

Guatemala Election Alert #32

Guatemala shut down by peaceful democracy defenders

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/guatemala-shut-down-by-democracy-defenders>



Indefinite National Blockade: 6th day, with over 70 roadblocks
Indigenous authorities, civil society & citizens united in defense of democracy, demanding resignations of
Attorney General Consuelo Porras, FECCI prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche, Judge Fredy Orellana
Map: Prensa Comunitaria

The Guatemalan people have peacefully shut the country down, even as the corrupt Guatemalan government –long-time “democratic allie” of US, Canada, EU and global banks/ companies– is still carrying out an electoral coup d’etat against the election of President-elect Bernardo Arevalo and VP-elect Karin Herrera.

This is far from over.

Three months, 6 days until January 14, 2024 transfer of power

"Stop the country until we take it back"

Prensa Comunitaria Editorial, October 5, 2023

<https://prensacomunitaria.org/2023/10/117167/>

The news of a new raid on the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and the theft of material from the first electoral round, by the FECCI (Special Prosecutor Against Corruption), using force and above all outside of the law, broke the patience of a good part of the Guatemalan society.

In the previous weeks, the Congress of the Republic had reactivated proposals such as the Amnesty Law for the military tried for crimes against humanity and the so-called Monsanto Law, desperate attempts to achieve benefits by specific sectors that see their opportunities running out.

This way of acting on the part of those who have made the State their booty and do not want to lose it, makes clear once again something that has been said since the night of June 25: what is at stake is not a political party or a president, not even the result of an election - the future of democracy in Guatemala is at stake.

If they succeed in their purpose of preventing the seizure of power by those who have been resoundingly elected, we would be totally at the mercy of those who think of the laws as traps and the people as slaves to their interests.

These actions to prevent the fulfillment of the will expressed at the ballot box have continued in spite of international pronouncements and despite the fact that marches, demonstrations, communiqués, sit-ins and all kinds of actions throughout the country have not ceased, demonstrating the will of the people to have their decision respected.

But those who have not demonstrated, those who sustain these illegal actions with their silence and their ambiguity are those who should because it is their mandate: the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Justice and the President of the Republic, obliged to enforce the laws that are violated daily thanks to their passivity.

Nor are many of the civil institutions that represent society, such as universities or professional associations, acting with clarity. Not to mention the CACIF (Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations) whose silence only shows their internal indecision and short-sightedness when they complain about the roadblocks.

So it is not through institutional channels that legality and respect for the will of the people will be recovered. That was the great success of the 'pacto de corruptos' (covenant of the corrupt): to mold the public institutionality to serve the diverse, and never legitimate interests of the different sectors that joined together in this criminal governance.

On the same Saturday that the TSE was raided, the elected president and vice-president of the Semilla Party (Bernardo Arevalo and Karin Herrera) sent messages to the citizenship calling not to allow what they openly called an attempted coup d'état.

Some sectors reacted with communiqués and calls, but these actions are not enough: months of marches, sit-ins and citizen demonstrations all over the country, of communiqués from diverse national and international actors, have not been able to stop the coup.

For this reason, the national strike called by the 48 Cantons of Totonicapán and other ancestral and community authorities has become the action that has gathered the most energy and will.

Once again, these authorities are showing us that local interests do not have to be at odds with the actions of democratic will and commitment to the whole society.

And this commitment is something we would expect from the other sectors and actors that defend the respect for the popular will: political parties (though few will), campesino, indigenous, women, union and student organizations, but also professional associations, chambers of commerce, departmental associations, diverse churches.

If it had not been for popular pressure in August 2015, Otto Pérez Molina would have ended his term in office with impunity while Rossana Baldetti took the blame. But the pressure was maintained and increased, and won over those who wanted to do "damage control".

In the situation we have reached, it is not enough to send communiqués through networks; and it does not have to be only citizens in their own name - they have already done enough these months.

We have to denounce not only the actions of the henchmen, but also the inaction of those who allow them to act with impunity.

If the organized actors of civil society do not act in a coordinated manner and call for resounding action, the effort and sacrifice of all Guatemalans who are on the roads, enduring

sun and rain, showing their determination and spirit of solidarity with all of society, will not be of much use.

There are many ways in which we can support the strike: it was already seen in 2015. You can close educational and commercial establishments as they have done in Quiché and Totonicapán. We can blockade institutions. We can accompany those who are in the streets for a while. Posters and banners can be put up everywhere.

We have a lot at stake. If we are not all of us, we will not have solved anything and this wave of impunity will carry us forward...

Electoral coup d'état: 'Death by a 1000 cuts'

It is impossible to keep up with the attacks being carried out, daily, by the 'covenant of the corrupt' government and allies on the electoral process and against the Semilla Party – a 'death by a 1000 cuts' strategy, let alone increasing repression against protesters, judges, lawyers and prosecutors.

Rights Action calls for Americans and Canadians to keep sharing these informations widely (including media outlets), and to contact your Senators, Members of Congress and Parliamentarian, urge them to publicly support the Semilla Party and President-elect Bernardo Arevalo and VP-elect Karin Herrera, and to support calls for the main coup plotters to resign: Attorney General Consuelo Porras, special prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche, Judge Fredy Orellana.

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

More information

- Rights Action's "Guatemala Election Watch" alerts (www.rightsaction.org/emails)
- Guatemala Human Rights Commission (www.ghrc-usa.org)
- Twitter feeds of Festivales Solidarios (@festivalesgt) & Prensa Comunitaria (@PrensaComunitaria)
- Prensa Comunitaria's daily news (<https://prensacomunitaria.org/>)

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