

GUATEMALA:



COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL CLARIFICATION (COMISIÓN PARA EL ESCLARECIMIENTO HISTÓRICO CEH)



WHAT IS THE TRC?

The Commission for Historical Clarification (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico CEH) is a *Truth, Reconciliation & Memorialization* commission established by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca. It aimed to address and reconcile the human rights violations committed against citizens in the form of state oppressive measures.

The CEH was initially created in 1997, following the Charter of the “*Agreement on the establishment of the Commission to clarify past human rights violations and acts of violence that have caused the Guatemalan population to suffer*” in 2004. The final report of the TRC was completed in 1999.

WHY WAS IT CREATED?

The CEH largely focuses on the period between 1960-1996, which was characterized by multiple militant groups in Guatemala stirring up civil unrest. In response to such, the Guatemalan government began implementing state suppressive measures against citizens, ultimately resulting in several forms of human rights violations.

Furthermore, in 1982, the Guatemalan military conducted what was labelled as a “scorched earth campaign” against the Revolutionary National Unity of Guatemala (URNG), resulting in a high number of civilian casualties. Many of the citizens killed during the internal conflict were reported to be approximately 83% Mayan and 17% Latino, suggested a targeted and ethnically motivated agenda from the government.

MANDATES OF THE TRC

The main goals of the TRC were:

- Clarifying the human rights violations committed within the internal conflict until the United Nation's brokered peace agreement of 1996
- Fostering tolerance, peace, and democratic restoration within the nation
- Preserving the memories of victims

OUTCOMES & LEGACIES

- Recommendations for the erection of monuments, dedication of public parks or buildings, reclamation of Mayan sites and financial assistance for exhumations
- Calls for structural reform in both the military and judicial system
- Development and encouragement of culture of mutual respect and the strengthening of the democratic process
- Public apology for past governmental abuses by President Arzu
- USA response to allegations of its role in the Guatemalan civil war that were strongly condemned by the report
- The approval of Decree 06-2004 in 2004, which establishes a national remembrance day for victims of the conflict. The "Day of Dignity" is now held every year on February 25.

STATISTICS

Number of Commissioners: 3

Number of Women Commissioners: 1

Total Number of Participants: 200 000

Number of Cases Heard: 20 000

Number of Petitions Received: 7 200

