

Demanding justice in the midst of a political crisis

Survivors are leading us towards a new, more liberated world, and it could not be clearer how urgently we must follow their path. We turn to Black and Indigenous organizers who are envisioning and building alternatives to the police state, informed by centuries of surviving state violence. We honor Guatemalan mothers who have spent decades demanding justice for their disappeared loved ones; **their audacity to believe in change is leading to wins that many never thought possible.** We stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence the world over as they share truths and defend each other against the desperate lashings of a dying patriarchy. From the throws of global crisis unparalleled in living memory, **we give deep gratitude for the lessons and leadership of survivors.**

Military Diary Case

The Military Diary documents operations carried out by Guatemalan state forces during the military dictatorship of Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores (1983-1985).

In 1999, the document was anonymously withdrawn from the Guatemalan Military Archives and leaked to Kate Doyle of the National Security Archive. The document lays out systematic surveillance, illegal detentions, torture, sexual violence, forced disappearance, and extra-judicial killings against 183 people, including children.

The details outlined in the Military Diary have been corroborated by testimonies from both survivors and relatives of the victims. These family members have been demanding justice ever since the moment their loved ones were illegally detained.



Activists and relatives placed pictures of their disappeared loved ones that are registered in the Military Diary. A sign reads “Confess: Where are they?” Photo credit: CALDH. Top image: a page in the Military Diary. Photo credit: Centro de Medios Independientes

An ongoing political crisis

Guatemala is facing a political crisis that the pandemic has exacerbated. In the most recent political scandal, Attorney General Consuelo Porras removed anti-impunity prosecutor Juan Francisco Sandoval, and replaced him with a lawyer known for persecuting anti-corruption organizers. On July 29, **Ancestral Authorities called a national strike demanding that the President and Attorney General resign and appealing for the creation of a plurinational constitutional assembly.** The uprising rejects the government’s corruption and abuse of power in the name of protecting oligarchs. The whole state is co-opted. In the middle of a health crisis, the government continues stealing money allocated for vaccines, emergency aid, and health care, thereby killing its own citizens.

Families demand accountability

On May 27, twelve former military and police officials involved in the Military Diary case were arrested. These arrests were a groundbreaking advance in a case that family members have worked towards for decades. As the case moves forward, guaranteeing the safety of the families, plaintiffs, lawyers, prosecutors, and judge is a central concern and demand. The defendants have strong relationships with right-wing military organizations, private security companies, and other corrupt actors.



Left: A relative holds the picture of one of their disappeared loved ones, next to the notes taken during the Military Diary hearings.

Photo credit: Nelton Rivera, Prensa Comunitaria

Below: Marcia Méndez is seeking justice for her sister, Luz Haydee Méndez Calderón, who was detained and disappeared in 1984.

Photo credit: CPR-Urbana

We stand in solidarity with the victims and survivors of Guatemalan state violence, acts of terror that were supported by the U.S. government. We honor the diverse lived experiences of survivors, as well as the diverse tactics that they employ to heal and seek justice. We stand in solidarity with their demands:

- **the right to the truth**
- **access to justice**
- **to know the locations of the disappeared**
- **a guarantee that these crimes will not be repeated**

Follow these Twitter accounts for developments in the Military Diary case:

- **FAMDEGUA:** @FamdeguaG
- **Verdad y Justicia:** @VerdadJusticiaG
- **NISGUA:** @NISGUA_Guate

Our partners have asked us to educate people about their struggle. **Support survivors by writing an opinion piece in your local newspaper and meeting with elected officials.** Email us at info@nisgua.org for more information!

