



TV UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

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Programme No. 885

Length: 3'27"

DETERIORATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY IN GUATEMALA

VIDEO

NIGHT PATROL (20")

NEWSPAPER CLIPPING/DEATH
SCENE

GLORIA LOPEZ ON CAMERA
(19")

TRAFFIC POLICE (20")

AUDIO

It's nighttime in Guatemala – and people are jittery. Violence has been on the rise.

In a recent five-month period, 1800 people have died. Human rights and political activists, journalists, women, and students have all been threatened. Gloria Lopez recently got the sort of call every mother dreads:

LOPEZ:

"I begged him to tell me what really happened. He told me they had been shot. I asked about my son and he told me he was with firemen who were trying to help him. That was a lie, my son was already dead."

Her son was a schoolboy, another victim of an over-stretched public safety system. Security and justice are the responsibility of the National Civilian Police, the Attorney General's Office and the Courts. Strengthening them is vital. Tom Koenigs, U.N. Special Representative in Guatemala says the

challenges are formidable.

KOENIGS:

TOM KOENIGS ON CAMERA
(13.5")

"The causes of these problems are multiple and they include the lack of resources, a low level of professional preparation of personnel, and deeply rooted corruption."

CADETS (20")

Basic police training is being cut and it's a concern for the United Nations Mission in Guatemala, MINUGUA. The mission fears that cadet training, a crucial element in strengthening the civilian police, will suffer.

ROUTINE CHECKS (14")

Guatemalans are worried about further increases in violence as elections approach. The country is now, more than ever, in need of a strong police force to maintain law and order.

KOENIGS:

KOENIGS ON CAMERA
(27")

"Guatemala is undergoing a severe public security crisis: murders, attacks, kidnappings, lynchings, armed robberies, drug-trafficking and prison riots. Crime is affecting society as a whole. 2002 was one of the most violent years in the post-war history of the country."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION
BRANCH (27")

At a time when an efficient criminal investigation service is needed, Guatemala's is underfunded and may not be up to the task. Criminal investigation services exist in 15 of Guatemala's 22 departments, but their structure and

performance are chaotic. Personnel standards are low - some officers have not even completed eighth grade, while others have criminal records.

POLICE CHECKS (23")

Swift action is recommended to streamline ranks of the service, improve the selection process, and increase training. Investigation procedures sorely need improvement. Guatemala's security situation will remain precarious as long as its leadership fails to reform its police force and fund it properly.

LOGO (17")

This report was prepared by Gustavo Jurado and Mary Ferreira for the United Nations.