

Positive trends on impunity in recent months:

The Guatemala political leadership understands that solving the problem of impunity is essential to their own success and know quite well what needs to be done at the institutional level to deal with impunity. MINUGUA reports that human rights violations have declined. The Law of National Reconciliation exists to bring the URNG back into society through amnesty. No one convicted of serious human rights violations has received amnesty. Legal proceedings on some of the worse massacres have started and a few individuals have been sentenced.

Role of Canada and the International Community:

The elimination of impunity and the necessary building of transparent institutions and trust within civil society takes years to achieve. It requires a long-term peacebuilding strategy: 1) assistance is needed to the police and judicial systems; 2) close monitoring of implementation and the promotion of full compliance with the accords; 3) support to Guatemalan civil society; 4) strong political level support to police and judicial reform; 5) strong support to MINUGUA; 6) support to the extension of police and judicial services to outlying rural areas with the capacity to understand indigenous customary law - this is an encouraging current initiative which requires more resources; 7) targeted assistance to the training of new national civilian police, contributing Canadian experience in community and aboriginal policing. The urgency of our support is very clear as a growing number of Guatemalans consider the need to call back their armed forces to ensure their security.

Discussion:

- An important role for Canada and the international community is to contribute new models for Guatemala in areas such as conflict-resolution. CIDA Bilateral is interested in supporting sustainable peacebuilding programs which propose such models. One example is contributing models for national dialogue, demonstrating how diverse actors within government and civil society can dialogue and work together. CIDA's Democratic Development Fund has been supporting such processes involving civil society capacity building and the opening of spaces for government-NGO discussion.

Socio-Economic Accord:

Canada's role in supporting Guatemala can best be described as *peace-nurturing*. This is not our process, this is Guatemalans' process but we can assist in and support their efforts.

Context:

- 1) **Lack of civilian structure:** There has never been a civilian structure outside of the capital, only a military or feudal structure. Now, civilian authorities must work to deconstruct and transform historic power structures based on military authority and other authoritarian militaristic, or feudal power structures which have existed for generations. These structures have affected and distorted people's approach and attitude to power.
- 2) **Distrust in social relations:** Building peace will be a long process.