

Rights Action  
September 1, 2015

## **Former Guatemalan Generals Perez Molina & Rios Montt On Trial for Corruption & Genocide ~ Great Business Partners for Global Mining Industry!**

Below:

- Telesur article: Possible impeachment of president Otto Perez Molina
- The Guardian article: Re-trial of Efraim Rios Montt for crime of genocide

What to do / How to support: See below

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### **Guatemala Congress Expected to Remove President's Immunity**

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Guatemala-Congress-Expected-to-Remove-Presidents-Immunity-20150901-0018.html>

Amid a mass graft scandal that has brought the government to the brink of collapse, Guatemala's Congress is discussing Tuesday whether to remove President Otto Perez Molina's immunity from criminal prosecution.

Despite an initial "no" vote to stripping Perez Molina's immunity, the Supreme Court then decided to allow Congress to vote again. The motion must receive at least 105 votes out of 158 to pass.

The decision also was fueled by a series of claims against the president, made by important sectors in Guatemala, including the office of human rights, the agricultural, rural, industrial, and financial committees, the Peasant Unity Committee, the Catholic and Evangelical churches and members of civil organizations.

Furthermore, last month the U.N.-backed international commission against impunity in Guatemala CICIG filed a formal complaint with Guatemala's Supreme Court seeking the removal of the president's immunity from prosecution.

Pressure has been growing on Perez Molina to step down over the last four months over his alleged involvement in the "La Linea" scandal, which has thrown the country into one of its worst political crises in history. Tens of thousands regularly take to the streets to demand his resignation and hundreds of businesses and schools have closed in support of the protests.

Several other officials involved in the scandal have been either fired by Perez Molina, or have resigned from their posts, including the former vice president, Roxana Baldetti, who is in remand pending a trial on her alleged involvement in the case.

Since exposing evidence that Perez Molina is one of the masterminds of La Linea, CICIG prosecutors have been recommending Perez Molina's removal. However, he denies any involvement in the case and refuses to resign.

"From a telephone call they want to link a call I made to the superintendent of the tax authority and they're giving a context that responds to a criminal structure. I reject that it is like this," he said to the press Monday, referring to an audio recording, released recently where the president appears to be pressuring people at the customs agency to make changes linked to La Linea.

The Central American country is still struggling to recover from the U.S.-funded civil war (1960-1996), which saw more than 250,000 Guatemalans killed, mostly indigenous Mayans. It currently faces high rates of poverty and ranks among one of the most corrupt countries in the world according to the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International.

General elections are scheduled for Sep. 6, but many Guatemalans have been chanting in their marches that the "conditions aren't right" for elections, and may abstain in large numbers.

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## **Guatemala Court: Former Dictator Can Be Tried For Genocide – But Not Sentenced**

25 August 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/25/guatemala-rios-montt-genocide-trial-not-sentenced>

A Guatemalan court has said former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt can stand trial on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity – but cannot be sentenced because the 89-year-old suffers from dementia.

The court ruling announced on Tuesday says the law allows for a special trial where all evidence and witnesses will be presented behind closed doors with a representative of Ríos Montt. He can be found guilty or not guilty, but will not receive a sentence because of his health conditions. His lawyers have the option to appeal against the ruling.

In July, Guatemala's forensic authority declared the ex-dictator as mentally unfit. Due to cognitive deterioration, the 89-year-old would not be able to defend himself against charges that he was responsible for the killings of nearly 2,000 indigenous Maya during a particularly brutal stretch of the country's 36-year civil war, the National Forensic Science Institute determined.

Ríos Montt was convicted in 2013 and sentenced to 80 years for genocide and crimes against humanity committed during his dictatorship in 1982 and 1983 at the height of Guatemala's brutal civil war. The sentence was later thrown out on a technicality.

Ríos Montt's opponents accuse him of implementing a scorched-earth policy, and his earlier conviction had been hailed as a landmark for justice in the Central American nation.

The conflict claimed as many as 250,000 lives.

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#### **Just Say No To: 'International Business and Investments, Repression, Corruption and Impunity As Usual'**

*"For decades, the international community, including other governments, the mining industry, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, have been comfortably doing profitable business in Guatemala with repressive, corrupted governments headed by the likes of former General Efraim Rios Montt, found guilty of the crime of genocide in 2013, and currently by former General, now President Otto Perez Molina, facing impeachment for overseeing a \$120 million import tax organized crime ring.*

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

Send, and keep on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to your own elected politicians (MPs, Congresspersons, Senators), to your media, and to your own pension and investment funds, asking: Why our governments, companies and investment firms do nothing about the poverty, repression and violence, and environmental and health harms associated with North American businesses, while benefiting from these economic, military and political relations?

#### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & United States)**

To support community organizations working for locally-controlled development, the environment, human rights, real democracy and the rule of law in Honduras and Guatemala, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8
- USA: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091
- Credit-Card Donations: <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>
- Stock donations: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

#### **Get Informed / Get Involved**

- Speakers: Invite us to give presentations about these issues

- Educational Delegation: Join an educational delegation seminar to Guatemala and Honduras to learn more about these issues and struggles
- Daily News: [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org) / [www.upsidedownworld.org](http://www.upsidedownworld.org) / <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/index.html> / [www.rabble.ca](http://www.rabble.ca) /
- Recommended Reading: "This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus The Climate", by Naomi Klein; "Open Veins of Latin America", by Eduardo Galeano; "A People's History of the United States", by Howard Zinn

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