

New York Times article censors U.S. role in and co-responsibility for Guatemalan genocides, massacres and disappearances

The New York Times reports on the arrests of former military officers in Guatemala, charged with massacres and other war crimes, and the NYT does not report on how these former military officers were direct allies of the U.S. government and pentagon during the worst years (1975-1985) of Guatemala's genocides, massacres and disappearances, and that the U.S. funded, armed, trained and directly participated with Guatemalan police, military and death squads during this entire time. When will the NYT stop censoring reporting about the extensive U.S. role in and responsibility for the Guatemalan genocides, massacres and disappearances?

- What to do/ How to get involved: See below

Guatemala Arrests Former Military Officers in Connection With Massacres

by Elisabeth Malkin, New York Times, January 6, 2016

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/07/world/americas/guatemala-arrests-former-military-officers-in-connection-with-massacres.html?ref=americas&_r=2

MEXICO CITY — The Guatemalan authorities on Wednesday arrested 18 former military officers on charges related to massacres and disappearances during the 1980s, the bloodiest period of the country's 36-year civil war. The arrests pose a direct challenge to the president-elect, Jimmy Morales, a political neophyte who ran as the candidate of a party dominated by former officers.

Among the men who were arrested was retired Gen. Manuel Benedicto Lucas García, 83, who was the army chief of staff during the dictatorship of his brother, Gen. Romeo Lucas García. A former military intelligence chief, Manuel Antonio Callejas y Callejas, was also detained, as was one of the generals who ousted General Lucas García in a 1982 coup.

"These are the big fish," said Victoria Sanford, an anthropologist at Lehman College of the City University of New York who has studied human rights violations committed during the 1960-96 war, when security forces razed whole villages as they pursued leftist guerrillas.

Over the years, prosecutors have struggled to put officers on trial for human rights atrocities committed during the war. In 2013, a former military dictator, Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, was convicted of genocide, but the verdict was overturned. A retrial is scheduled to begin next week, although his health is too frail for him to attend the court sessions.

One of the accused could not be arrested on Wednesday. Edgar Justino Ovalle, the co-founder of the party that backed Mr. Morales, enjoys immunity as an incoming legislator. Attorney General Thelma Aldana said that her office had asked the Supreme Court to lift his immunity.

Mr. Morales, a former television comedian and producer who will be inaugurated next Thursday, was elected in November as a political outsider. The stage was set for his victory after former President Otto Pérez Molina was accused of leading a scheme to lower import duties in exchange for bribes. Mr. Pérez Molina, also a former general, resigned and now faces a trial.

Although Mr. Morales campaigned as a fresh face and promised to support continued investigations into corruption, human rights groups pointed to his ties to former officers as a concern.

The arrests "are a message that the incoming government has to distance itself from these Jurassic figures," said Jo Marie Burt, a political science professor at George Mason University.

Most of the arrests stem from a three-year investigation on a military base in Cobán in the central region of Alta Verapaz, where investigators have found the remains of 558 people, including 90 children, Ms. Aldana said. DNA testing confirmed the identities of 97 people at the site who disappeared from 1981 to 1986, when the accused officers were commanding the base or in the chain of command.

Four of those arrested Wednesday have been charged in the disappearance of a Guatemala City teenager in 1981.

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