



OPEN SOCIETY
JUSTICE INITIATIVE



WOLA

ROBERT F.
KENNEDY
HUMAN
RIGHTS

CEJIL



impunity
watch

Human rights organizations applaud UN decision to renew mandate of International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala

The undersigned human rights organizations welcome the announcement that United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon has approved the mandate renewal of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) until September 2017, in response to a formal request from Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina. In particular, the groups below applaud the Secretary General and the State of Guatemala for maintaining the mandate in its current form as provided for in the 2006 agreement between them, thereby granting CICIG full authority and independence to carry out its essential work. The Secretary General is also to be commended for facilitating the approval of the Guatemalan President's request without delay, thus ensuring the continuity and security of CICIG's operations at a critical moment.

CICIG has played a vital role in the fight against impunity in Guatemala since its establishment in 2007, and its partnership with Guatemala's Public Prosecutor's office makes it unique among international rule of law mechanisms. CICIG thus represents a potential model for other countries in the region struggling with weak institutions, endemic corruption, and widespread violence.

In collaboration with Guatemalan prosecutors, CICIG has conducted more than 200 investigations and helped levy charges against more than 160 current and former officials, dismantling illegal groups and clandestine power structures responsible for organized crime. For example, on May 20 Guatemalan authorities arrested the president and vice-president of the Social Security Administration (Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social), along with 15 others, due to evidence of corruption and fraud uncovered by CICIG. Additionally, in April

authorities arrested 24 people, including the current and former heads of Guatemala's tax collection agency, as a result of CICIG's extensive investigation into a criminal network that had been used to defraud the state. The case has implicated officials in the highest levels of government: Vice President Roxana Baldetti's private secretary was identified as the crime ring's leader, leading to Ms. Baldetti's resignation on May 8. CICIG has also asked the Supreme Court to lift the immunity of four judges based on evidence of corruption.

As these and other cases facilitated by CICIG advance in the justice system, they are expected to contribute to greater transparency and accountability in Guatemala. Indeed, the presence of CICIG is needed now more than ever. Despite significant justice sector reforms and advances by the Public Ministry in recent years, Guatemala is in the midst of a serious political crisis. Additionally, impunity rates are extremely high, particularly for crimes against indigenous peoples, human rights defenders, journalists, women, and other vulnerable populations. The announcement that CICIG can continue collaborating with national authorities is thus a positive development for all Guatemalans who long for a more just and fair society.

Because CICIG is funded through voluntary contributions, it is crucial that the UN encourage member states to support this important institution. Fortunately, the United States, the European Union, and others have already pledged continued assistance. Additional donors should follow suit to ensure that CICIG has the necessary resources to continue its vital work in the pursuit of justice.

Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)

Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)

Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC)

Impunity Watch Guatemala

Open Society Justice Initiative

Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Washington Office on Latin American (WOLA)