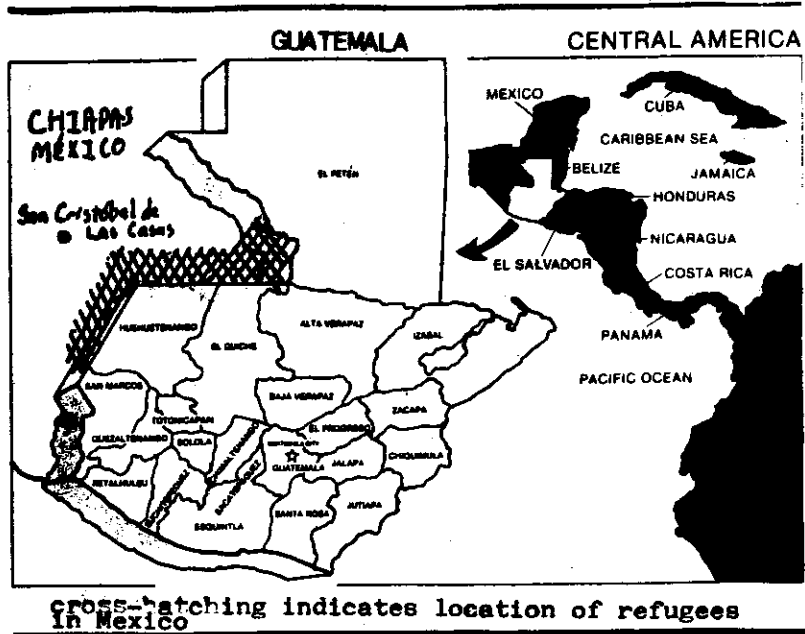


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Cross-hatching indicates location of refugees in Mexico

GUATEMALA

BASIC FACTS

Population:

7.5 million of which 4 million is Mayan Indian (55%)
 3.0 percent annual population growth rate
 1990 estimated population is 10 million
 75 percent of the population lives in rural areas

Health:

70 of every 1000 infants will die before age one. Another 10 will die before their fifth birthday. These averages are at least 50% higher among the Indian population. Comparable figures for the U.S. are 13/1000 before age 1, 1/1000 between ages one and five.
 There is one doctor for every 2,560 persons, but the ratio is many times higher in the countryside. (U.S.-1 doctor/580)
 Only 40% of the population has access to safe drinking water.
 One-third of the population is measurably malnourished.
 Life expectancy from birth- general average is 58 years, among the Indian population it is only 49 years.

Literacy:

50% of all Guatemalans are illiterate, among Indians-82%

Socioeconomic Indicators:

Three-quarters of the population earn less than \$215 per year, while overall per capita income is \$1,080.
 Just two percent of the people control 62% of all arable land.
 88% of the farms are inadequate to meet a farm family's basic food subsistence needs.
 41% of all farms are less than 1.8 acres.
 55% of the workforce is employed in the agricultural sector.
 The daily agricultural wage is between \$1-\$3.

Exports:

Guatemala exports cotton, coffee, bananas, sugar, chemicals and beef. It imports large quantities of basic foodstuffs.

SOME BACKGROUND

Since the CIA-instigated coup d'etat against constitutionally elected President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, three colonels, five generals (including the current president who came to power in a coup d'etat in August), and one civilian have occupied the presidential palace, often gaining power through fraudulent elections and coups. In exchange for the Guatemalan government's guarantee of a stable investment climate and a staunch anti-communist position, most U.S. presidents have turned a blind eye to internal repression and gross human rights violations. Since 1979 many human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Americas Watch have directed world attention to the atrocities committed against opposition political parties, labor unions, the Catholic Church, student leaders and teachers. Guatemala's indigenous population has been a frequent target for repression by the Guatemalan military, security, and police forces. Once it was discovered that the rich oil fields of southern Mexico extended into northern Guatemala, entire Indian communities were forcefully uprooted to prepare the valuable land for exploitation and speculation by national and foreign companies. The Indians' attempts to resist the land grabs were met with severe reprisals, among the first of which was the one in Panzós in May, 1978 when 108 unarmed peasants were massacred. There are many more and more bloody reprisals documented.

Recent reports indicate that the long-standing pattern of government-sponsored violence against the civilian population in both the cities and countryside is on the upswing from the already high levels. The Reagan administration has claimed that the human rights situation is improving in Guatemala. This argument was presented to Congress as part of the administration's initiative to award Guatemala \$50.25 million in aid for fiscal 1984--much of it for military purposes. President Carter cutoff military aid to Guatemala and Congress has yet to approve the Reagan administration's request for renewal. In October, however, Congress did approve a multimillion dollar request for helicopter parts. Evidently Congress and the President have chosen to ignore Guatemala's nearly 30 year history of institutionalized violence against its own population.

SOME INSIDER'S VIEWS ON THE SITUATION

"The war has made it increasingly difficult for people to plant their fields or to trade among villages. People are also afraid to travel to the coast for work, because they fear that the army will stop them and accuse them of being rebels. The people believe that the army does not really care if the Indians are working or not and simply looks for reasons to kill them. Even those Indians with papers proving that they work feel that they must hide from the army. They fear that they will be tortured and killed simply as a lesson to other Indians to stay put in the mountains and not be interested in improving their lives. As one friend told me, 'We no longer have the right to care for our families. It is a crime to want to provide them with enough to eat.'"

---a Protestant missionary

"The government does not just go out and kill guerillas, It kills anyone who has leadership ability. It is killing a lot of good and innocent people."

---a parish priest

"The anti-communist, anti-terrorist drive intended to wipe out undesirable persons and rally the country behind the government has been recognized by the majority of the population as being a terrorist campaign against the people of Guatemala...the resolve of the people to remove the yoke of violence and injustice is strong, but so is the military arsenal."

---a literacy worker

(all quotations from respondents to an Oxfam-America survey)

THE REFUGEES IN CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Estimates of the number of Guatemalans that have been forced to flee their villages and take refuge in the Mexican state of Chiapas range from 50,000 to 200,000. The situation in the camps is desperate due to inadequate food supplies housing, and medical facilities. Many camps are remote from roads and isolated during the long rainy season. The refugees, especially the children, suffer from moderate to severe malnutrition; parasites; skin, eye, and respiratory infections; and a range of severe diseases malaria and tuberculosis. No international refugee aid organizations or personnel have been permitted by the Mexican government to work with the refugees, thus, all aid from abroad must be channeled through the Mexican government, independent organizations, or the extensive refugee aid programs of the Bishop of San Cristobal de Las Casas in Chiapas. GUASO channels the donations it receives to the Bishop and to a small independent organization headquartered in San Cristobal. Your donation does make a direct difference to the quality of life in the camps. Please contact us for more information and please make a donation to our refugee aid fund today.

RESOURCES

GUASO has an extensive collection of information from and about Guatemala. We are happy to help you to learn more. We also are able to provide your group, or organization with speakers on Guatemala, slide shows, and videos.

-please clip---and mail---

Send me more information on: REFUGEES _____ GUASO _____ GUATEMALA _____ RESOURCES _____
Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ for GUASO. \$ _____ for REFUGEES
I would like to receive GUASO's monthly bulletin: _____
Name/Address: _____

Tel.: _____

WRITE TO URGE SENATORS GORTON & EVANS, AND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO NOT APPROVE
MORE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO THE GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA