zinc has become a volatile political issue in Guatemala. Rural Mayan communities (where the mining takes place) argue that mining pollutes ground water with cyanide, arsenic and heavy metals, fosters corruption, creates very few jobs and the state lacks the ability to enforce environmental regulations. Many rural Mayan communities began holding referendums (19 in total) against mining between 2006 and 2008, and 99.94% of the 295,310 residents who participated in the referendums voted against allowing mining in their communities.

Nonetheless, exports of silver and gold have increased from \$14.6 million in 2005 to \$388 million in 2014. Having previously paid 1% in royalties, which was the lowest rate in all of Latin America, in 2012 gold and silver mining companies began paying the Guatemalan state a rate of 4%. For every Q100 that the central government expended, it only obtained Q0.10 in taxes and royalties from the mining industry. For every Q100 of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), the state receives Q1.45 from the extractive industries. For the year 2016, only 4,800 jobs were generated among the entire operating extractive industry. Mining projects not only are not contributing significantly to the Guatemalan economy, they also

take a very high toll on the environment. A definitive shut-down of mining in Guatemala is not foreseen, so mining can continue to provoke damage even after closure of mines. Local communities are not in agreement with mining projects. It is estimated that, out of every 10 municipalities with mining projects, 8 have community conflicts. The extractive industry projects wipe out the forests, fertile land, water and inhabitable territory³².



Mayan spirituality

The Maya in Guatemala total about six million people, composing the largest Amerindian population of North and Central America. As with many Amerindian belief systems, Mayan spirituality emphasizes the need to preserve balance and harmony between the individual and the community and between humankind and all of creation. Mayan spirituality is rooted in millennia of careful observation of the stars, the Earth's seasons, and human behavior. Mayan scientists and priests developed the concept of the zero before the Arabs and a calendar, still in use, that is more accurate than the one we use today. Vast libraries filled with Mayan documents were destroyed by the Spanish invaders in the 16th Century, representing an enormous loss to human knowledge. Key founding histories of the Maya, ranging from creation stories to the origins of the K'iche' people, survive in the *Popol-Vuh*, a post-Conquest text that is also available in English.

Hispanic Christendom has never managed to eliminate Maya spirituality. As a cultural defense mechanism, post-invasion Mayas appropriated Catholic liturgy into their spirituality and forged new religious practices known as *costumbre*. Protestants have tended to be less tolerant of Maya ways, characterizing their spirituality as satanic.

Mayas still worship at many sacred sites, bringing offerings to Heart of Heaven/Heart of Earth, a Mayan name for the Creator. Access to and control over sacred sites is an important cultural and political issue for the Maya.

Christianity

The predominant religion is Roman Catholicism, into which many indigenous Guatemalans have incorporated traditional forms of worship. Protestantism and

³² http://www.icefi.org/infografias (consulted December 2017). También consultar: http://icefi.org/sites/default/files/la_mineria_en_guatemala_-_2da_edicion.pdf.

traditional Maya religions are practiced by an estimated 42% (protestants) and 1% (maya religion) of the population, respectively.

Guatemalan Protestants, known as *evangélicos*, are divided into several hundred denominations. Local observers estimate that evangelicals have **more than 40,000 local congregations**³³, making them the most widespread pastoral presence of any faith group in Guatemala. Expressions of Christian faith in Guatemala include:

- 1. Roman Catholic Church, the oldest Christian church in Central America, arrived in Guatemala in 1524 as part of the Spanish conquest. Historically, Guatemalan culture and identity have been deeply influenced by Catholicism. Most Guatemalans consider themselves to be Catholic. During the colonial period (1524-1821) the Catholic Church wielded enormous political, cultural and economic power. Since Vatican II (1962-65), the Catholic Church has been a committed advocate for the poor and oppressed, as well as a vocal critic of human rights abuses. Despite occasionally fierce persecution of Catholic social activists and ongoing membership losses, the Catholic Church has preserved its institutional integrity and learned to accommodate great internal diversity, ranging from Opus Dei to Maryknoll, from the Charismatic Renewal to liberation theology.
- 2. Immigrant Churches: English merchants brought Anglicanism to Guatemala in the 1830s when they established Abbottsville, an English-speaking colony on the shores of Lake Izabal. Frederick Crowe, an Anglican Bible salesman, established an influential school in Guatemala City in 1843, but conservative dictator Rafael Carrera forced Crowe to abandon the capital in 1845. German entrepreneurs brought Lutheranism to Guatemala in the 1870s, but they had little religious impact beyond their own community.
- 3. Protestant Mission Churches are the progeny of U.S. Protestant and Evangelical denominations and represent widely varying mission strategies and doctrines. They include: Presbyterians (1882), Friends (1902), Church of the Nazarene (1904), and Primitive Methodists (1921). Episcopalians, part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, began a mission in Guatemala in 1965. Missouri Synod Lutherans began a mission in Guatemala in 1974.
- **4. Evangelical Faith Missions** are non-denominational mission agencies that first appeared in the United States at the end of the 19th Century. The Texasbased **Central American Mission** founded *La Iglesia Centroamericana* in Guatemala in 1899.

Y Revista "SENDAS" del Instituto de Investigación y proyección sobre diversidad sociocultural e interculturalidad, Universidad Rafael Landívar, 2015 (Consulted December 2017).

³³ https://www.soy502.com/articulo/cada-iglesia-catolica-hay-6-evangelicas-registradas

- 5. Pentecostal Mission Churches, born out of the great Pentecostal awakening at the beginning of the 20th Century, are known for their manifestations of the Holy Spirit: speaking in tongues, divine healing and prophecy. Many members come from marginalized social groups that find in small Pentecostal churches communities of solidarity, consolation, and healing. In Guatemala, these include the Church of God Cleveland, TN. (Iglesia de Dios del Evangelio Completo- 1934) and Assemblies of God (1936).
- 6. National Pentecostal Churches were born in Central America and share the Pentecostal emphasis on spiritual gifts. Typically, they derive from divisions in more traditional churches as charismatic Guatemalan leaders have challenged foreign liturgy and authority. Two examples are the *Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía* (1941) and the *Iglesia Príncipe de Paz* (1955).
- 7. Neo-Pentecostal Churches add to Pentecostal practice an emphasis on prosperity theology, exorcism, spiritual warfare and such exotic spiritual gifts as being slain in the Spirit. They tend to be rooted in the middle and professional classes, with close ties to similar groups in the U.S. and other countries. Leaders of these denominations often proclaim themselves to be "Apostles." They organize mega-churches and invest heavily in radio and television. Four of the larger Neo-Pentecostal churches in Guatemala are: Fraternidad Cristiana (1978), El Shaddai (1983), La Familia de Dios (1990), Casa de Dios (1994) and Vida Real (2002).

Key Moments in Guatemalan History

1523-27 Under the direction of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conquistador **Pedro de Alvarado** invades modern-day Guatemala. Because the **Mayan Empire** is a loose network of rival city-states at this point, it takes Alvarado more than a decade to consolidate military control.

1650 Only 12% of the indigenous populations living in Mesoamerica survive smallpox. influenza. sexually-transmitted diseases. bubonic plague, measles, mumps and other "childhood" diseases brought by the conquistadors. Malaria and yellow fever imported from Africa as byproducts of the slave trade. (European invaders import African slaves early in the 16th century when the indigenous population, their original source of forced labor. begins to die off.)

1820 Local K'iche' leaders Atanasio Tzul and Lucas Aguilar unite indigenous opposition against the and colonial regime lead successful revolt in Totonicapán against colonial rule. These groups refuse to pay both the ecclesiastical imposed by the Catholic hierarchy and tribute imposed by the Spanish empire. The short-lived revolt is put down by an invading militia raised ladino Quetzaltenango. This uprising illustrates a long history indigenous resistance to colonial powers and later the to Guatemalan State.

Central American countries declare independence from Spain.

1850-1870s Guatemala begins a shift to a coffee-based agricultural export economy. After the Liberal Revolution in the 1870s, the government expropriates land from indigenous communities and the Catholic Church, and deeds large tracts for coffee cultivation to key supporters. This policy helps consolidate the power latifundistas (large landowners with political clout) and leaves mostly indigenous minifundistas (small landowners) with no alternative but to sell their labor to latifundistas. This is a period of culture wars between Liberals and Conservatives, with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, a staunch ally of the Conservatives, paying a steep price in lost political, cultural, and economic power.

1882 Liberal dictator **Justo Rufino Barrios** challenges the waning power of the Catholic hierarchy by inviting the Presbyterian Church in the United States to establish the first ongoing Protestant mission presence in Guatemala.

1901 The Guatemalan government signs an agreement with Boston-based United Fruit Company. United Fruit, a banana producer, soon becomes the largest landholder, employer, and exporter in Guatemala.

1944 Liberal dictator **Jorge Ubico**, who had presided over an autocratic administration since 1931, is overthrown by a popular uprising led by students, teachers and military officers.

1945 Dr. Juan José Arévalo is elected president after approval of a new constitution. Social programs influenced by Roosevelt's "New Deal" are adopted, including: Social Security, a minimum wage, and a national health care program. Labor unions are encouraged and women are given the right to vote.

1950 Col. Jacobo Árbenz, a key leader in the 1944 uprising, is elected President. An agrarian reform program is initiated. mandating that arable land not under cultivation be turned over to landless peasants, with the goal of transforming Guatemala into a "modern capitalist state." Powerful members of the United Fruit Company respond by encouraging Árbenz opposition the to government in Washington.

1954 Due to fears of President Árbenz's alleged "communist sympathies," the CIA intervenes. U.S. military planes bomb military targets, terrorize Guatemala City, and pirate radio broadcasts in order to spread anti-government rumors. President Árbenz sees no alternative but to resign.

1960 An uprising against the corrupt, servile regime of **President Ydígoras Fuentes** is led in November by young Guatemalan

army officers **Yon Sosa** and **Turcios Lima**. (Ydígoras allowed the CIA to use Guatemala as a staging ground for the Bay of Pigs Invasion.) This marks **the beginning of 36-year civil war**.

1967 Guatemalan author Miguel Angel Asturias wins Nobel Prize in Literature for his widely acclaimed novel, El Señor Presidente (The President) and other writings, and unmasks the growing political and economic chasm between city and countryside, ladino and Maya, rich and poor.

1977 US military aid to Guatemala is cut off due to human rights violations. **U.S. officially bans arms sales** in **1978** but continues to support the army covertly (primarily through Israel).

1978 Gen. Romeo Lucas García is elected through fraud. His brother, Defense Minister Benedicto Lucas, initiates a scorched earth counterinsurgency campaign, which continues until the mid-80s. More than 400 Mayan villages are totally destroyed with all inhabitants and animals killed and all homes and crops burned.

1982 Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, a convert to neo-pentecostalism, seizes power after a coup. Promises are made to end the death squads and dissolve the secret police. He reins in the arbitrary terror of the Lucas years, but still continues the scorched earth campaign, and beefs up highly-militarized rural "development poles." (See below:

1999, 2012, 2013). Guatemala is censured by the U.N. for massive human rights violations.

1983 Ríos Montt is ousted by general, **Mejía Víctores**. Mejía begins the transition to a "formal democracy."

1985 Vinicio Cerezo is elected president, the first civilian since 1966, but as Cerezo himself admits to the press, the military continues to be the power behind the office.

1987 Formal peace negotiations begin in October, with the first publicly acknowledged encounter between the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) in Madrid, Spain.

1991 Jorge Serrano Elías wins elections and the assumes presidency. He is a member of the National Commission for Reconciliation. Under great pressure, and in an agitated climate, he begins making radical internal changes; for example, eliminating congress and controlling the decision-making powers of the electoral and justice tribunals, as well as cutting off freedom of the press. This is called "serranazo", a self-imposed coup d'etat (25 de mayo 1993). The population and other state and international authorities, discontent Serrano's with

decisions, demonstrates and generates huge pressure; they succeed in forcing his resignation. Serrano flees in the early morning of June 1, 1993 to Panama.³⁴

1992 Rigoberta Menchú Túm, leader and advocate of Indigenous rights and ethno-cultural reconciliation, from Uspantán, El Quiché, Guatemala, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. To date, Menchú is one of only sixteen women who hold the Nobel Peace Prize³⁵.

1993 Ramiro de León Carpio, former Human Rights Ombudsman, appointed by Congress President following Serrano's resignation. The populace demonstrates continued loss of confidence in Guatemala's corrupt "low-intensity democracy." Abstention rates exceed 80% in both the 1990 and 1994 elections.

1996 Neo-conservative technocrat **Alvaro Arzú**, a travel agent, former mayor of Guatemala City, and son of the landed oligarchy, is elected president. He focuses his energy on getting a peace agreement signed before the end of the year, but despite the peace process, his political effectiveness dissipates due to charges of corruption and arrogance.

Dec. 29, 1996, marks the formal end of the civil war with the signing of the **Firm and Lasting Peace** in

³⁴

https://aprende.guatemala.com/historia/pe rsonajes/presidente-jorge-serrano-elias/ (consulted December 2017)

³⁵ https://wilpf.org/women-awarded-thenobel-peace-prize/ (consulted January 2018)

Guatemala City. Unfortunately, the Peace Accords are not ratified by the Guatemalan Congress.

April 24, 1998, the Catholic Church presents Guatemala Nunca Más, a report containing more than 6.500 interviews with survivors of the 36year civil war. The report is based on a three-year study coordinated by Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera. It charges that government soldiers and paramilitary groups are responsible for 85.43% of the violence, guerrillas are responsible for 9.3%; and the responsibility for the remaining 5.27% is undetermined.

April 26, 1998, Bishop Gerardi is brutally murdered in his garage. Four people are convicted of the crime in June of 2000: retired Col. Byron Disrael Lima Estrada, his son, Capt. Byron Lima Oliva, army specialist Obdulio Villanueva, and Mario Orantes, a priest who shared Gerardi's residence.

The court characterizes the murder as a political assassination, though none of the convicted is considered to be the intellectual author of the crime. Villanueva, one of those convicted, is beheaded in a prison riot in February, 2003, while the verdicts of Lima Estrada and Lima Oliva are reclassified from homicide to accomplice in 2005, reducing their jail terms from 30 to 20 years. (For more, see *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?* Francisco Goldman, Grove: 2007.)

1999 A healthy voter turnout leads to a resounding presidential victory for **Alfonso Portillo**, a former Christian Democrat and a lawyer with the gift of gab. His adopted party is the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), created by **Ríos Montt**. The Portillo government proves to be corrupt and politically ineffective.

A second report on the war is published in February by the United Nations-sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification, mandated by the Peace Accords. The report finds that more than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared during the armed conflict, and between 1981 and 1983, deliberate policy genocide against the Mayan population was carried out by the Guatemalan state. Most massacres were carried out with the full knowledge, or by order of, the highest state authorities: 93% of all cases were attributed to the armed forces and paramilitary agents; 3% were traced to the URNG. The report also charges the CIA with building close alliances with farright political parties and the economic elite and with supporting systematic state terror as a method of counterinsurgency. United States President Bill Clinton subsequently apologizes for decades of U.S. policy in support of a military which he admits, "engaged in violent and widespread repression..." Clinton declares, "[that policy] was wrong and the United States must not repeat that mistake."

May 16, 1999, Guatemalan voters reject a package of constitutional amendments, making the Peace Accords, for all practical purposes, dead in the water. Amendments included proposals to grant the maiority indigenous nation's population equal rights and to curb the power of the armed forces. Since the Guatemalan Congress never ratified the Peace Accords, this package would have given legal standing to the agreements, which addressed the social, political, and economic problems behind the 36vear civil war

2003 A representative of the landed gentry and former mavor Guatemala City, Oscar Berger, assembles GANA (a coalition of micro-parties to win back political power for the traditional elites), and proves ineffective at fighting corruption. Governmentsponsored death squads carry out a campaign of "social cleansing" against suspected gang members and repeat offenders. Under these charges, Carlos Vielman (Minister of Interior, Berger administration) and Erwin Sperisen (Director of the Police. National Civil Berger administration) are in prison in Spain and Switzerland respectively. However, in the final months of Berger's presidency, Vice President Eduardo Stein and Presidential **Human Rights Commissioner Frank** LaRue succeed in convincing Congress to approve the

International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). (See below, 2008, 2009, 2012).

2005 Tens of millions **of decaying files** are discovered in a police station warehouse in Guatemala City. These files shed light on the fate of thousands of people disappeared by security forces during the war, and are gradually made available for review.

2007 Álvaro Colom, a Social Democrat and founder of the Unión Nacional de la Esperanza (UNE) is elected president over Otto Pérez Molina (See below, 2012).

2008 The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), takes effect in January as an independent investigative body by a treaty-level agreement between the United Nations and Guatemala. lts mandate is to assist the Guatemalan State in investigating and dismantling violent criminal organizations believed to responsible for widespread crime and the paralysis in the country's justice system.

April 9, 2008 is a historic day for women and women's rights activists as the Guatemalan congress passes the Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women. The law codifies an expansive definition of violence against women and represents an important step in stemming the targeted and brutal murder of women. Furthermore, it serves as a model for women's rights activists in other countries.

2009 Rosenberg "YouTube" Murder destabilizes Colom's presidency. CICIG leads an investigation absolving Colom of direct involvement.

2010 Tropical Storm Agatha inundates the with country torrential rains and volcanic immediately follows. eruption These events claim 235 lives. uproot 208,000 people from their homes, destroy nearly 15,000 homes and worsen existing food shortages.

2011 Armed men kill and decapitate 27 laborers on a farm in El Naranjo, departamento of Petén. The violence is attributed to a dispute between drug traffickers and the farm owner. Separately, renowned Argentine folk-singer and peace advocate, Facundo Cabral, is gunned down after performing a concert in Guatemala City. Three days of national mourning are officially recognized. Both events rock the country, make international news. and believed to have negatively affected tourism and travel. A depression in tropical October destrovs crops and displaces communities.

2012 Retired General **Otto Pérez Molina** is inaugurated president. He promises a "Firm Hand" approach to crime and corruption. Molina enrolls Kaibil special forces to fight narcotics traffic and announces

support to extend CICIG (above) mandate for another two years.

Portillo update: With outgoing President Colom's approval, former president Alfonso Portillo faces extradition charges to U.S. for laundering \$70 million through U.S. banks. (see also May 24, 2013)

Former military dictator Ríos Montt loses immunity, and is charged by Court of Justice for acts of genocide committed by armed forces under 1982-83 his command in Guatemala's Ixil Triangle (San Juan Cotzal, San Gaspar Chajúl, and Santa María Nebaj), which include the forced displacement of 29,000, the deaths of 1,771 individuals in 15 massacres, as well as torture and 1.485 acts of sexual violence against women. Ríos Montt is placed under house arrest as the trial is approved to move forward.

November 7, 2012, has a 7.4 magnitude earthquake with the epicenter in the departamento of San Marcos, leaving 52 confirmed dead and thousands of others without homes, electricity, or water.

2013 Guatemala achieves breakthrough for justice on January 31 with the opening of the landmark criminal trial of Ríos Montt for genocide and crimes against humanity. Ríos along with his chief of army José Mauricio intelligence, Rodríguez Sánchez. moves forward. Both men are accused as masterminds the behind

"scorched earth" military campaign (mentioned above).

May 2, 2013 President Otto Pérez Molina declares a state of emergency in four southern towns after protests against the Escobal silver mine turn deadly. The Canadian-owned mine, located in San Rafael Las Flores, Santa Rosa, had been granted a "final" permit in April 2013. Nevertheless, organized resistance to the mine continues.

May 10, 2013 a Guatemalan trial court convicts Ríos Montt of genocide and crimes against humanity for killings, forced displacement, rapes, and torture committed under his rule. The trial court acquits Rodríguez Sanchez on the same day.

May 20, 2013 A divided Constitutional Court annuls the verdict against Rios Montt and sends the trial backward. In its 3-2 judgment, the Constitutional Court rejects the outcome of the trial and leaves the entire future of the process uncertain.

May 24, 2013 Guatemala extradites Portillo to the United States to face corruption and money laundering charges. He becomes the first former Guatemalan president to face trial in the U.S.

April 4, 2014 Guatemala's bar association suspends Judge Jazmín Barrios from practicing law for one year. Barrios is accused of unethical behavior during the first session of the Rios Montt trial that began on March 19, 2013.

May 14, 2014 Guatemalan congress passes a resolution that essentially denies that genocide occurred during Guatemala's civil war. The motion is presented by Luis Fernando Pérez, legislator for the party founded by Rios Montt. The resolution is supported by 87 of the 158 legislators.

May 16, 2014 Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz, who had pushed forward the Rios Montt case and other cases against former military officials, is forced to step down seven months early, after a judicial decision reduces her term based on a technicality.

May 22, 2014 A Federal District Court in Manhattan sentences Portillo to a term of five years and ten months in prison for laundering millions of dollars through United States bank accounts. He is also ordered to pay a fine of \$2.5 million. Earlier in March, Portillo had pleaded guilty to corruption charges, admitting that he had taken \$2.5 million in bribes from the government of Taiwan.

June 6, 2014 The Geneva Criminal Court sentences former Chief of the PNC of Guatemala, Erwin Sperisen, to life in prison for the extrajudicial killing of seven inmates in 2006, in a case known as the Pavón Case.

2015 Portillo is released from a US prison and returned to Guatemala. He offers his first press conference the same day and later launches a political campaign to run for congress.

2015 The International Commission against Impunity (CICIG for its initials in Spanish) dismantles 21 organized crime structures within the Guatemalan government. One case that stands out is the case of customs fraud known as "La Línea," in which then-president Otto Pérez Molina. then-vice president Baldetti. and Roxanna several Government cabinet members, congresspersons & judges are all implicated.

This generates indignation among the population who organize and are called, via social media, to go out and protest in "La Plaza" (the constitutional plaza in zone one of the capital city). The number of demonstrators eventually reaches a total of about 100,000 people. The people's indignation leads them to call for a national strike on August 27, which takes place throughout the country, and has been called the largest march in the history of Guatemala. Protestors denounce government corruption and demand the resignation of the president and his team.

May 8, 2015 Roxana Baldetti presents her resignation and she goes on to be investigated; she is arrested on August 22 for her links with the "La Línea" case. Finally, on September 2nd, the president presents his resignation and one day later he is processed for the

same charges as Baldetti. Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre takes office as provisional president.

In **September** of this same year, general elections are held in which presidential candidate **Jimmy Morales** obtains a majority of votes cast, along with his vice president Jafeth Cabrera, both from the FCN-NACION party.

Also in **2015**, the CICIG presents an investigation into the financing of political parties, which concludes that the Guatemalan political system is financed by corruption. 25% of political party funds come from criminal structures, another 25% come from business people and 50% come from providers of the state³⁶.

2016 The 14th of January, **Jimmy Morales** takes office as president, along with the entire new cabinet and additional team members. In his campaign, Jimmy had made a direct attack on corruption with the slogan, "neither corrupt, nor a thief." He also added four retired military men as advisors.

July 18, 2016 Byron Lima is assassinated inside the prison where he has been serving a sentence for the murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi (1998).

The MP (the Attorney General's office) carries out a series of captures of 18 retired military men,

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³⁶ Source: *El financiamiento de la política de Guatemala*, ISBN 978-9929-40-769-5, CICIG, 16 de julio 2015. Page 41

charging them with crimes against humanity during the internal armed conflict. Among them, a former retired military leader Benedicto Lucas Garcia (1978 to 1982) stands out, as well as César Augusto Cabrera, who was to become a cabinet member for Jimmy Morales. V Edgar Ovalle. congressman of the official party FCN-Nation party.37

"We can sum up the first year of Morales's President Jimmy government as void of results. His agenda has been of a trivial character; we have not seen him involved in any public policy efforts nor in government strategies. The head of the executive branch was inert until September when he made it known that his son, José Manuel, and his brother Samuel, were involved in an investigation by the General Registry of Property, an entity to which they submitted a fantasy receipt to simulate a purchase of breakfasts for Q90,000. Morales faced his first pre-trial hearing for abuse of authority by establishing a state of alert (or state of prevention) in August, but it was rejected by the CSJ (Supreme Court of Justice)."38

2017 The year begins with tension due to the events involving Jimmy Morales:

March 8. 2017. In the midst of the commemoration of International Women's Day, a fire is reported in the "Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción" (Virgin οf Assumption Safe Home), a state institution, in which 41 girls are burned to death. 15 more are severely burned, two of whom later die from their injuries. The girls had been enclosed in a room and when they pleaded for help, they were ignored by police and other personnel. The government blamed for negligence and for involvement in this massacre.

August 25, 2017 the CICIG & MP present an investigation about money laundering and illicit electoral financing by the FCN-Nation political party; they request a pre-trial hearing with the president.

Saturday, August 26, 2017 several sectors of the population protest in "The Plaza," demanding the head of state's resignation.³⁹

August 27, 2017 President Jimmy declares Morales the CICIG commissioner. Iván Velázquez. "Persona Non Grata," after learning of the investigation in progress into money-laundering and electoral financing by the FCN-NACION party; Morales demands immediate expulsion the of Velázguez.

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https://elperiodico.com.gt/domingo/2016/ 12/04/los-sucesos-de-2016/ (Consulted December 2017).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ https://nomada.gt/la-semana-que-casillegamos-al-abismo/ (Consulted December de 2017)

Several organizations file for orders of protection in the Constitutional Court in order to prevent the expulsion of Iván Velázquez. Three cabinet members renounce their posts in protest over Jimmy's decision, and the U.S. and Europe warn that there could be sanctions for Guatemala. The court stops the expulsion of the commissioner. The population also makes its presence known in the form of protests.⁴⁰

September 12, 2017 Information is showing that revealed Jimmy Morales, in addition to his salary, has been receiving a monthly "special bonus" of Q50,000 from the army. The General Comptroller's office declares this bonus is illegal.

September 13, 2017 Congress approves a law as nationally urgent, to the effect that "it should no longer be the politicians who are [found] responsible for illicit financing, but rather the accountants of the political parties. And in their eagerness to ensure their own impunity from accusations of corruption, they approved a law enabling them to avoid jail by doing what they know how to do best: by paying money."41

September 14, 2017 The people return to "The Plaza" (La Plaza), demanding that the law

overturned and that all of the congresspersons resign.

Α presidential spokesperson announces that the president will return Q450,000 in supplementary wages that he had received as "bonus" payments.

The congresspersons apologize and call for an extraordinary session. The constitutional court puts a stop to the laws passed on Sept. 13.

September 20. 2017 The Association of University Students (AEU) of the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, calls for a national strike, with the purpose of demanding the resignation of the congresspersons, reforms to the electoral laws, and a national constitutional assembly.

October 5, 2017 CICIG and the MP present the case called "Pandora's Box" that involves deceased exmilitary officer, Byron Lima (see 1998; July 18, 2016), and the current mayor of Guatemala City, Álvaro Arzú. A pre-trial hearing is requested for Arzú regarding use of municipal funds for his political campaign, in cooperation with Lima⁴².

October 30, 2017 A community of 80 families is forcibly removed (from their land) in the

⁴⁰ https://nomada.gt/la-plaza-y-la-cortefrenan-al-congreso-jimmy-amenaza/ (Consulted December 2017)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² https://nomada.gt/el-negocio-de-arzucon-el-reo-mas-poderoso-del-pais/ (consulted December 2017).

departamento of Izabal. Approximately 1000 families have been forcibly removed during this calendar year. The most recent are: November 1, 25 families in Tactic, Alta Verapaz and November 3, 18 families in Senahú, Alta Verapaz. 43

2018. President Morales presents his second government report and begins his second term in government amid corruption allegations and protests with Álvaro Arzú Escobar taking office as President of the Congress, despite also being accused of corruption.

February 13, 2018. Former President Alvaro Colom and his entire cabinet were arrested for alleged involved in corruption cases being investigated by the CICIG and detained at the Mariscal Zavala Military Center.

March 2018. After 37 years, a historic day for Guatemalan justice. A trial started against five former army chiefs accused of disappearing the 14-year old teenager, Marco Antonio, and sexual abuse of his sister, Emma Molina Theissen.

April 1, 2018. Former President Efrain Rios Montt dies ending the trials of genocide against him.

April 27, 2018. The Mayor of Guatemala City, Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen passed away while playing

golf. He was a politician that held the most important positions of the country, and during his last days he became a good allied of former President Jimmy Morales against CICIG.

June 3, 2018. Volcán de Fuego Eruption up in air, 38 people died, 100 injured report, last time bigger Eruption since 1974.

November, 2018. A caravan of migrants started their journey from San Pedro Sula to go to the United States. Hondurians were running away from poverty, unemployment and violence in their country. This caravan showed the human face of the thousands of migrants that start this journey in the countries of the Northern Triangle.

2019.

January, 2019. Samuel Morales, former President's brother. requested to the Policía Nacional Civil (PNC) that his criminal records were clear because he wanted to run as a congressman for 2019 elections. The case was in trial due to corruption targeting 25 people, including the former head of the country's property registry. He was accused of fraud, and Morales was also charged with money laundering.

April 17, 2019. A Guatemalan presidential candidate was arrested in Miami and charged with an elaborate plot to use drug cartel

<u>2268538924097536</u> (consulted December 2017).

money to win the election and assassinate rivals, according to U.S. officials, two months before voters head to the polls. Mario Estrada, candidate of the center-right National Change Union, was polling far behind other rivals, and was accused along with another man, Juan Pablo Gonzalez, of seeking between \$10 and \$12 million from Mexico's powerful Sinaloa Cartel to fund his campaign and transport cocaine into the United States.

May 15. 2019. Telma Aldana. former President of the Supreme Court and former Attorney General who supported CICIG entered the presidential election, campaigning on the platform of anti-corruption with new party Semilla. However, the Constitutional Court rejected her candidacy for President, on the grounds of alleged corruption cases concerning her. She denied the accusations and attributes them to what she calls the "pact of the corrupt", composed of politicians and business leaders of the country. As former Attorney General, she had uncovered several maior corruption cases.

The candidature of Zury Ríos, daughter of Guatemalan dictator from 1982 to 1983 Efraín Ríos Montt, was rejected by authorities on the grounds that the country's constitution bars close relatives of coup leaders from serving as president.

August 11, 2019. In a runoff election, Alejandro Giammattei defeated Sandra Torres to be

elected president of Guatemala. Giammattei received 58% of the vote, compared to 42% for Torres. Abstention, meanwhile, was high: 57% of registered voters did not cast a vote.

September, 2019. Guatemalan former first lady and presidential runner-up Sandra Torres arrested on Monday in connection with alleged campaign financing crimes. The arrest came on the eve of the closure of an UN-backed anticorruption commission, initiated the investigation. Torres, 63, faced charges of unregistered campaign financing and unlawful association in connection with the 2015 elections, when she lost in the runoff to former President Jimmy Morales.

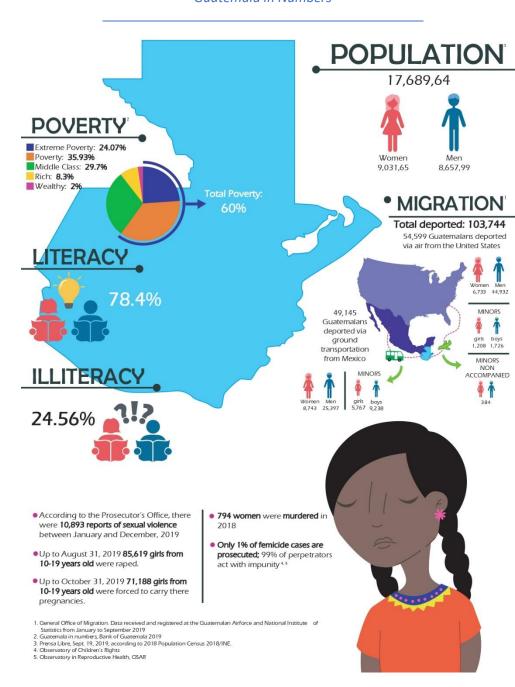
October. 2019. Alvaro Leonel Ramazzini Imeri was appointed by Pope Francis as Cardinal Priest of San Giovanni Evangelista Spinacetois. He has been a longtime advocate for social justice for Guatemala's poorest citizens. Ramazzini has fought to end the unjust land tenure system western Guatemala, arguing it disfavors the poor and limits social mobility.

2020

January 14, 2020. New President Alejandro Giammattei takes office.

February, 2020. The United States deported a record 4,171 Guatemalans (3,000 men, 692 women, 479 minors), a 2.27% increase over 2019, during the month of January, according to the Instituto Guatemalar Institute of Migration, IGM).

Guatemala in Numbers





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