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Guatemala: Unique opportunity to combat impunity must not be missed

Amnesty International today called on the Guatemalan Congress to approve the creation of the United Nations backed Commission for the Investigation of Illegal Bodies and Clandestine Security Apparatus (CICIACS) in Guatemala.

"Now is the time to build on efforts to strengthen Guatemala's debilitated judicial system and to break the cycle of violence and impunity in Guatemala.", Amnesty International said. "The CICIACS represents a unique and unprecedented opportunity in the history of Guatemala to overcome decades of impunity, human rights crimes and allegations of links between organized crime and the state apparatus."

The Guatemalan Congress has an obligation to the people of Guatemala to ensure the rule of law is upheld independently and impartially, to protect the rights of all people, to ensure their security and to ensure transparent governance. Pursuant of these obligations, the Guatemalan Congress should approve the creation of the CICIACS because it represents Guatemala's best hope of overcoming the legacy of violence and impunity which threatens to overrun every aspect of public life and obstruct the fulfilment of the Peace Accords.

Despite several years of efforts to strengthen the weak system of administration of justice in Guatemala, virtually no progress has been made and few cases reach a satisfactory conclusion. With external support, the CICIACS can strike at the heart of impunity and assist in identifying powerful elites and clandestine groups which have established a shadow parallel state structure in Guatemala.

"The CICIACS proposal is not to be dismissed lightly and failure approve its creation could result in an endless cycle of impunity, a Guatemalan state at the hands of organized crime and persistent human rights violations" warned Amnesty International.

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