Key Actors

Through the Peace Process

This article describes the roles of key individuals and institutions in the broader Guatemalan peace process. Information from before 1987 can be found in the Historical Background article at the front of this issue.

National Antagonists

The Military

After conducting a brutal counter-insurgency campaign causing tens of thousands of civilian deaths and 'disappearances', the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands, and the co-opting of close to a million villagers into **'Civil Defence Patrols' (PACs)**, the Guatemalan army was militarily victorious in the mid-1980s. Thereafter, its 'constitutionalist' wing commenced a slow and fitful ascendancy, staunchly defending army interests related to political influence, the economy and human rights, while gradually relinquishing degrees of control over the government and peace process. In 1985, a civilian government was installed. In 1991, peace talks commenced with the rebels. In 1993, when military hard-liners are thought to have supported an executive 'autocoup' (see below), the constitutionalists facilitated the reinstatement of a legitimate interim administration. Soon after, they relinquished a degree of independent representation in peace negotiations and three years later, pledged to limit the role of the army to external defence and to adjust its doctrine, training, deployment, size and budget accordingly.

The army has consistently resisted calls for a judicial inquiry into human rights abuses and an entrenched culture of silence and impunity has allowed torture and killings to remain widespread well into the 1990s, accompanied by high-level profiteering from drugs and other illicit trade. These problems have yet to be addressed.

At the signing of the peace accords, official figures placed army numbers at around 46,000. After disarmament, the figure will be close to 30,000.

The Private Sector

Private sector elites have generally opposed any substantive redistribution of political and economic power, identifying less with their disadvantaged compatriots than with allies in the government and the US/international business community. Through the peace process, they worked to limit government concessions and conspicuously boycotted reformist civil society fora. However, with the development of new sectors of the economy, particularly tourism, and the need to protect existing interests, some elements retained a degree of engagement. In 1990, representatives of the **Co-ordinating Committee of Farming, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations (CACIF)** met with the armed opposition,

producing a communiqué which was tactful, if not wholly conciliatory.

In concert with the priorities of international financial institutions (IFIs), sectors within CACIF and the **National Farmers' and Ranchers' Council (CONAGRO)**, have gradually increased their commitment to deregulating markets and modernising the state along neo-liberal lines. Since 1996, this has brought prominent business people into key posts in the executive and civil service from where they act as close advisers to the government. As a result, the interests of the business community are strongly reflected in current government policy and in key peace accord provisions on land tenure and the economic role of the state. Despite pressure from the IFIs, the private sector remains notorious for evading its minimal tax liabilities, and for resisting fiscal reform.

The Armed Opposition

Organised guerrilla activity began in Guatemala in 1960 and reached its peak around 1979-80 (see Historical Background, p. 10). After much of their support base was displaced or eliminated, the various Guatemalan rebel groups, organised as the **Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG)**, switched tactics in the mid-1980s, strengthening links with civilian organisations and increasingly exploiting international support networks to highlight army human rights abuses and militarisation. While sustaining a campaign of extortion and infrastructural sabotage against the private sector, they tentatively welcomed the reinstatement of civilian rule and embraced the nascent peace process, opening discussions with a cross-section of political and civil society to gain maximum coverage for their political programme. Direct talks with the government ensued from 1991 but strategic disagreements led to a fluctuation in URNG engagement.

In the substantive negotiations of 1994-96, the **General Command** and the **Political and Diplomatic Commission** of the URNG were put under conflicting pressure from the international community and the government on one hand, who both wanted a quick conclusion to the process, and from their rank-and-file and the civic opposition on the other, who held out for more substantial reforms. In the event, negotiators made major concessions on economic reform and the establishment of a truth commission, but secured UN participation in the verification of ongoing human rights abuses and wide-ranging commitments to the rights of indigenous peoples. Despite several gestures of resistance from constituent forces, the negotiations strategy held and by the end of 1996, ceasefire and disarmament provisions were agreed, together with a comprehensive programme for rebel reintegration.

The URNG comprised several armed groups organised in roughly distinct geographical areas. They were typically led by *ladinos*, though rank-and-file guerrillas were predominantly indigenous (see Historical Background, p. 10). At the time of disarmament, the combined membership of rebel groups totalled 3,614. Of this number, 1,812 had fought as the **Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP)**, 1,025 as the **Rebel Armed Forces (FAR)**, 307 as the **Revolutionary Organisation of the People in Arms (ORPA)**, and 470 as the so-called **Unitary Front (FU)**, a force dominated by ORPA but

Russell Yip/The San Francisco Chronicle

Fighter at a URNG hideout in the northern Petén rainforest

also incorporating a number of EGP and **Guatemalan Workers (Communist) Party (PGT)** combatants. All registered rebels disarmed according to schedule in mid-1997.

Political Society and the Civilian State

Though failing to secure substantial human rights improvements, the civilian government of President **Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo** (1985-1991) and the **Christian Democratic Party (PDCG)** did temper Guatemala's dismal international reputation through its role in expediting regional peace talks. In doing so, it survived two coup attempts and paved the way for direct dialogue between the rebels and a range of political and civic groups.

In 1991, **Jorge Serrano Elías** of the minority, rightist **Solidarity Action Movement (MAS)** won a close-run presidential campaign. Key figures within the hard-line military hierarchy were immediately removed, direct talks with the URNG ensued and the agenda for all subsequent negotiations was established. Despite these early successes, Serrano proved incapable of managing the political and economic crises of the early '90s. Renewed peace talks broke down within months of his inauguration, human rights abuses proliferated with impunity, and the protests of civil society were met with increasing authoritarianism. The gathering crisis culminated in the so-called 'autocoup' of 1993, in which Serrano suspended the constitution and attempted to dismiss the legislature and judiciary.

The Electoral System in Guatemala

(sources – Europa Yearbook, Europa Publications, London; Voter Turnout from 1945 to 1997, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm; and the Political Database of the Americas, http://www.georgetown.edu)

The Presidency	The Legislature	Local Administration	Political Parties	Electoral Turn-out
The President is elected for a four-year term without the possibility of re-election. If none of the candidates receives a majority of votes, a second round of voting is held.	Guatemala has a unicameral Congress. The 80 members are elected by proportional representation. In the last election (1995), 16 were elected from national lists and 64 from departmental lists. Votes are cast separately for the national and departmental lists.	For the purposes of administration, Guatemala is divided into departments and municipalities, headed respectively by governors and mayors. Governors are appointed by the president. The duration of their terms is also decided by the president. At present, elections are being considered as an alternative mechanism for the selection of governors. Mayors are directly elected for terms of four years.	24 political parties contested the last national elections, seven of whom are now represented in Congress. The ruling Party of National Advancement (PAN) holds 43 seats, while its nearest rival, the right-wing Guatemalan Popular Front (FRG), holds 21. The minority parties include the left-of-centre New Guatemalan Democratic Front (six seats), the 'centrist' Christian Democratic (PDCG), National Centrist Union (UCN) and Democratic Union (UD) parties (four, three and two seats respectively), and the extreme right-wing Movement of National Liberation (MLN), one seat.	With the reinstatement of civilian rule in 1985 and the electoral mobilisation of the military-controlled Civil Defence Patrols (PACs), turn-out in presidential and parliamentary elections climbed to an average 48% of the eligible population, a modest figure but an all-time high for Guatemala. Turn-out has since declined rapidly and the average 1990s figure, at 29.6%, is the lowest in Latin America and among the lowest in the World.

The 'Autocoup' and its Immediate Aftermath

5 May 1993	Manuel Conde, leader of the government's negotiation team, breaks off peace talks, announcing the war will be won by military means alone
25 May	Discredited, deserted by political allies and under increasing pressure from the army, President Serrano attempts to dissolve Congress, the Supreme Court and the Court of Constitutionality and announces he will rule by decree, pending the drafting of a new constitution.
26-29 May	The Constitutional Court, backed by the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Supreme Electoral Council, declares the 'autocoup' criminal. US, Japanese and European aid programmes are suspended. Fearing that events in Guatemala would derail the peace process in El Salvador, the US threatens to block IMF and World Bank loans.
30-31 May	Members of the political elite, private sector, the church and popular organisations come together in the National Consensus Body (INC) to condemn the 'autocoup'. The Organisation of American States (OAS) holds talks with Serrano over sanctions, tabled for ratification in three days.
1-2 June	Serrano flees to El Salvador. His deputy, Gustavo Espina Salguero, declares himself president with hard-line military support, but Congress refuses to ratify his succession.
3-5 June	A general strike is called by popular organisations. The INC presents a list of prospective presidential candidates. The Court of Constitutionality declares Espina incompetent and calls on Congress to select a replacement. The military resolves not to intervene.
6 June	Human Rights Ombudsman Ramiro de León Carpio, nominated by the popular organisations within the INC, is duly elected by Congress to complete Serrano's term.
7 June	Senior military figures are fired and demoted by de León. The US restores aid.
June-Nov.	Under pressure from the political elites, the private sector and the army, de León excludes the popular organisations from talks on constitutional reform and tones down his own radical proposals.
January 1994	A constitutional reform package is approved by referendum. While only 16% of the electorate participate in the vote, which is boycotted by popular organisations, a number of important steps are taken. These include diminishing the president's power relative to Congress, creating more open mechanisms for the selection of judges, establishing new functions for the Public Prosecutor's Office and increasing the share of the national budget allocated to municipalities.

After Congress had re-asserted itself and installed as president the former Human Rights Ombudsman **Ramiro de León Carpio**, a constitutional reform package was approved and long delayed agreements on human rights signed. Although de León enjoyed unprecedented support in the early months, perceived inconsistency and indecisiveness cost him dear in the following two years, leading to a rapid decline in popularity and renewed social unrest.

In the 1995-96 elections, ex-Guatemala city mayor **Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen** and his **National Advancement Party (PAN)** narrowly defeated the populist **Guatemalan Popular Front (FRG)**. Uncompromised by hard-line military influence and with strong support in the business community, Arzú's election was a catalyst for a swift conclusion of the peace process. Of equal long-term significance was the creditable third place won by the **New Guatemalan Democratic Front (FDNG)**, a broad-based, left-of-centre party dominated by activists from the unions and popular organisations.

While the realignment of the Guatemalan

left continues, with the tortuous transformation of the URNG, the formation of the **Democratic Alternative** party (formerly the United Left), and the full complement of power struggles, defections and disillusionment, the fact that the FDNG could successfully canvass largely free of harassment signifies a new-found tolerance and pluralism in Guatemalan politics. This liberalisation could be further enhanced by the political/administrative decentralisation envisaged in the peace accords. It has already allowed an unprecedented level of scrutiny and criticism of government policy on matters as far-ranging as poverty, redistributive reform, state corruption, crime and tax evasion.

However, in the medium-term at least, it looks like the criminal justice system will remain ineffectual in addressing crime and the political culture of silence and impunity. Factors behind this include the bewildering array of obstructionist appeals procedures, the limited scope and sluggish organisation of the **Commission of Historical Clarification (CEH),** and the 1996 **Law of National Reconciliation** which contradicts previous human rights accords and effectively establishes a new amnesty for the perpetrators of past political killings.

Nigel Dickinson/Leader Photos

Presidents Ramiro de León Carpio and Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen (left and right), at the latter's inauguration; Guatemala City, January 1996

The Civic Opposition

In 1984, the **Mutual Support Group (GAM)** emerged, quickly becoming the figurehead of popular resistance and facing fierce military repression that claimed the lives of its two founders within the year. Comprising 85% Mayan women, GAM was initially focused in support of the families of the 'disappeared'. In time, however, it came to share with the **Catholic Archbishop's Human Rights Office (ODHA)** the broader role of unofficial monitor of all military abuses.

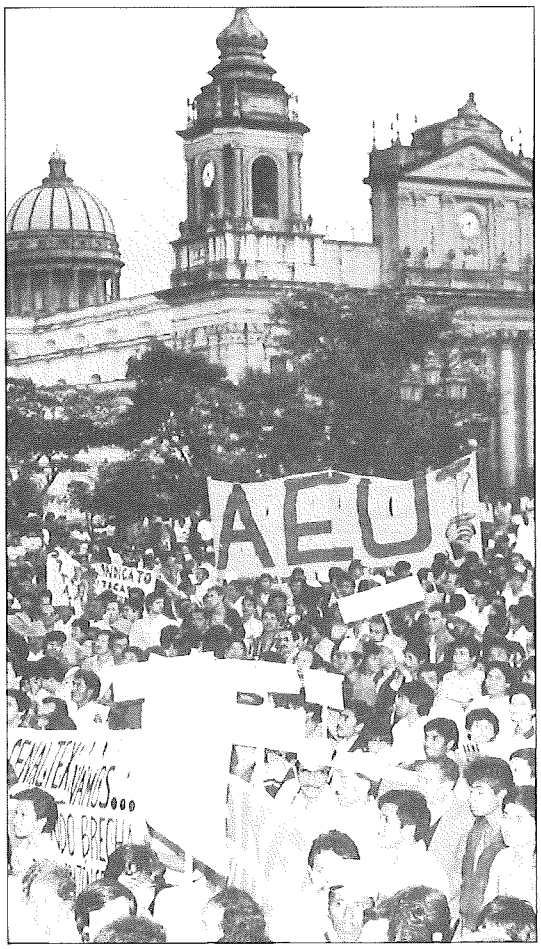
With the re-emergence of the **Committee for *Campesino* Unity (CUC)**, the prominent civic group of the 1970s, new largely Mayan human rights organisations were also established, including the 11,000-strong **National Co-ordination of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA)** and the **Council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ)** who vocally opposed the Civil Defence Patrols. Together with GAM, these groups began to identify clandestine cemeteries and commenced an ongoing series of exhumations which have severely embarrassed successive governments and provoked military and paramilitary campaigns to undermine and eliminate their critics. In 1987, the **Unity of Labour and Popular Action (UASP)** was established, pressing for social and economic reform, as well as an end to repression. A broad-based umbrella group led by the radical leftist **Unity of Guatemalan Labour (UNSITRAGUA)**, the UASP soon became a central forum for the civic opposition, not least in its contributions to the peace process.

In the early '90s, tens of thousands of internally displaced Guatemalans organised into **Communities of People in Resistance (CPRs)** to denounce army terror campaigns in the north of the country. Meanwhile, the **National Indigenous and Campesino Co-ordination (CONIC)** broke away from the CUC to concentrate on issues of land ownership and the **Association of Families of the Disappeared (FAMDEGUA)** also broke from GAM. In short, a panoply of new organisations started to emerge, increasingly Mayan-led and independent of links to the rebels. Employing various methods, these groups promoted the full range of

human rights, supporting sectoral interests both independently and from within umbrella groupings such as UASP, the **Co-ordination of Organisations of Mayan People of Guatemala (COPMAGUA)**, and the **Council of the Displaced of Guatemala (CONDEG)**.

Benefiting greatly from their links to international human rights groups and NGOs, civic organisations clearly played a key role in the broadening of debate and the maturation of Guatemalan political society. This was particularly evident when they joined with business associations and political parties in the **National Consensus Body (INC)**, a grouping which sought to re-establish legitimate governance after the 1993 'auto-coup'. As conventional channels for political expression have begun to widen though, members of GAM, CERJ, CONAVIGUA and other groups have reoriented their energies, committing themselves to the debates and activities of centrist and centre-left political groupings. As a result, 'civil society' is less focused and unified than it has been in the past.

Richard Wilson



A Unity of Labour and Popular Action demonstration on the Plaza Mayor, outside the National Palace; Guatemala City, January 1988

National Peace-Making Institutions

National Reconciliation Commission (CNR)

Under the terms of the 1987 Esquipulas II agreement, the CNR was established by the government with one official delegate, one representative of existing political parties, one prominent citizen and a delegate from the Guatemalan Bishop's Conference (CEG). In the same year, the commission facilitated the first ever meeting between the URNG and state representatives and then engaged in further talks with the rebels in 1988. In 1989, it inaugurated a Grand National Dialogue to discuss Guatemala's principal problems. Though boycotted by private sector organisations, the Dialogue created a unique forum for civil society and enabled it to set the agenda for all subsequent peace talks. In 1990, the government appointed its representative on the CNR and called for a summit between the commission and the URNG to prepare conditions for direct dialogue. This meeting which produced the so-called 'Oslo Accord' was followed by others involving the CNR, the rebels and five separate groupings of political and civil society. These meetings further developed the agenda for talks that was subsequently agreed by the government, army and the URNG.

After 1991, the influence of the CNR waned significantly and the commission was disbanded by the government in 1993. While polarised attitudes continued to constrain constructive negotiation throughout the lifetime of the CNR, civic influence working through the commission was crucial in increasing pressure on the parties for public accountability and in promoting greater political participation free of the fear of repression.

Guatemalan Bishop's Conference (CEG)

While many of its personnel remain compromised by past associations with anti-democratic forces in Guatemala, the Catholic Church has in recent years been a prime catalyst for progressive change. On

one level, its community education and broader development work have fostered the emergence and consolidation of a self-assertive civil society. On another, it has employed its place in the national establishment to exert moral and political pressure on government and rebels alike.

Emboldened by international support and by its leading role in the CNR, the Bishop's Conference was instrumental in instituting the Grand National Dialogue of 1989. The following year, its representative on the CNR, the Bishop of Zacapa, **Msgr Rodolfo Quezada Toruño**, was named by the government as official 'conciliator', a post through which he facilitated dialogue first between the CNR, the URNG and the socio-political sectors and later between the government, the army and the rebels.

Though influential in establishing an agenda for comprehensive talks and in bringing the parties into dialogue, the church was perceived as possessing neither the impartiality nor the political leverage to broker agreements on the more sensitive issues and was relieved of its mediatory role in 1993. The Bishop's Conference was subsequently called upon to convene the Civil Society Assembly (ASC), and Msgr Quezada held the chair of this forum until 1995.

Government Peace Commission (COPAZ)

COPAZ was created under **President de León.** Headed initially by **Héctor Rosada Granados**, a sociologist with close links to the army, it became the formal negotiating body of the government and army, institutionally divorcing their interests from civil society sectors which had influenced its predecessor, the CNR. In 1996, **President Arzú** replaced Rosada with **Gustavo Porras Castejón**, one-time leader of the rebel Guerilla Army of the Poor (EGP). Both the formation of COPAZ and this later overhaul represented a dilution of hard-line military influence on the peace process and preceded significant breakthroughs in negotiations. However, they also signified a progressively exclusivist dimension to the peace process that allowed the army, rebels and government to engineer a peace settlement well above the heads of civil society.

Civil Society Assembly (ASC)

The creation of a broad civil society assembly was promoted by the government and the URNG in early 1994 to discuss the substantive agenda of peace talks, to draw up consensus documents and to submit recommendations which, though not binding, were intended to 'facilitate understanding among the parties'. The ASC was established after the signing of the Comprehensive Human Rights Agreement. Representatives of 11 social sectors were invited to participate, of which only the business association, CACIF, declined. Keeping assiduously to a one-year timetable, consensus documents were drafted on all substantive negotiating themes, first by individual organisations, next by the sectors and finally by the ASC as a whole. In many cases, the ASC's proposals were more radical than both the final accord signed and the initial negotiating positions of the URNG.

The ASC comprises ten representatives from the 11 social sectors invited to participate. The first five of these sectors participated in the post-Oslo Accord consultations of 1990. The sectors are:

1. Political parties
2. Business associations, represented by CACIF
3. Religious groups
4. Unions and popular organisations
5. Academics, co-operative members, entrepreneurs, community organisations and professionals
6. Mayan People's organisations
7. Women's organisations
8. Journalists
9. Development NGOs
10. Research centres
11. Human rights protection and promotion centres

The ASC president was supported by a secretary-general and an organising committee drawn from the five 'Oslo sectors' and the Mayan organisations. Each sector was responsible for arranging its own meetings and electing its representatives to the Assembly.

To a significant degree, the ASC was dominated by leftist unions and popular organisations, and its relations with the government and business were therefore erratic. Its influence is clearly evident in the 1995 Accord on Indigenous Rights, but the assembly subsequently became marginalised, as the negotiations became progressively less consultative. Simultaneously, the unity, capacity and public credibility of the ASC was significantly undermined by the resignation of its president and by the defection of a number of leaders to the emerging political parties of the left.

The most concrete achievements of the ASC are probably the experience it afforded civil organisations in cross-sectoral communication and consensus-building and its successes since mid-1995 in lobbying international lending agencies on the implementation and monitoring of post-settlement assistance.

International Intervenors

Regional governments

From the mid- to late- 1980s, **United States** regional policy underwent a gradual shift in favour of demilitarisation, political liberalisation, public sector reform and human rights. This shift was reflected in the volume and function of US financial assistance to Guatemala and was decisive in influencing the pace of political reform. It was executed after US-backed military activities had decisively undermined the capacities and morale of the revolutionary **Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)** government in Nicaragua and the left-wing rebels of the **Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)** in El Salvador. It was consolidated after the Sandinistas lost elections in February 1990, and sealed when the Salvadorean war ended in a political settlement in January 1992.

Despite continuing US ambivalence towards an independent sub-regional peace initiative, **Costa Rican President Oscar Arias** also made decisive moves in 1986-87 to resurrect the failing 'Contadora' initiative (see Historical Background, p. 10). A new round of talks was convened between the Central American presidents aimed at raising awareness of the ongoing cost of regional conflicts, furthering debate on shared interests, and developing inclusive frameworks for conflict resolution. Held at Esquipulas, Guatemala, these talks culminated in the 1987 Procedure for Establishing Firm and Lasting Peace for Central America (the 'Esquipulas II' accord). Among other things, Esquipulas II provided for the establishment of the National Reconciliation Commission (CNR) in Guatemala.

In the three years following Esquipulas II, **Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador** and **Canada** all hosted negotiations involving the CNR, civic and political groupings, and the URNG. Between 1991-96, Mexico hosted government-URNG talks for most of the 'substantive' accords. Together with the **US, Venezuela** and **Colombia**, they were also accorded 'friendly country' status in 1994, charged with supporting United Nations contributions to the peace process and providing 'security and firmness' to peace commitments.

Extra-Regional Governments

Outside of the Americas, it was the government of **Norway** which played the most constructive facilitatory role in the Guatemalan peace process. It was they who hosted the CNR/URNG talks in 1990 which produced the so-called 'Oslo Accord', opening the way for further discussions between the rebels, socio-political groupings, the government and the army. While providing substantial assistance to the peace-making initiatives of international ecumenical bodies in the mid-1990s, the Norwegians also hosted the signing of two substantive agreements in 1994 and the definitive ceasefire in December 1996.

For its part, the government of **Spain** hosted the first ever contact between the URNG and state representatives in 1987, the first of the post-Oslo consultative meetings in 1990 and the signing of the Agreement of Legal Integration of the URNG in December 1996. Talks leading to the previous agreement, on Constitutional Reform, were

hosted in Stockholm by the government of **Sweden**. In 1994, Norway and Spain were appointed 'friendly country' guarantors of the UN-mediated peace process.

International Financial Institutions

Once the momentum for a political settlement had begun to build in the early 1990s, the range of donors affiliated to the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank Consultative Group** began to tie its support for Guatemala to a comprehensive neo-liberal agenda. In addition to the over-riding priorities of macroeconomic stability and privatisation, this agenda implies a degree of commitment to administrative efficiency, political pluralism, social investment and basic human rights. Strategically exploited by civil society lobbyists to promote sustainability and local participation in aid projects, it also created an urgent incentive for the Guatemalan government to complete negotiations.

Meeting in early 1997, the Consultative Group promised to cover almost 75% of the $2.6 billion cost of the accords' implementation, channelling donations and loans from the **European Union, the Interamerican Development Bank, the World Bank, the Central American Bank of Economic Integration, the US, Germany** and **Spain.** However, this support was also tied, notably to demands that the Guatemalan government meet the remaining shortfall. This condition, which compels the government to bite the bullet of tax reform, was later reiterated forcefully by the IMF. There is little doubt that international donors have played and will continue to play a key role in determining the success and direction of peace-building in Guatemala.

International Non-Governmental Organisations

International NGOs working in the fields of human rights and development have been key allies of the civic opposition in Guatemala, raising awareness of military repression and providing financial, moral and institutional support.

In the peace process itself, the **Lutheran World Federation (LWF)** played a key role with the Catholic Church in consultations leading to the signing of the 'Oslo Accord' in 1990. Subsequently, the LWF was the lead agent in an ecumenical alliance of church bodies that co-sponsored four consultations between 1993 and 1995. These consultations, held in Washington, Guatemala, Oslo and Costa Rica, aimed at giving civic representatives a platform to share their visions of justice and peace with the parties to the negotiations and with the international community. They took place at particularly difficult times, when peace negotiations were at an impasse, or during periods of frustration, marked by disappointment over the lack of concrete action to honour promised undertakings.

The other co-sponsors of the ecumenical consultations were the **Latin American Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches** and **the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA**. These groups were supported by a Local Committee in Guatemala, a **'Four Council Team'** in the Central American region and a **Support Group** in Costa Rica. They received financial backing from the Norwegian government through **Norwegian Church Aid** and the **Churches' Development Service of the Evangelical Church** in Germany.

United Nations

In the late 1980s and early 90s, the UN had provided observers to the 1989 Grand National Dialogue and the ill-fated 'Oslo process', and had maintained an office for monitoring human rights violations. In 1993, it was called upon by the parties to upgrade its role in negotiations. Subsequently, erstwhile observer **Jean Arnault** was appointed as UN 'moderator' to chair all subsequent talks and to 'make proposals to facilitate the signing of a firm and lasting peace agreement'.

In 1994, the UN was also requested to verify the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights. The **United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive**

Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) was formally established in November and was fully operational three months later, working from 13 offices nation-wide with a staff of over 400. Its role was: (i) to deal with and verify complaints of human rights violations; (ii) to monitor the performance of state institutions in dealing with these abuses; (iii) to conduct public information and education campaigns; (iv) to provide institutional support to existing human rights organisations; and (v), to make general recommendations to promote the full observance of human rights. This mandate has been extended twice; first to cover verification of the human rights provisions of the 1995 Indigenous Rights Accord and then to monitor the implementation of all the accords.

In 1997, **Arnault** was appointed head of the new MINUGUA but was subsequently implicated in the alleged cover-up of the army murder of URNG operative Juan José Cabrera Rodas (alias 'Mincho' — see Violent Truths, p. 18). This sparked fears that Arnault could be compromised by his double role as both mediator and verifier of the peace process. Despite these reservations, and its failure to reverse the military culture of impunity, MINUGUA has provided a model of international mediation and verification which will be analysed for some years to come. It is widely credited with providing a significant deterrent to further human rights abuses and for providing a space for greater organisation and freedom of expression on the part of civil groups.

Other UN agencies that have made significant contributions to recent peace-building in Guatemala include the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) , the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America (PRODERE) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV).**

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