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By Ollantay Itzamná  
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## *Guatemala: 25 years since the signing of the Peace Accords, 25 years of neoliberalism*

**Sources:** Rebellion

In the Christmas atmosphere, and the day after the feast of the "holy innocents", the rebel groups grouped in arms grouped in the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) and the Creole State of Guatemala, after 36 years of "internal war", signed the Agreements of Firm and Lasting Peace. Then, it was December 29, 1996.

The contents of this political commitment were twelve. Of these, perhaps the tenth, the one referring to the recognition of the URNG as a political subject, is the one with the greatest compliance. Everything else, including the "shrinking" of the Army, access to land for peasants, the fight against racism, more taxes for the State, etc., are currently in a worse situation, both statistically and daily, than what happened in the 90s of the last century.

Just to mention some hard facts: At the time of the signing of the Peace Accords, more than 50% of the country's population was in a situation of poverty. By 2018, according to the Ministry of Social Development, more than 61% of Guatemalans were in a situation of multidimensional poverty. Currently, Guatemala is a continental champion with children in a situation of malnutrition.

It is true that thanks to the Peace Accords, the Army no longer "parades publicly" in the streets. But, with the Peace Accords, the private security industry had a historic growth in the maelstrom of violence in the country. And this private security industry is monopolized by retired military personnel. Security became a lucrative privatized business.

Almost all of the country's major cities consume corn from Mexico, with serious suspicions of overdose of the carcinogenic glyphosate. Currently, all of the country's arable land is hoarded for monocultures. Even the land handed over by Fondo de Tierras, under the rules of the free market, is rented for monocultures of African palm. In the 90s, at least cities consumed corn tortillas with food safety because peasants had access to land to rent and cultivate.

As for the promise of expanded tax collection, the whitest and most nefarious stories of corruption by evasion and subtraction of the few taxes were written in the last decade. The country subsists thanks to the economic remittances sent by some 3 million Guatemalans expelled after the signing of the Peace Accords. Before the pandemic, remittances accounted for about 17% of the country's Gross Domestic Product. In 2021, remittances grew by more than 34% compared to 2020.

Corporate state violence persists today. The difference is that there are no longer armed political/military groups to repel such violence. No government in the post-Peace Accords era ruled without resorting to the use of the "State of Siege or State of Emergency" mechanism! The persecution, criminalization and selective murder of human rights defenders and Mother Earth was and is a constant in the bicentennial Republic that signed and promised peace and bread for its impoverished population.

The successful implementation of the neoliberal political economic system is a correlate of the signing of the Peace Accords. Those who promoted and signed these Agreements knew that they signed the statutes for the implementation of the messianic neoliberal proposal.

Perhaps for this reason, the contents of the 12 agreements do not refer, by far, to the ideas of deep and urgent structural changes in the country such as: plurinationality, participatory

democracy, Good Living, land redistribution/economic democratization, socio-political rights of peoples and rights of Mother Earth, among others.

Pero, como nada ocurre fuera de la Bondad, el neoliberalismo, como correlato de la implementación de los Acuerdos de Paz, activa y activó procesos de resistencias comunitarias fecundas y transformadoras, incluso fuera y más allá del marco teórico/ideológico de los Acuerdos de Paz.

A 25 años de la firma de los Acuerdos de Paz, comunidades campesinas, pueblos originarios, colectivos urbanos y sectores sociales excluidos, dentro y desde sus dinámicas de procesos de resistencias colectivas, plantean e impulsan la urgente necesidad de un proceso de Asamblea Constituyente Popular y Plurinacional para realizar cambios estructurales en el país, crear el Estado Plurinacional, y avanzar hacia el Buen Vivir, más allá del marco de la modernidad incluso.

Estos actores colectivos, con sus propuestas, emergen fuera de las constelaciones de los sujetos políticos institucionales que surgieron con los Acuerdos de Paz (como son URNG, WINAQ). No porque se sintieran “traicionados” por los firmantes de los Acuerdos de Paz, sino porque simplemente sus históricas demandas postergadas no formaron parte de los contenidos de los Acuerdos de Paz.

The political promise of the "trickle" or "trickle" of the neoliberal banquet towards the impoverished sectors never happened, nor will it happen in Guatemala, or anywhere in the world. Consequently, the plurinational structural changes promoted and energized by the peoples and communities that bear the weight of exclusion and neoliberal plunder are urgent.

**Ollantay Itzamná. Defender of Mother Earth Rights and Human Rights from Abya Yala**

Author's Blog: <https://ollantayitzamna.com/>

*@JubenalQ*

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