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## *Guatemala Timeline*

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1954: The U.S. backs a coup led by Carlos Castillo Armas against Guatemala's president, Jacobo Arbenz, which halts land reforms. Castillo Armas becomes President and takes away voting rights for illiterate Guatemalans.

1957: On July 26, President Armas is killed.

1960: The violent Guatemalan Civil War begins between the government's army and left-wing groups. Thousands of murders, rapes, tortures, and forced disappearances were executed by the Government toward the indigenous peoples.

1971: 12,000 students of the Universidad de San Carlos protest the soaring rate of violent crime.

1980: Maya leaders go to the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala to protest the numerous disappearances and assassinations by the State and to ask that the army be removed from their department, El Quiché. Security forces respond by burning the Embassy, which results in 37 deaths.

1982: Under President/Dictator Ríos Mont, the Scorched Earth policy targeting indigenous groups goes into effect. Over 626 indigenous villages are attacked. The massacre of the Ixil people and the Dos Erres Massacre are two of the most severe genocides during this time.

1985: Guatemala's Constitution includes three articles protecting the indigenous. Article 66 promotes their daily life, including their dress, language, and traditions. Article 67 protects indigenous land, and Article 68 declares that the State will give land to indigenous communities who need it for their development.

1985: The Academy of Mayan Languages of Guatemala (ALMG), which promotes and advocates for the use of the twenty-two Mayan languages in the public and private spheres, is recognized as an autonomous institution funded by the government.

1989: The death toll from the State's violence results in 100,000 dead and 40,000 considered missing.

1992: Rigoberta Menchú, a K'iche' Maya Activist, is awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for her social and cultural work for indigenous communities.

1994: The Coalition of Organization of the Maya People (COPMAGUA) is formed, made up of over 150 different Mayan organizations. They propose that the Guatemalan government stop promoting assimilation and acculturation policies.

1995: The Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples is signed, which states that ethnic discrimination is considered a crime, and requires indigenous rights to be recognized, such as language, dress, and practices. It also defines Guatemala as being a multilingual nation.

1996: The Peace Accords are signed, ending the 36-year civil war that left approximately 200,000 either dead or disappeared; 83% are Mayas.

1996: The International Labor Organization Convention 169 is ratified, which obliges the government to respect indigenous land and traditions and to consult with them on developmental decisions.

1997: The International Court on Human Rights holds the Guatemalan government responsible to persecute those that violated human rights during the civil war, with limited results. Findings suggest that 80% of the human rights violations and disappearances were on behalf of the State.

1999: A UN report shows that the State committed 93% of the crimes during the civil war, including the 626 massacres in Maya villages. A criminal complaint against Guatemalan officers and Ríos Montt for crimes against humanity is issued by the Rigoberta Menchú Foundation.

2001: \$1.8 million is paid to the families of the 226 victims who were killed by soldiers in the Dos Erres massacre.

2005: An indigenous *pueblo* in San Marcos votes against having a Canadian mining project on their land. However, the government grants the company a permit anyway and the issue went to the Guatemalan Constitution Court. The conclusion was that the indigenous communities do need to be consulted before implementing a project on their land, but their decision has no legal power.

2007: Rigoberta Menchú runs for president under the political party, Winaq, which she founded in the same year. This is Guatemala's first indigenous-led political party.

2016: After being jailed for sixteen months, seven people are freed after protesting against the implementation of power dams in their community.

2008: Television station, TV Maya, broadcasts three times a day promoting Mayan culture and language.

2011: Rigoberta Menchú runs for President again.

2011: Four soldiers are found guilty of murder in the Dos Erres Massacre. They are each sentenced to 6,060 years for the murders and crimes against humanity.

2013: The government, with the work of Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz, convicts Ríos Montt of genocide during the country's civil war. However, ten days later, the Constitutional Court overturns the decision.

2013: The Ministry of Education and USAID implement the National Reading Program which develops educational material in both Spanish and in four indigenous languages, to each of the 22 departments in Guatemala.

2014: 69-year-old special investigation chief, Pedro Garcia Arredondo, is accused of crimes against humanity and homicide for his role in the burning of the Spanish Embassy in 1980. He is later found guilty and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

2015: Thousands of people gather in Guatemala City to protest against corruption and demand the resignation of President Otto Pérez Molina. These demonstrations went on every Saturday for two months.

2015: President Pérez Molina resigns in September and is imprisoned after being charged on counts of corruption.

2017: Law 5247 is proposed by the National Mayan Weavers Movement. This law would protect Mayan textiles from being plagiarized and grant the weavers royalties and compensation for their art. This bill is waiting on Congress' consideration to be enacted.

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## Links

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- 1994: <https://nacla.org/article/guatemala-struggle-maya-unity>
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- 1997: [https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297c/war\\_peace/americas/hpeaceaccord.html](https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297c/war_peace/americas/hpeaceaccord.html)
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- 2008: <http://minorityrights.org/minorities/maya-2/>
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