

Guatemala Election Watch, Alert #36

1 dead, more injured by gunshots near pro-democracy protest in Guatemala

Feared escalation in violence and repression

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/1-dead-more-injured-near-pro-democracy-protest>

- Below: AP article

Shifting strategy?

Since June 26, 2023, the repressive Pacto de Corruptos ('Covenant of the Corrupt') government in power – longtime “democratic allie” of the U.S., Canada, the E.U., World Bank and transnational corporations – has been trying to block or overthrow the 2023 election results.

To date, most of these efforts have aimed at filing trumped up criminal charges against the winning Semilla Party, against members of the Semilla Party, and against the Supreme Electoral Tribunal that organized, carried out and validated the elections.

In response to these ‘death by a 1000 cuts’ attacks on the election results, Guatemalan citizens – led by the Indigenous peoples – finally initiated (October 3) a nationwide, peaceful strike, demanding resignations of the government officials leading the illegal efforts to block the elections.

Now, armed men, dressed in civilian clothing, are brandishing weapons and attacking peaceful protesters at the roadblocks.

The fear is that the strategy is to create outbreaks of ‘citizen-on-citizen’ violence such that the also corrupt President Giammattei would claim he is obliged to call in the Army and Police to reestablish the peace.

Day 17 - Nationwide pro-democracy strike
2 months, 26 days until Jan.14, 2024 transfer of power
This is not over - Stay tuned!

1 dead, 2 injured by gunshots near a pro-democracy protest in Guatemala

By Sonia Perez, October 16, 2023

<https://apnews.com/article/guatemala-protest-death-democracy-violence-c16906461c8873cdfaa69dc2e7c86f96>

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — One person died and at least two more were injured by gunshots near a pro-democracy demonstration in Guatemala on Monday, local authorities said. Victor Gomez, spokesman for the volunteer firemen in Malacatan, near the border with Mexico, said it was not clear whether the victims were protesters themselves, or just caught nearby.

The incident marked the beginning of a third week of demonstrations against Attorney General Consuelo Porras, who protesters accuse of attempting to undermine a popular vote for progressive President-elect Bernardo Arévalo.

Videos from Malacatan circulating on social media painted a chaotic picture. Some appear to show civilians and police officers fleeing as bursts of gunfire are heard. In one recording, a vehicle and a police patrol are burning. It is not clear who fired the shots.

In response to the incident, Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei said authorities were “carrying out corresponding investigations” and promised more details in due course. The National Police later announced the arrest of 11 people.

The Interior Department said in a statement that after the attack it coordinated a search for the vehicles involved and found three wounded people, but it made no mention of a death.

Arévalo took to the social network X, formerly known as Twitter, to condemn the violence. “We demand that the authorities ensure the safety of those who peacefully demonstrate and guarantee that this act does not go unpunished,” he said.

The incident is the latest violent episode after 15 days of protests and roadblocks in the Central American country.

On Sunday, Porras’ supporters in Guatemala City called for violence against demonstrators blocking roads. Then on Monday, other social media videos appeared to show people in civilian clothing carrying machetes attacking protesters at three roadblocks in the township of El Asintal, Retalhuleu, just under 55 (90 kilometers) southwest of Malacatan.

Porras herself has called for the roadblocks to be cleared, using force if necessary, “in the public interest.” On Monday she urged the government to sack Interior Secretary Napoleón Barrientos for failing to do so.

Demonstrators maintain that after Arévalo’s [victory in the August runoff election](#), Porras mounted an undemocratic challenge against Arévalo, his left-wing Seed Movement party and electoral authorities. They have called for the resignation of Porras, prosecutors Rafael Curruchiche and Cinthia Monterroso, and Judge Fredy Orellana.

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/>)

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

It is impossible to keep up with the attacks being carried out by the 'covenant of the corrupt' government and allies on the election and against the Semilla Party – a 'death by a 1000 cuts' strategy.

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>

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