

THE PBF IN GUATEMALA



Photo: UNDP Guatemala

Peacebuilding Challenges

The 1996 Guatemalan Peace Accords, which brought an end to the country's decades-long civil war, envisioned comprehensive legal, political, economic and social reforms to overcome the root causes of the armed conflict. However, weak state institutions and lack of political will hindered their implementation. Deep social inequalities, structural discrimination, drug trafficking, organized crime and gangs continue to foster violence, placing Guatemala among the countries with the highest murder rate in the world. In 2015, Guatemala suffered a severe political and institutional crisis that shook the

foundations of the Guatemalan society, when a series of corruption scandals unveiled by the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and the Public Prosecutor's Office brought to light long-established corruption networks entrenched in state institutions.

PBF Intervention

The UN Secretary-General declared Guatemala eligible to access the Peacebuilding Fund in 2011 to build the country's capacity to implement aspects of the 1996 peace agreement, particularly in the area of rule of law.

PBF INVESTMENTS IN GUATEMALA:

TOTAL ALLOCATION:

\$ **29** MILLION
invested since 2011

CURRENT PORTFOLIO:

\$ **13** MILLION

FOCUSING ON:



Support to judiciary system
and Rule of Law

PARTNERS:

UNDP, UN Women, UNODC, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, OHCHR, FAO, UNHCR, IOM, Mercy Corps

The presence of CICIG reflected the United Nations' commitment to supporting peacebuilding in Guatemala, and the PBF financed activities of the UN Country Team (UNCT) as a way to buttress CICIG's work through capacity-building of national institutions.

Current PBF support to Guatemala aims at addressing key peacebuilding needs and gaps concerning rule of law, particularly transitional justice and criminal investigations capacities, as well as social conflict and the need for increased dialogue.

In light of recent events involving high-impact corruption cases brought to justice, the PBF is engaging closely with the UNCT in Guatemala to explore how it can help strengthen specialized units of the General Prosecutor's Office as well as for the strengthening of civil society's monitoring and auditing of policy reform processes.

PBF also recently allocated USD 2 million through its Gender Promotion Initiative to expand support to women survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence who seek justice and transformative reparations. Women's leadership and national networks will also be bolstered to enable a stronger policy and agenda-setting role for structural change.

In late 2017 PBF's approved its first regional project in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, focusing on three key areas that require immediate responses: strengthening mechanisms for social and economic reintegration for migrants upon return; strengthening mechanisms for the protection and prevention of violence; and complementing the civilian security policy with actions to promote social inclusion, the strengthening of the administration of justice, and the exchange of information between the countries on lessons-learned.

PBF Impact and Catalytic Effect

In Guatemala, PBF supported the "Grandmothers of Sepur Zarco" to hold perpetrators of sexual slavery to justice years after the country's long civil war. This work resulted in the first ever conviction of conflict-related sexual violence in 2016, which UN Women and partners are now following up on to ensure the survivors get justice. UN Women sees the Sepur Zarco sentence as a major step forward for indigenous women's access to

justice, an integral aspect of peacebuilding in Guatemala and in other countries. The Guatemala Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) came to an end in December 2015, and an independent evaluation on the implementation of the Plan took place in October and November 2015. The evaluation showed that PBF projects under the PPP significantly contributed to the strengthening of justice and security institutions and increased citizen's trust in them.

Looking ahead

2017 tested the capacity of justice institutions and the CICIG to combat impunity and corruption. Responding to these new challenges, the Fund will, in 2018, focus on consolidating and expanding institutional strengthening within the justice system by providing technical support to enable strategic criminal prosecutions, particularly in high-impact and femicide cases.

2018 will also be a time of change that presents an opportunity to deepen democracy and peace. There is a need to seize this opportunity and consolidate progress made. A relapse would further weaken the Guatemalan society's trust in State institutions, erode governability and put the country's stability at risk.

About the PBF

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The PBF may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. From 2006 to 2017, the PBF has allocated \$772 million to 41 recipient countries. Since inception, 58 member states contributed to the Fund, 33 in the present 2017-2019 Business Plan. The PBF works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to political opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.